

**AP\* COMPARATIVE  
GOVERNMENT AND  
POLITICS:  
AN ESSENTIAL COURSEBOOK**

**SEVENTH EDITION**

**by Ethel Wood**



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## Why Comparative Government and Politics?

I taught social studies classes for many years, mostly at Princeton High School in Princeton, New Jersey. Like most social studies teachers, my experience included classes in United States history and government. I have also published review books, textbooks, readers, and web materials that have required me to do extensive research in various types of American studies. Needless to say, I believe that an education in these areas is incredibly important for high school students, and every secondary curriculum should include them. So why is comparative government and politics particularly significant?

The 21st century has taught us that we cannot ignore the world around us. Happenings around the globe now directly impact our lives, and social studies teachers and students around the country face the challenge of interpreting complex, puzzling events. The AP comparative course focuses on government and politics in other countries and provides a theoretical framework to compare political systems around the world. It is my hope that this book will help students to grasp something of the political complexities of our global environment, and gain some understanding of both commonalities and differences among modern political systems. In today's world, we cannot afford not to know.

Ethel Wood  
 Germantown, NY  
 October 2015

## Other Books by Ethel Wood

*American Government: A Complete Coursebook*

*AP European History: An Essential Coursebook*, 1st and 2nd editions

*AP Human Geography: A Study Guide*, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd editions

*AP United States History: An Essential Coursebook*, 1st and 2nd editions

*AP World History: An Essential Coursebook*, 1st and 2nd editions

*The Immigrants: An Historical Reader*

*Introduction to Sociology*

*Multiple Choice and Free-Response Questions in Preparation for the AP United States Government and Politics Examination*, editions 1-7

*Multiple Choice and Free-Response Questions in Preparation for the AP World History Examination*, editions 1 and 2

*Teacher's Guide - AP Comparative Government and Politics*

*The Best Test Preparation for the Graduate Record Examination in Political Science*

*The Presidency: An Historical Reader*

## PREFACE: THE COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS EXAMINATION

The AP Comparative Government and Politics Examination administered by the College Board in May lasts for two hours and 25 minutes and consists of the following parts:

- 55 multiple-choice questions (45 minutes allowed; 50% of AP grade)
- a 100-minute free response section consisting of 8 questions (50% of AP grade)

The multiple-choice questions cover all the topics listed below, and test knowledge of comparative theory, methods, and government and politics in Britain, Russia, China, Mexico, Iran, and Nigeria. On the exam, the College Board no longer subtracts one-fourth of the number of questions answered incorrectly from the number of questions answered correctly to come up with your score. Since there is no penalty for guessing, it is advisable to answer all questions the best that you can.

The free-response questions are of three types:

- Definition and description (25% of free-response grade) – Students provide brief definitions or descriptions of five concepts or terms, briefly explaining their significance. Students may have to provide an example of the definition or description in one or more of the six core countries.
- Conceptual analysis (one question; 25% of free-response grade) – Students must use major concepts from comparative politics, explain important relationships, or discuss the causes and implications of politics and policy.
- Country context (two questions; 50% of free-response grade; each question 25%) – These questions focus on specific countries, and require students to use core concepts to analyze one country or compare two countries.

The recommended total time for definition and description terms is 30 minutes; for the conceptual analysis question, 30 minutes; and for each of the two country context questions, 20 minutes. However, there are no time divisions among the free-response questions. Instead, a total of 100 minutes is allotted to answer all of them.

Generally, multiple-choice questions are distributed fairly evenly among the six countries. In addition, many questions are not country-specific, but instead test knowledge of the major concepts. According to the College Board, the topics of the multiple choice questions are distributed as follows:

Introduction (methods, purpose of comparisons).....	5%
Sovereignty, Authority, and Power.....	20%
Political Institutions.....	35%
Citizens, Society, and State.....	15%
Political and Economic Change.....	15%
Public Policy.....	10%

This newly revised 7th Edition of *AP Comparative Government and Politics: An Essential Coursebook* is designed to help you prepare for the exam by giving you a sound footing in comparative concepts as well as country-specific information about the six core countries. The book is divided into three parts:

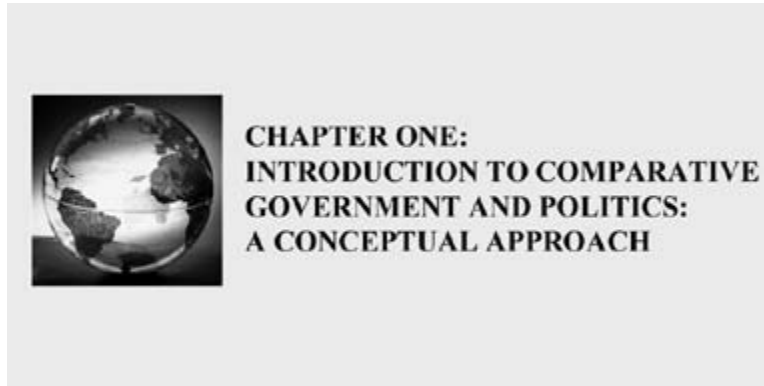
- **Part One** – Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics: A Conceptual Approach
- **Part Two** – Country Cases: Advanced Democracies (Great Britain), Communist and Post-Communist Regimes (Russia and China), and Less-Developed and Newly-Developing Countries (Mexico, Iran, and Nigeria)
- **Part Three** – Practice Examinations: Two complete practice exams, each with 55 multiple-choice questions and 8 free-response questions

Your best preparation for the exam is to know your stuff. The questions do require reading and writing skills, but the surer you are of the material, the more likely you are to answer the questions correctly. This book provides the concepts and information, as well as plenty of practice questions that will prepare you for the exam. The most important things are that you learn something about comparative government and politics, and that you learn to love it, too!

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**PART ONE:**  
**CONCEPTS FOR COMPARISONS**

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Comparative government and politics provides an introduction to the wide, diverse world of governments and political practices that exist in modern times. Although the course focuses on specific countries, it also emphasizes an understanding of conceptual tools and methods that form a framework for comparing almost any governments that exist today. Additionally, it requires students to go beyond individual political systems to consider international forces that affect all people in the world, often in very different ways. Six countries form the core of the course: Great Britain, Russia, China, Mexico, Iran, and Nigeria. The countries are chosen to reflect regional variations, but more importantly, to illustrate how important concepts operate both similarly and differently in different types of political systems: “advanced” democracies, communist and post-communist countries, and newly-industrialized and less-developed nations. This book includes review materials for all six countries.

Goals for the course include:

- Gaining an understanding of major comparative political concepts, themes, and trends
- Knowing important facts about government and politics in Great Britain, Russia, China, Mexico, Iran, and Nigeria
- Identifying patterns of political processes and behavior and analyzing their political and economic consequences
- Comparing and contrasting political institutions and processes across countries

- Analyzing and interpreting basic data for comparing political systems

## WHAT IS COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS?

Most people understand that the term **government** is a reference to the leadership and institutions that make policy decisions for a country. However, what exactly is **politics**? Politics is basically all about power. Who has the power to make the decisions? How did power-holders get power? What challenges do leaders face from others – both inside and outside the country’s borders – in keeping power? So, as we look at different countries, we are not only concerned about the ins and outs of how the government works; we will also look at how power is gained, managed, challenged, and maintained.

College-level courses in comparative government and politics vary in style and organization, but they all cover topics that enable meaningful comparisons across countries. These topics are introduced in the pages that follow, and will be addressed in greater depth when each of the countries is covered separately.

The topics are:

- The Comparative Method
- Sovereignty, Authority, and Power
- Political and Economic Change
- Citizens, Society, and the State
- Political Institutions
- Public Policy

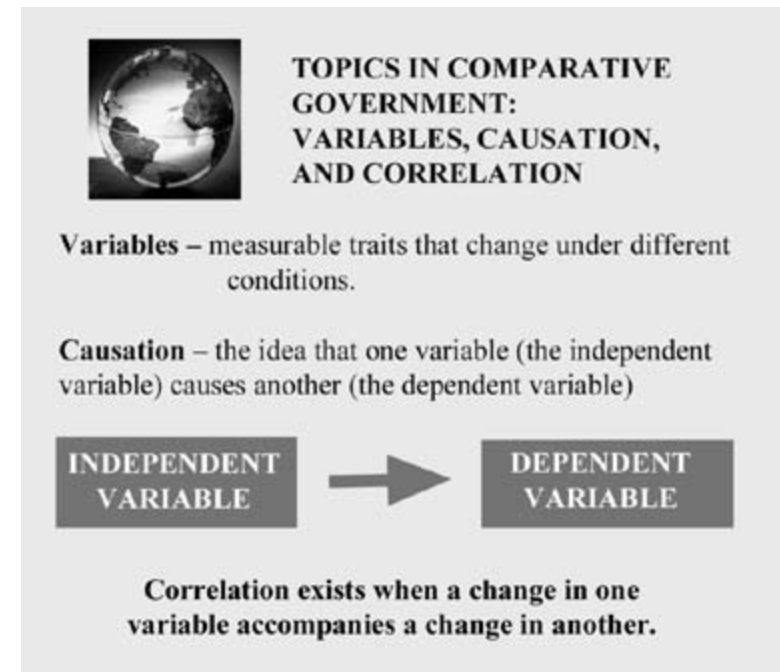
## TOPIC ONE: THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

Political scientists sometimes argue about exactly what countries should be studied and how they should be compared. One approach is to emphasize **empirical data** based on factual statements and statistics, and another is to focus on **normative** issues that require value judgments. For example, the first approach might compare statistics

that reflect economic development of a group of countries, including information about Gross National Product, per capita income, and amounts of imports and exports. The second approach builds on those facts to focus instead on whether or not the statistics bode well or ill for the countries. Empiricists might claim that it is not the role of political scientists to make such judgments, and their critics would reply that the empirical approach alone leads to meaningless data collection. The approaches give us different but equally important tools for analyzing and comparing political systems.

As with research in any social science, comparative government and politics relies on scientific methods to objectively and logically evaluate data. After reviewing earlier research, researchers formulate a **hypothesis**, a speculative statement about the relationship between two or more factors known as **variables**. Variables are measurable traits or characteristics that change under different conditions. For example, the poverty level in a country may change over time. One question that a comparative researcher might ask is, “Why are poverty rates higher in one country than in others?” In seeking to answer this question, the researcher wants to identify which variable or variables may contribute to high levels of poverty. In other words, the researcher is trying to discover **causation** – the idea that one (or more) variable causes or influences another. So a credible hypothesis might be that higher poverty levels are caused by lower levels of formal education. In this hypothesis, one variable (the poverty level) is called the **dependent variable** because it is caused or influenced by another variable (the level of formal education), which is called the **independent variable**. A **correlation** exists when a change in one variable coincides with a change in the other. Correlations are an indication that causality *may* be present; they do not necessarily indicate causation. Comparative researchers seek to identify the causal link between variables by collecting and analyzing data.

How do we go about comparing countries? The model most frequently used until the early 1990s was the **three-world approach**, largely based on cold war politics. The three worlds were 1) the United States and its allies; 2) the Soviet Union and its allies; and 3) “**third world**” nations that did not fit into the first two categories and were economically underdeveloped and deprived. Even though the



Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, this approach is still taken today by many comparative textbooks, whose comparisons are based on democracy vs. authoritarianism and communism vs. capitalism. Even though this method is still valid, newer types of comparisons between countries are reflected in the following three trends:

- **The impact of informal politics** – Governments have formal positions and structures that may be seen on an organizational chart, but these formal elements are not all that there is to political systems. For example, in formal terms Great Britain is led by a prime minister and has a House of Lords and a House of Commons. In comparison, the United States has a president, a Senate, and a House of Representatives. You may directly compare the responsibilities and typical activities of each position or structure in Britain to its counterpart in the United States. However, you gain a deeper understanding of both political systems if you connect **civil society** – the way that citizens organize and define themselves and their interests – to the ways that the formal government operates. **Informal politics** takes into consideration not only the ways that politi-



cians operate outside their formal powers, but also the impact that beliefs, values, and actions of ordinary citizens have on policy-making.

- **The importance of political change** – One reason that the three-world approach has become more problematic in recent years is that the nature of world politics has changed. Since 1991, the world no longer has been dominated by two superpowers, and that fact has had consequences that have reverberated in many areas that no one could have predicted. However, it creates an opportunity to compare the impact of change on many different countries.
- **The integration of political and economic systems** – Even though we may theoretically separate government and politics from the economy, the two are often intertwined almost inextricably. For example, communism and capitalism are theoretically economic systems, but how do you truly separate them from government and politics? Attitudes and behavior of citizens are affected in many ways by economic inefficiency, economic inequality, and economic decision making. If citizens turn to the government for solutions to economic problems and government does not respond, they may revolt, or take other actions that demand attention from the political elite.

Keeping these trends in mind, in this book we will study countries in three different groups that are in some ways similar in their political and economic institutions and practices. These groups are:

- **“Advanced” democracies** – These countries have well established democratic governments and a high level of economic development. Of the six core countries that we study in this course, Great Britain represents this group.
- **Communist and post-communist countries** – These countries have sought to create a system that limits individual freedoms in order to divide wealth more equally. Communism flourished during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but lost ground to democratic regimes by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Russia (as a post-communist country) and China (currently a communist

country) represent this group in our study of comparative government and politics.

- **Less-developed and newly-industrializing countries** – We will divide the countries traditionally referred to as the “Third World” into two groups, still very diverse within the categories. The newly-industrializing countries are experiencing rapid economic growth, and also have shown a tendency toward democratization and political and social stability. Mexico and Iran represent this group, although, as you will see, Iran has many characteristics that make it difficult to categorize as one or the other. Less-developed countries lack significant economic development, and they also tend to have authoritarian governments. Nigeria represents this group, although it has shown some signs of democratization in very recent years.

Important concepts that enable meaningful comparisons among countries are introduced in this chapter, and will be addressed with each of the individual countries separately. However, it is important to remember that the main point of comparative government and politics is to use the categories to compare among countries. For example, never take the approach of “Here’s Britain,” “Here’s Russia,” without noting what similarities and differences exist between the two countries.

## TOPIC TWO: SOVEREIGNTY, AUTHORITY, AND POWER

We commonly speak about powerful individuals, but in today’s world, power is territorially organized into **states**, or countries, that control what happens within their borders. What exactly is a state? German scholar Max Weber defined state as the organization that maintains a monopoly of violence over a territory. In other words, 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. States also include **institutions**: stable, long-lasting organizations that help to turn political ideas into policy. Common examples of institutions are bureaucracies, legislatures, judicial systems, and political parties. These institutions make states themselves long-lasting, and often help



them to endure even when leaders change. By their very nature, states exercise **sovereignty**, the ability to carry out actions or policies within their borders independently from interference either from the inside or the outside.

A state that is unable to exercise sovereignty lacks autonomy, and because it is not independent, it may be exploited by leaders and/or organizations that see the state as a resource to use for their own ends. Frequently, the result is a high level of corruption. The problem is particularly prevalent in newly-industrializing and less-developed countries, largely because their governments lack autonomy. For example, military rulers in Nigeria stole vast amounts of money from the state during the 1990s, making it one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Today Nigeria's tremendous revenues from oil largely evaporate before they reach ordinary citizens, providing evidence that corruption is still a major issue in Nigeria.

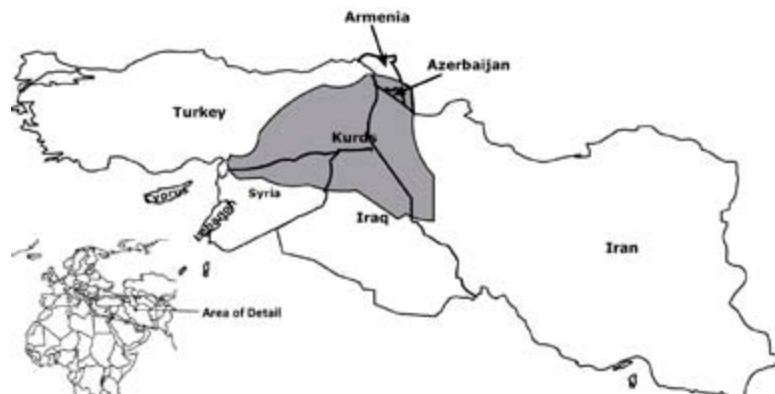
### States, Nations, and Regimes

States do much more than keep order in society. Many have important institutions that promote general welfare – such as health, safe

transportation, and effective communication systems – and economic stability. The concept of state is closely related to a **nation**, a group of people bound together by a common political identity. **Nationalism** is the sense of belonging and identity that distinguishes one nation from another. Nationalism is often translated as patriotism, or the resulting pride and loyalty that individuals feel toward their nations. For more than 200 years now, national borders ideally have been drawn along the lines of group identity. For example, people within one area think of themselves as “French,” and people in another area think of themselves as “English.” Even though individual differences exist within nations, the nation has provided the overriding identity for most of its citizens. However, the concept has always been problematic – as when “Armenians” live inside the borders of a country called “Azerbaijan.” Especially now that globalization and fragmentation provide counter trends, the nature of nationalism and its impact on policymaking are clearly changing.

### Variations of the Nation State

A **binational** or **multinational state** is one that contains more than one nation. The former Soviet Union is a good example of a multinational state. It was divided into fifteen “soviet republics” that were based on nationality, such as the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. When the country fell apart in 1991, it fell along ethnic boundaries into independent nation-states. Today Russia (one of the former soviet republics) remains in itself a large multinational state that governs many ethnic groups. Just as ethnic pressures challenged the sovereignty of the Soviet government, the Russian government has faced “breakaway movements” – such as in Chechnya – that have threatened Russian stability. Minority ethnic groups may feel so strongly about their separate identities that they demand their independence. **Stateless nations** are a people without a state. In the Middle East the Kurds are a nation of some 20 million people divided among six states and dominant in none. Kurdish nationalism has survived over the centuries, and has played an important role in the politics that followed the reconfiguration of Iraq after the Iraqi War that began in 2003.



**A Stateless Nation.** The Kurds have had a national identity for many centuries, but they have never had a state. Instead, 20 million Kurds are spread in an area that crosses the formal borders of six countries: Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

### Core Areas

Most of the early nation-states grew over time from **core areas**, expanding outward along their frontiers. Their growth generally stopped when they bumped up against other nation-states, causing them to define boundaries. Today most European countries still have roughly the same core areas as long ago, and many countries in other parts of the world also have well-defined core areas. They may be identified on a map by examining population distributions and transport networks. As you travel away from the core area, into the state's **periphery** (outlying areas), towns get smaller, factories fewer, and open land more common. Clear examples of core areas are the Paris Basin in France and Japan's Kanto Plain, centered on the city of Tokyo. States with more than one core area – **multicore states** – may be problematic, especially if the areas are ethnically diverse, such as in Nigeria. Nigeria's northern core is primarily Muslim and its southern core is Christian, and the areas pull the country in different directions. To compensate for this tendency for the country to separate, the capital city was moved from Lagos (in the South) to Abuja, near the geographic center of the state.

A multicore character is not always problematic for a country. For example, the United States still has a primary core area that runs along

its northeastern coastline from Washington D.C. to Boston. A secondary core area exists on the West Coast that runs from San Diego in the south to San Francisco in the north. Arguably, other core areas have developed around Chicago and other Midwestern cities, and Atlanta in the South. Despite the multiple core areas, regional differences do not threaten the existence of the state, as they do in Nigeria.

The rules that a state sets and follows in exerting its power are referred to collectively as a **regime**. Regimes endure beyond individual governments and leaders. We refer to a regime when a country's institutions and practices carry over across time, even though leaders and particular issues change. Regimes may be compared by using these two categories: democracies and authoritarian systems.

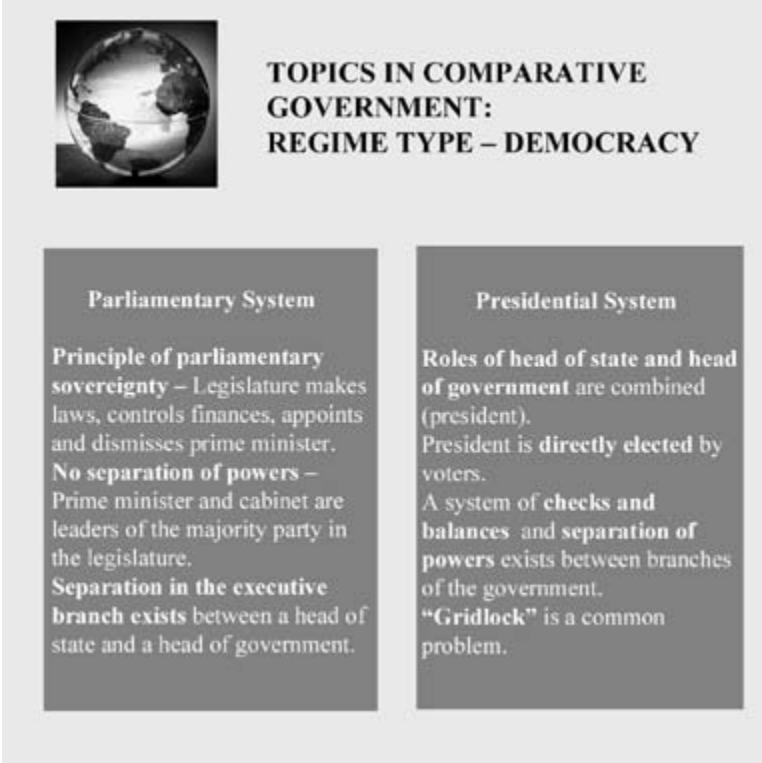
### Democracies

This type of regime bases its authority on the will of the people. Democracies may be **indirect**, with elected officials representing the people, or they may be **direct**, when individuals have immediate say over many decisions that the government makes. 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** – where citizens vote for legislative representatives, who in turn select the leaders of the executive branch. Others are **presidential systems** – where citizens vote for legislative representatives as well as for executive branch leaders, and the two branches function with separation of powers. Democratic governments vary in the degree to which they regulate/control the economy, but businesses, corporations, and/or companies generally operate somewhat independently from the government.

- **Parliamentary systems** – In this type of democracy, the principle of **parliamentary sovereignty** governs the decision-making process. Theoretically, the legislature makes the laws, controls finances, appoints and dismisses the prime minister and the cabinet (the other ministers), and debates public issues. In reality, however, strong party discipline within the legisla-

ture develops over time, so that the cabinet initiates legislation and makes policy. The majority party in the legislature almost always votes for the bills proposed by its leadership (the prime minister and cabinet members). Even though the opposition party or parties are given time to criticize, the legislature eventually supports decisions made by the executive branch. Because the prime minister and cabinet are also the leaders of the majority party in the legislature, no separation of powers exists between the executive and legislative branches. Instead, the two branches are fused together. Also typical of the parliamentary system is a separation in the executive branch between a **head of state** (a role that symbolizes the power and nature of the regime) and a **head of government** (a role that deals with the everyday tasks of running the government). For example, in Great Britain, the queen is the head of state who seldom formulates and executes policy, and the prime minister is the head of government who directs the country's decision-making process in his or her position as leader of the majority party in parliament.

- **Presidential systems** – In this type of democracy, the roles of head of state and head of government are given to one person – the president. This central figure is directly elected by the people and serves as the chief executive within a system of **checks and balances** between the legislative and executive (and sometimes judicial) branches. The **separation of powers** between branches ensures that they share power and that one branch does not come to dominate the others. As a result, power is diffused and the policymaking process is sometimes slowed down because one branch may question decisions that another branch makes. In order for presidential systems to truly diffuse power, each branch must have an independent base of authority recognized and respected by politicians and the public. The United States is a presidential system, as are Nigeria and Mexico. As we will see, an important question is whether or not the branches have truly independent bases of authority in Mexico and Nigeria.



**TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT:  
REGIME TYPE – DEMOCRACY**

Parliamentary System	Presidential System
<p><b>Principle of parliamentary sovereignty</b> – Legislature makes laws, controls finances, appoints and dismisses prime minister.</p> <p><b>No separation of powers</b> – Prime minister and cabinet are leaders of the majority party in the legislature.</p> <p><b>Separation in the executive branch</b> exists between a head of state and a head of government.</p>	<p><b>Roles of head of state and head of government</b> are combined (president). President is <b>directly elected</b> by voters.</p> <p>A system of <b>checks and balances</b> and <b>separation of powers</b> exists between branches of the government.</p> <p>“Gridlock” is a common problem.</p>

Some countries combine elements of the presidential and parliamentary systems, as is illustrated in Russia's 1993 Constitution. Although Russia is a questionable democracy, the Constitution clearly provides for a **semi-presidential system** where a prime minister coexists with a president who is directly elected by the people and who holds a significant degree of power. Until recently, the Russian president has had a disproportionate amount of power, but the prime minister's position became much more important when Vladimir Putin, after serving two terms as president, took the position in 2008. Since Putin was elected president again in 2012, the presidency has regained its previous power. In other semi-presidential systems – such as France and India – the amount of power held by each executive is quite different.

#### Authoritarian Regimes

In this type of regime, decisions are made by political **elites** – those who hold political power – without much input from citizens. These regimes may be ruled by a single dictator, an 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 on **communism**, a theory developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Karl Marx and altered in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by V. I. Lenin and Mao Zedong. In these regimes, the communist party controls everything from the government to the economy to social life. Other authoritarian regimes practice **corporatism** – an arrangement in which government officials interact with people/groups outside the government before they set policy. These outside contacts are generally business and labor leaders, or they may be heads of huge **patron-client systems** that provide reciprocal favors and services to their supporters.

Common characteristics of authoritarian regimes include:

- A small group of elites exercising power over the state
- Citizens with little or no input into selection of leaders and government decisions
- No constitutional responsibility of leaders to the public
- Restriction of civil rights and civil liberties

#### *Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism*

A common misconception about authoritarian regimes is that they are not legitimate governments. If the people accept the authority of the leaders, and other countries recognize the regime's right to rule, authoritarian regimes may be said to be legitimate.

Many people think of authoritarianism and **totalitarianism** as the same thing, but the term “totalitarian” has many more negative connotations, and is almost always used to describe a particularly repressive, often detested, regime. For example, during the Cold War era, westerners often referred to the Soviet Union as a “totalitarian regime.” However, authoritarian systems are not necessarily totalitarian in nature. Unlike totalitarian regimes, authoritarian governments do not necessarily seek to control and transform all aspects of the political and economic systems of the society. Totalitarian regimes generally have a strong ideological goal (like communism) that many authoritarian systems lack, and authoritarian governments do not necessarily

use violence as a technique for destroying any obstacles to their governance.

#### *Military Rule*

One form of nondemocratic rule is **military rule**, especially prevalent today in Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia. In states where legitimacy and stability are in question, and especially when violence is threatened, the military may intervene directly in politics, since it often is the only organization that can resolve the chaos. Military rule usually begins with a **coup d'état**, a forced takeover of the government. The coup may or may not have widespread support among the people. Once they take control, military leaders often restrict civil rights and liberties, and, in the name of order, keep political parties from forming and elections from taking place. Military rule usually lacks a specific ideology, and the leaders often have no charismatic or traditional source of authority, so they join forces with the state bureaucracy to form an authoritarian regime. Military rule may precede democracy, as occurred in South Korea and Taiwan during the 1990s, or it may create more instability as one coup d'état follows another, reinforcing a weak, vulnerable state.

#### **Corporatism in Authoritarian and Democratic Systems**

Modern corporatism is a system in which business, labor, and/or other interest groups bargain with the state over economic policy. In its earliest form corporatism emerged as a way that authoritarian regimes tried to control the public by creating or recognizing organizations to represent the interests of the public. This practice makes the government appear to be less authoritarian, but in reality the practice eliminates any input from groups not sanctioned or created by the state. Only a handful of groups have the right to speak for the public, effectively silencing the majority of citizens in political affairs. Often non-sanctioned groups are banned altogether. For example, in Mexico's one-party system that existed for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, oil wells and refineries were placed under the control of state-run PEMEX, and many private oil businesses were forced out of the country. Corporatism gives the public a limited influence in the policy-making process, but the interest groups are funded and managed by the state. Most

people would rather have a state-sanctioned organization than none at all, so many participate willingly with the hope that the state will meet their needs.

A less structured means of **co-optation**, or the means a regime uses to get support from citizens, is **patron-clientelism**, a system in which the state provides specific benefits or favors to a single person or small group in return for public support. Unlike corporatism, clientelism relies on individual patronage rather than organizations that serve a large group of people. Responsibilities and obligations are based on a hierarchy between elites and citizens. We will see example of clientelism in China, Russia, Mexico, and Nigeria.

More recently, corporatist practices have emerged in democratic regimes as well. In democracies corporatism usually comes into play as the state considers economic policy planning and regulation. In some cases, such as in Scandinavian countries, many major social and economic policies are crafted through negotiations between the representatives of interests and the government agencies. In democracies that have nationalized industries, the directors are state officials who are advised by councils elected by the major interest groups involved. In democracies that do not nationalize industries, many regulatory decisions are made through direct cooperation between government agencies and interests.

A basic principle of democracy is **pluralism**, a situation in which power is split among many groups that compete for the chance to influence the government's decision making. This competition is an important way that citizens may express their needs to the government, and in a democracy, the government will react to citizens' input. **Democratic corporatism** is different from pluralism in two ways:

- 1) In democratic pluralism, the formation of interest groups is spontaneous; in democratic corporatism, interest representation is institutionalized through recognition by the state. New groups can only form if the state allows it.
- 2) In democratic pluralism, the dialogue between interest groups and the state is voluntary and the groups remain autonomous; in democratic corporatism, organizations develop institution-

alized and legally binding links with the state agencies, so that the groups become semi-public agencies, acting on behalf of the state. As a result, groups and individuals lose their freedoms.

Just how much corporatism a democracy will allow before it becomes an authoritarian state is a question of much debate. For example, in the United States, the National Recovery Act of 1934 was judged by the Supreme Court to be unconstitutional, largely because it gave the government too much say in private industries' hiring and production decisions. In more recent years, U.S. government agencies have been criticized for hiring people from private interest groups to fill regulatory positions, allegedly giving special interests control of policy and destroying the ability of the government to guard the public interest. In the 1970s, labor unions in Great Britain were often accused of strong-arming public officials, including the prime minister, into passing labor-friendly policies into law. In all of these cases, the entangling of government and private interests has been criticized for undermining the principle of diffusion of power basic to a democracy.

#### The Democracy Index

In 2007, *The Economist* Intelligence Unit began publishing a “**Democracy Index**”, in which the organization ranks countries around the globe in terms of their democratic practices. The index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation; and political culture.

Democracy Index 2014, by Regime Type

	# of countries	% of countries	% of world population
Full democracies	24	14.4	12.5
Flawed democracies	52	31.1	35.5
Hybrid regimes	39	23.4	14.4
Authoritarian regimes	52	31.1	37.6

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

Countries are categorized into four types of regimes: full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes, and authoritarian regimes. Of the core countries, the United Kingdom is categorized as a full democracy; Mexico as a flawed democracy; and Nigeria, Russia, China, and Iran as authoritarian regimes.

### Legitimacy

Who has political power? Who has the authority to rule? Different countries answer these questions in different ways, but they all answer them in one way or another. Countries that have no clear answers often suffer from lack of political **legitimacy** – or the right to rule, as determined by their own citizens.

Legitimacy may be secured in a number of ways, using sources such as social compacts, constitutions, and ideologies. According to political philosopher Max Weber, legitimacy may be categorized into three basic forms:

- **Traditional legitimacy** rests upon the belief that tradition should determine who should rule and how. For example, if a particular family has had power for hundreds of years, the current ruling members of that family are legitimate rulers because it has always been so. Traditional legitimacy often involves important myths and legends, such as the idea that an ancestor was actually born a god or performed some fantastic feat like pulling a sword out of a stone. Rituals and ceremonies all help to reinforce traditional legitimacy. Most monarchies are based on traditional legitimacy, and their authority is symbolized through crowns, thrones, scepters, and/or robes of a particular color or design. Traditional legitimacy may also be shaped by religion, so that political practices remind people of deep-seated ancient beliefs. For example, the Inca believed that their chief ruler, called the Inca, was a deity descended from the sun, and his status as a god-king was reflected in his elaborate dress, with fine textiles woven just for him. Although the belief in a god-ruler is not generally accepted in the modern world, many leaders in the Middle East today base authority on their ability to interpret *sharia* (traditional religious) law.

- **Charismatic legitimacy** is based on the dynamic personality of an individual leader or a small group. Charisma is an almost indefinable set of qualities that make people want to follow a leader, sometimes to the point that they are willing to give their lives for him or her. For example, Napoleon Bonaparte was a charismatic leader who rose in France during a time when the traditional legitimacy of the monarchy had been shattered. By force of personality and military talent, Napoleon seized control of France and very nearly conquered most of Europe. However, Napoleon also represents the vulnerability of charismatic legitimacy. Once he was defeated, his legitimacy dissolved, and the nation was thrown back into chaos. Charismatic legitimacy is notoriously short-lived because it usually does not survive its founder. A modern example of a charismatic leader was Hugo Chavez, president of Venezuela, who led the country from 1999 until his death in 2013. Chavez so dominated Venezuelan politics with the force of his personality that many observers fear for the continuing stability of the country in his absence.
- **Rational-legal legitimacy** is based neither on tradition nor on the force of a single personality, but rather on a system of well-established laws and procedures. This type of legitimacy, then, is highly institutionalized, or anchored by strong institutions (such as legislatures, executives, and/or judiciaries) that carry over through generations of individual leaders. People obey leaders because they believe in the rules that brought them to office, and because they accept the concept of a continuous state that binds them together as a nation. Rational-legal legitimacy is often based on the acceptance of the rule of law that supersedes the actions and statements of individual rulers. The rule may take two forms: 1) **common law** based on tradition, past practices, and legal precedents set by the courts through interpretations of statutes, legal legislation, and past rulings; and 2) **code law** based on a comprehensive system of written rules (codes) of law divided into commercial, civil, and criminal codes. Common law is English in origin and is found in Britain, the United States, and other countries with a

strong English influence. Code law is predominant in Europe and countries influenced by the French, German, or Spanish systems. Countries in the comparative government course that have code law systems are China, Mexico, and Russia.

Most modern states today are based on rational-legal legitimacy, although that does not mean that traditional and charismatic legitimacy are not still important. Instead, they tend to exist within the rules of rational-legal legitimacy. For example, charismatic leaders such as Martin Luther King have captured the imagination of the public and have had a tremendous impact on political, social, and economic developments. Likewise, modern democracies, such as Britain and Norway, still maintain the traditional legitimacy of monarchies to add stability and credibility to their political systems.

Many factors contribute to legitimacy in the modern state. In a democracy, the legitimacy of leaders is based on fair, competitive elections and open political participation by citizens. As a result, if the electoral process is compromised, the legitimacy of leadership is likely to be questioned as well. For example, the controversial counting of votes in Florida in the U.S. presidential election of 2000 was a crisis for the country largely because the basic fairness of the electoral process (an important source of legitimacy) was questioned. Factors that encourage legitimacy in both democratic and authoritarian regimes are:

- **Economic well-being** – Citizens tend to credit their government with economic prosperity, and they often blame government for economic hardships, so political legitimacy is reinforced by economic well-being.
- **Historical tradition/longevity** – If a government has been in place for a long time, citizens and other countries are more likely to view it as legitimate.
- **Charismatic leadership** – As Max Weber said, charisma is a powerful factor in establishing legitimacy, whether the country is democratic or totalitarian.
- **Nationalism/shared political culture** – If citizens identify strongly with their nation, not just the state, they are usually more accepting of the legitimacy of the government.

- **Satisfaction with the government's performance/responsiveness** – Chances are that the government is a legitimate one if citizens receive benefits from the government, if the government wins wars, and/or if citizens are protected from violence and crime.

### Political Culture and Political Ideologies

Historical evolution of political traditions shapes a country's concept of who has the authority to rule as well as its definition of legitimate political power. This evolution may be gradual or forced, long or relatively brief, and the importance of tradition varies from country to country. **Political culture** refers to the collection of political beliefs, values, practices, and institutions that the government is based on. For example, if a society values individualism, the government will generally reflect this value in the way that it is structured and in the way that it operates. If the government does not reflect basic political values of a people, it will have difficulty remaining viable.

Political culture may be analyzed in terms of **social capital**, or the amount of reciprocity and trust that exists among citizens, and between citizens and the state. Societies with low amounts of social capital may be more inclined toward authoritarian and anti-individual governments, and societies with more social capital may be inclined toward democracy. Some argue that Islam and/or Confucianism are incompatible with democracy because they emphasize subservience and respect for differing statuses in life. As the argument goes, social capital is not valued within such traditions. Critics of social capital theory say that it relies too heavily on stereotypes, and that it ignores the fact that democracy has flourished in traditional societies, such as India, South Africa, and Turkey.

#### Types of Political Culture

The number and depth of disagreements among citizens within a society form the basis for categorizing political cultures into two types: consensual and conflictual.

- **Consensual political culture** – Although citizens may disagree on some political processes and policies, they tend generally to agree



on how decisions are made, what issues should be addressed, and how problems should be solved. For example, citizens agree that elections should be held to select leaders, and they accept the election winners as their leaders. Once the leaders take charge, the problems they address are considered by most people to be appropriate for government to handle. By and large, a **consensual political culture** accepts both the legitimacy of the regime and solutions to major problems.

- **Conflictual political culture** – Citizens in a **conflictual political culture** are sharply divided, often on both the legitimacy of the regime and its solutions to major problems. For example, if citizens disagree on something as basic as capitalism vs. communism, conflict almost certainly will be difficult to avoid. Or if religious differences are so pronounced that followers of one religion do not accept an elected leader from another religion, these differences strike at the heart of legitimacy, and threaten to topple the regime. When a country is deeply divided in political beliefs and values over a long period of time, political subcultures may develop, and the divisions become so imbedded that the government finds it difficult to rule effectively.

No matter how we categorize political cultures, they are constantly changing, so that over time, conflictual political cultures may become consensual, and vice versa. However, political values and beliefs tend to endure, and no political system may be analyzed accurately without taking into consideration the political culture that has shaped it. So when the Russian president dictates a major change of policy, the Chinese government enforces economic development of rural lands, the British prime minister endures another round of derision, or Mexican citizens take a liking to a leftist leader, you may be sure that political culture is a force behind the stories in the news.

### Political Ideologies

Political culture also shapes political ideologies that a nation's citizens hold. **Political ideologies** are sets of political values held by individuals regarding the basic goals of government and politics. Examples of political ideologies are:

- **Liberalism** places emphasis on individual political and economic freedom. Do not confuse liberalism as an ideology with its stereotype within the U.S. political system. As a broad ideology, liberalism is part of the political culture of many modern democracies, including the United States. 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. For example, in recent years many U.S. citizens openly expressed their disagreements with the Bush administration concerning the war in Iraq and homeland security issues. The U.S. political culture supports the belief that government leaders should allow and even listen to such criticisms. Public opinion generally has some political impact in liberal democracies, such as the U.S. and Britain.
- **Communism**, in contrast to liberalism, generally values equality over freedom. Whereas liberal democracies value the ideal of equal opportunity, they usually tolerate a great deal of inequality, especially within the economy. Communism rejects the idea that personal freedom will ensure prosperity for the majority. Instead, it holds that an inevitable result of the competition for scarce resources is that a small group will eventually come to control both the government and the economy. For communists, liberal democracies are created by the rich to protect the rights and property of the rich. To eliminate the inequalities and exploitation, communists advocate the takeover of all resources by the state that in turn insures that true economic equality exists for the community as a whole. As a result, private ownership of property is abolished. Individual liberties must give way to the needs of society as a whole, creating what communists believe to be a true democracy.
- **Socialism** shares the value of equality with communism but is also influenced by the liberal value of freedom. Unlike communists, socialists accept and promote private ownership and free market principles. However, in contrast to liberals, socialists believe that the state has a strong role to play in regulating

the economy or even owning key industries within it, and providing benefits to the public in order to ensure some measure of equality. Socialism is a much stronger ideology in Europe than it is in the United States, although both socialism and liberalism have shaped these areas of the world.

- **Fascism** is often confused with communism because they both devalue the idea of individual freedom. However, the similarity between the two ideologies ends there. Unlike communism, fascism permits the continued private ownership of property, at least by elites. 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 the responsibility to mold the society and economy and to eliminate obstacles (including people) that might weaken them. The powerful authoritarian state is the engine that makes superiority possible. The classic example is of course Nazi Germany. No strictly fascist regimes currently exist, but fascism still is an influential ideology in many parts of the world.
- **Religions** have always been an important source of group identity and continue to be in the modern world. Many advanced democracies, such as the United States, have established principles of separation of church and state, but even in those countries, religion often serves as a basis for interest groups and voluntary associations within the civil society. Even though some European countries, such as Great Britain, have an official state religion, their societies are largely secularized, so that religious leaders are usually not the same people as political leaders. However, the British monarch is still formally the head of the Anglican Church, as well as head of state for the country. In our six countries we will see religion playing very different roles in all of them – from China, whose government recently squelched the Falon Gong religious movement, to Iran, which bases its entire political system on Shia Islam. In Nigeria, religious law (*sharia*) is an important basis of legitimacy in the Muslim north but not in the Christian south.

### TOPIC THREE: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

Comparativists are interested not only in the causes and forms of change, but also in the various impacts that it has on the policymaking process. Profound political and economic changes have characterized the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and governments and politics in all of the six core countries of the AP Comparative Government and Politics course illustrate this overall trend toward change. More often than not, political and economic changes occur together and influence one another. If one occurs without the other, tensions are created that have serious consequences. For example, rapid economic changes in China have strongly pressured the government to institute political changes. So far, the authoritarian government has resisted those changes, a situation that leaves us with the question of what adjustments authoritarian governments must make if they are to guide market economies.

#### Types of Change

Change occurs in many ways, but it may be categorized into three types:

- **Reform** is a type of change that does not advocate the overthrow of basic institutions. Instead, reformers want to change some of the methods that political and economic leaders use to reach goals that the society generally accepts. For example, reformers may want to change business practices in order to preserve real competition in a capitalist country, or they may want the government to become more proactive in preserving the natural environment. In neither case do the reformers advocate the overthrow of basic economic or political institutions.
- **Revolution**, in contrast to reform, implies change at a more basic level, and involves either a major revision or an overthrow of existing institutions. A revolution usually impacts more than one area of life. For example, the Industrial Revolution first altered the economies of Europe from feudalism to capitalism, but eventually changed their political systems, transportation, communication, literature, and social classes. Likewise, the French and American Revolutions were direct-

ed at the political systems, but they significantly changed the economies and societal practices of both countries, and spread their influence throughout the globe.

- **Coup d'état** generally represent the most limited of the three types of change. Literally “blows to the state,” they replace the leadership of a country with new leaders. Typically coups occur in countries where government institutions are weak and leaders have taken control by force. The leaders are challenged by others who use force to depose them. Often coups are carried out by the military, but the new leaders are always vulnerable to being overthrown by yet another coup.

### Attitudes Toward Change

The types of change that take place are usually strongly influenced by the attitudes of those that promote them. Attitudes toward change include:

- **Radicalism** is a belief that rapid, dramatic changes need to be made in the existing society, often including the political system. Radicals usually think that the current system cannot be saved and must be overturned and replaced with something better. For example, radicalism prevailed in Russia in 1917 when the old tsarist regime was replaced by the communist U.S.S.R. Radicals are often the leaders of revolutions.
- **Liberalism** supports reform and gradual change rather than revolution. Do not confuse a liberal attitude toward change with liberalism as a political ideology. The two may or may not accompany one another. Liberals generally do not think that the political and/or economic systems are permanently broken, but they do believe that they need to be repaired or improved. They may support the notion that eventual transformation needs to take place, but they almost always believe that gradual change is best.
- **Conservatism** is much less supportive of change in general than are radicalism and liberalism. Conservatives tend to see

change as disruptive, and they emphasize the fact that it sometimes brings unforeseen outcomes. They consider the state and the regime to be very important sources of law and order that might be threatened by making significant changes in the way that they operate. Legitimacy itself might be undermined, as well as the basic values and beliefs of the society.

- **Reactionary beliefs** go further to protect against change than do conservative beliefs. Reactionaries are similar to conservatives in that they oppose both revolution and reform, but they differ in that reactionaries also find the status quo unacceptable. Instead, they want to turn back the clock to an earlier era, and reinstate political, social, and economic institutions that once existed. Reactionaries have one thing in common with radicals: both groups are more willing to use violence to reach their goals than are liberals or conservatives.

### Three Trends

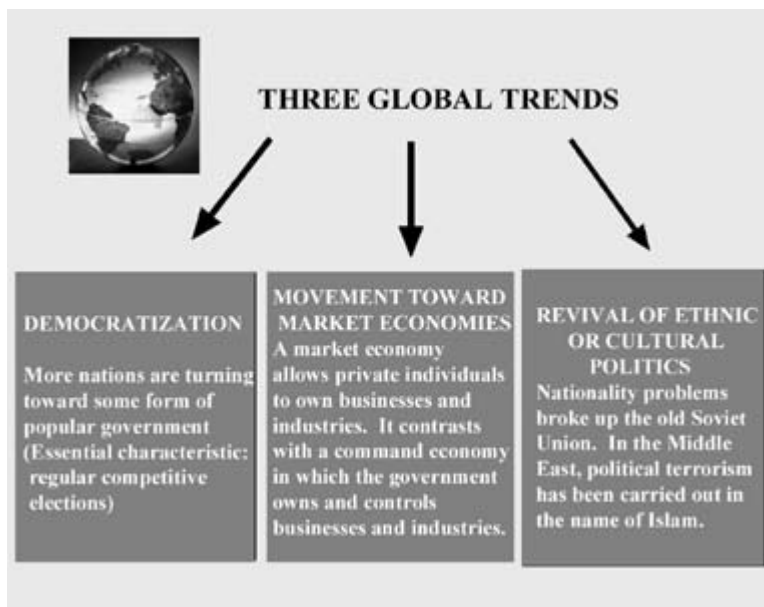
In comparing political systems, it is important to take notice of overall patterns of development that affect everyone in the contemporary world. Two of these trends – democratization and the move toward market economies – indicate growing commonalities among nations, and the third represents fragmentation – the revival of ethnic or cultural politics.

#### Democratization

Even though democracy takes many different forms, more and more nations are turning toward some form of popular government. One broad, essential requirement for democracy is the existence of **competitive elections** that are regular, free, and fair. In other words, the election offers a real possibility that the incumbent government may be defeated. By this standard, a number of modern states that call themselves “democracies” fall into a gray area that is neither clearly democratic nor clearly undemocratic. Examples are Russia, Nigeria, and Indonesia. In contrast, **liberal democracies** display other democratic characteristics beyond having competitive elections:

- **Civil liberties**, such as freedom of belief, speech, and assembly
- **Rule of law** that provides for equal treatment of citizens and due process
- **Neutrality of the judiciary** and other checks on the abuse of power
- **Open civil society** that allows citizens to lead private lives and mass media to operate independently from government
- **Civilian control of the military** that restricts the likelihood of the military seizing control of the government

Liberal democracies may also be called **substantive democracies** where citizens have access to multiple sources of information. Whereas no country is a perfect substantive democracy, some have progressed further than others. Countries that have democratic procedures in place but have significant restrictions on them are referred to



as **illiberal democracies**, or **procedural democracies**. For example, the rule of law may be in place, but it may not be consistently followed by those who have political power. Presidents in illiberal systems often hold a disproportionate share of power, and the legislatures are less able to check executive power. Another typical characteristic of illiberal democracies is that political parties and interest groups are restricted so that elections lack true competitiveness. The presence of a procedural democracy is a necessary condition for the development of substantive democracy, but many procedural democracies do not qualify as substantive democracies because they are missing the other necessary characteristics. In fact, theorists G. Bingham Powell, Jr. and Eleanor N. Powell do not consider procedural democracies to be democratic at all, but instead view them as forms of “electoral authoritarianism.”

#### *Huntington's “Three Waves” of Democratization*

According to political scientist Samuel Huntington, the modern world is now in a **“third wave” of democratization** that began during the 1970s. The “first wave” developed gradually over time; the “second wave” occurred after the Allied victory in World War II, and continued until the early 1960s. This second wave was characterized by de-colonization around the globe. The third wave is characterized by the defeat of dictatorial or totalitarian rulers in South America, Eastern Europe, and some parts of Africa. The recent political turnover in Mexico may be interpreted as part of this “third wave” of democratization.

Why has democratization occurred? According to Huntington, some factors are:

- The **loss of legitimacy** by both right and left wing authoritarian regimes
- The **expansion of an urban middle class** in developing countries
- A new emphasis on **“human rights”** by the United States and the European Union

- The “**snowball**” effect has been important: when one country in a region becomes democratic, it influences others to do so. An example is Poland’s influence on other nations of eastern Europe during the 1980s.

One of the greatest obstacles to democratization is poverty because it blocks citizen participation in government. Huntington gauges democratic stability by this standard: democracy may be declared when a country has had at least two successive peaceful turnovers of power.

#### *Democratic Consolidation*

An authoritarian regime may transition to a democracy as a result of a “trigger event,” such as an economic crisis or a military defeat. Political discontent is generally fueled if the crisis is preceded by a period of relative improvement in the standard of living, a condition called the “**revolution of rising expectations.**” The changes demanded may not necessarily be democratic. Democratization begins when these conditions are accompanied by a willingness on the part of the ruling elite to accept power-sharing arrangements, as well as a readiness on the part of the people to participate in the process and lend it their active support. This process is called **democratic consolidation**, which creates a stable political system that is supported by all parts of the society. In a consolidated democracy, all institutions and many people participate, so that democracy penetrates political parties, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy. The military, too, cooperates with political leaders and subordinates its will to the democratically-based government. A state that progresses from procedural democracy to substantive democracy through democratic consolidation is said to experience **political liberalization**, which eventually leads other states to recognize it as a liberal democracy.

#### Movement toward **Economic Liberalism** and Market Economies

A second trend of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries is a movement toward economic liberalism and market economies. Political scientists disagree about the relationship between democratization and marketization. Does one cause the other, or is the relationship between the two spurious? Many countries have experienced both, but two of the country cases for the comparative government course offer contradic-

tory evidence. Mexico has moved steadily toward a market economy since the 1980s, and democratization appears to have followed, starting in the late 1980s. On the other hand, China has been moving toward capitalism since the late 1970s without any clear sign of democratization.

#### *Political and Economic Liberalism*

The ideology of liberalism has its roots in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, where its proponents supported both political and economic freedoms, and so gave rise to the belief that political liberalism goes hand in hand with economic liberalism. Most liberals were **bourgeoisie** – middle-class professionals or businessmen – who wanted their views to be represented in government and their economic goals to be unhampered by government interference. They valued political freedoms – such as freedoms of religion, press, and assembly – and the rule of law, and they also wanted economic freedoms, such as the right to own private property. They advocated free trade with low or no tariffs so as to allow individual economic opportunities to blossom. These values clashed with those of radicals, who emphasized equality more than liberty and generally believed that liberals tolerated too much inequality within their societies.

#### *Command and Market Economies*

The 19<sup>th</sup> century radicals who advocated equality more than liberty included Karl Marx, whose communist theories became the basis for 20<sup>th</sup> century communist countries, including the U.S.S.R. and China. In order to achieve more equality – at least in theory – these countries relied on a **command economy**, in which the government owned almost all industrial enterprises and retail sales outlets. The economies were managed by a party-dominated state planning committee, which produced detailed blueprints for economic production and distribution, often in the form of five-year plans. Central planning supported economic growth in many cases – especially in the Soviet Union – but by the 1980s, most communist countries found themselves in deep economic trouble. A major problem was that economic growth of major industries had not translated into higher living standards for citizens.

Many political economists today declare that the economic competition between capitalism and socialism that dominated the 20<sup>th</sup> century is now a part of the past. The old **command economies**, with socialist principles of centralized planning, quota-setting, and state ownership, are fading from existence, except in combination with market economies. It appears as if most societies are drifting toward market economies based on private ownership of property and little inference from government regulation. This process of limiting the power of the state over private property and market forces is commonly referred to as **economic liberalization**. The issue now seems to be what type of **market economy** will be most successful: one that allows for significant control from the central government – a “**mixed economy**” – or one that does not – a pure market economy. For example, modern Germany has a “social market economy” that is team-oriented and emphasizes cooperation between management and organized labor. In contrast, the United States economy tends to be more individualistic and opposed to government control.

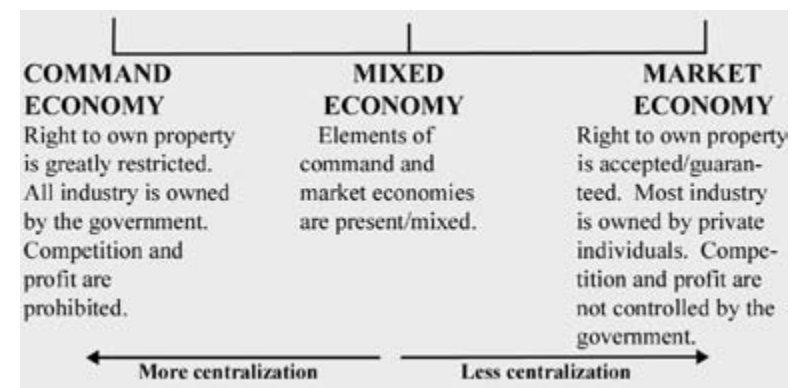
Two factors that have promoted the movement toward market economies are:

- 1) **Belief that government is too big** – Command economies require an active, centralized government that gets heavily involved in economic issues. Anti-big government movements began in the 1980s in the United States and many western European nations, where economies had experienced serious problems of inefficiency and stagnation. Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the United States rode to power on waves of public support for reducing the scale of government.
- 2) **Lack of success of command economies** – The collapse of the Soviet Union is the best example of a command economy failure that reverberated around the world. This failure was accompanied by changes among the eastern European satellite states from command to market economies. Meanwhile, another big command economy – China – has been slowly infusing capitalism into its system since its near collapse in the

1970s. Today China is a “socialist market economy” that is fueled by ever-growing doses of capitalism.

**Marketization** is the term that describes the state’s re-creation of a market in which property, labor, goods, and services can all function in a competitive environment to determine their value. **Privatization** is the transfer of state-owned property to private ownership. One important disadvantage of a free-market economy is that it inevitably goes through cycles of prosperity and scarcity. Recessions, small market downturns, or even depressions – big downturns – happen, but the market corrects itself eventually as supply and demand adjust to correct levels. However, a market downturn may be devastating, as it was during the 1930s when the world went into global depression. This disadvantage of market economies has led many countries to conclude that a “mixed economy” is the best solution, with the government playing a more active role than it does with a market economy, but a less active role than with a command economy.

All economies fall somewhere on the continuum between command and market systems, as illustrated on the graph below. For example, the United States is mostly a market economy, but competition and profit are regulated by the government, so it has some characteristics of a mixed economy. On the other end of the continuum is the former Soviet Union, where the government controlled the economy and allowed virtually no private ownership. Countries may move along the continuum over time. A good example is China, which has moved steadily away from a command economy toward a market economy since 1979.



### Revival of Ethnic or Cultural Politics

Until recently, few political scientists predicted that **fragmentation** – divisions based on ethnic or cultural identity – would become increasingly important in world politics. A few years ago **nationalism** – identities based on nationhood – seemed to be declining in favor of increasing globalization. However, nationality questions almost certainly derailed Mikhail Gorbachev's attempts to resuscitate the Soviet Union, and national identities remain strong in most parts of the world. Perhaps most dramatically, the **politicization of religion** has dominated world politics of the early 21st century. Many Westerners have been caught off guard by this turn of events, especially in the United States, where separation of church and state has been a basic political principle since the founding of the country. In the Middle East, political terrorism has been carried out in the name of Islam, and some people believe that many modern international tensions are caused by conflicts between Muslims and Christians.

Samuel Huntington has argued that our most important and dangerous future conflicts will be based on clashes of civilizations, not on socio-economic or even ideological differences. He divides the world into several different cultural areas that may already be poised to threaten world peace: the West, the Orthodox world (Russia), Islamic countries, Latin American, Africa, the Hindu world, the Confucian world, the Buddhist world, and Japan. Some political scientists criticize Huntington by saying that he distorts cultural divisions and that he underestimates the importance of cultural conflicts within nations. In either case – a world divided into cultural regions or a world organized into multicultural nations – the revival of ethnic or cultural politics tends to emphasize differences among nations rather than commonalities.

### TOPIC FOUR: CITIZENS, SOCIETY AND THE STATE

Government and politics are only parts of the many facets of a complex society. Religion, ethnic groups, race, social and economic classes all interact with the political system and have a tremendous impact on policymaking. These divisions – theoretically out of the realm of politics – are called **social cleavages**.

- **Bases of social cleavages** – What mix of social classes, ethnic and racial groups, religions, and languages does a country have? How deep are these cleavages, and to what degree do they separate people from one another (form **social boundaries**)? Which of these cleavages appear to have the most significant impact on the political system?
- **Cleavages and political institutions** – How are cleavages expressed in the political system? For example, is political party membership based on cleavages? Do political elites usually come from one group or another? Do these cleavages block some groups from fully participating in government?

### Comparing Citizen/State Relationships

Governments connect to their citizens in a variety of ways. We may successfully compare government-citizen relationships by categorizing, and in turn noting differences and similarities among categories. For example, citizens within democracies generally relate to their governments differently than do citizens that are governed by authoritarian rulers. Or, different countries may be compared by using the following categories:

- **Attitudes and beliefs of citizens** – Do citizens trust their government? Do they believe that the government cares about what they think? Do citizens feel that government affects their lives in significant ways? One important measure of connections between citizens and their government is **political efficacy**, or a citizen's capacity to understand and influence political events. If citizens have a high level of political efficacy, they believe that the government takes their input seriously and cares about what they have to say. They also believe in their own abilities to understand political issues and to participate in solving problems. If citizens lack political efficacy, they may not believe that it is important to vote, or they may try to ignore the government's efforts to enforce laws.

## SOCIAL CLEAVAGES

**Social class** – Even though class awareness has declined in industrial and post-industrial societies, it is still an important basis of cleavages. For example, traditionally in Great Britain, middle-class voters have supported the Conservative Party and working-class voters have supported the Labour Party. These differences have declined significantly in recent elections. In less developed countries class tensions may appear between landless peasants and property owners. In India, vestiges of the old caste system (now illegal) have slowed India's movement toward a democratic political system.

**Ethnic cleavages** – In the early 21st century, ethnic cleavages are clearly the most divisive and explosive social cleavages in countries at all levels of development. Ethnic clashes are the cause of several full-scale civil wars in the former Yugoslavia, some of the former U.S.S.R. republics, and African countries such as Liberia, Rwanda, and Angola. Ethnic cleavages are based on different cultural identities, including religion and language, and are important considerations in evaluating the political systems of all six country cases in the AP Comparative course.

**Religious cleavages** – Religious differences are often closely intertwined with ethnicity. For example, the conflict in Northern Ireland has a strong religious dimension, with the Irish nationalists being strong Catholics and the loyalists strong Protestants. However, religious differences may also exist among people of similar ethnic backgrounds. For example, some have argued that a basic cleavage exists in the United States between fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist Christians.

**Regional cleavages** – In many modern states, differing political values and attitudes characterize people living in different geographic regions. These populations compete for government resources such as money, jobs, and development projects. Regional differences are often linked to varying degrees of economic development. For example, regional conflicts in Nigeria coming in large part from economic inequalities resulted in the secession of Biafra and a tragic civil war.

**Coinciding and cross-cutting cleavages** – When every dispute aligns the same groups against each other, **coinciding cleavages** are likely to be explosive. **Cross-cutting cleavages** divide society into many potential groups that may conflict on one issue but cooperate on another. These tend to keep social conflict to more moderate levels.

- **Political socialization** – How do citizens learn about politics in their country? Do electronic and print media shape their learning? Does the government put forth effort to politically educate their citizens? If so, how much of their effort might you call “propaganda”? How do children learn about politics? At any specific time, a person's political beliefs are a combination of many feelings and attitudes, including both general and specific identifications. At the deepest level, people identify with their nation, ethnic or class groups, and religions. At a middle level, people develop attitudes toward politics and the ways that government operates. On a narrower level, people have immediate views of current events, or political topics that the media, family, friends, or schools may call to their attention.
- **Types of political participation** – In authoritarian governments, most citizens contact government through **subject activities** that involve obedience. Such activities are obeying laws, following military orders, and paying taxes. In democracies, citizens may play a more active part in the political process. The most common type of participation is voting, but citizens may also work for political candidates, attend political meetings or rallies, contribute money to campaigns, and join political clubs or parties.
- **Voting behavior** – Do citizens in the country participate in regular elections? If so, are the elections truly competitive? If not, what is the purpose of the elections? What citizens are eligible to vote, and how many actually vote? Do politicians pay attention to elections, and do elections affect policymaking?
- **Factors that influence political beliefs and behaviors** – Consider the important cleavages in the country. Do they make a difference in citizens' political beliefs and behaviors? For example, do the lower classes vote for one political party or the other? Are women's beliefs and behaviors different from those of men? Are younger people as likely to vote as older people are? Do people in rural areas participate in government?



**COMPARATIVE VOTER TURNOUT  
SELECTED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2012-15**

Country	Date of Election	Voter Turnout
Russia	March 4, 2012	65%
France	May 6, 2012	80%
Mexico	July 1, 2012	65%
Venezuela	October 7, 2012	81%
United States	November 6, 2012	58%
South Korea	December 19, 2012	76%
Kenya	March 4, 2013	86%
Syria	June 3, 2014	71%
Brazil	October 26, 2014	74%
Poland	May 24, 2015	55%

**Comparative Voter Turnout.** Voter turnout may be compared across countries, as shown in the chart of recent presidential elections above. The chart does not explain why some voter rates are lower than others, but a little research will yield some hypotheses. For example, the Venezuelan election was of high interest after the death of Hugo Chavez, so the voter turnout was much higher than it had been in previous recent presidential elections.

Source: Election Guide, [www.electionguide.org](http://www.electionguide.org).

- **Level of transparency** – A transparent government is one that operates openly by keeping citizens informed about government operations and political issues and by responding to citizens' questions and advice. In a 2009 memo to the heads of executive departments and agencies, U.S. President Barack Obama asserted, "Government should be transparent. Trans-

parency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their Government is doing...My Administration will take appropriate action, consistent with law and policy, to disclose information rapidly in forms that the public can readily find and use." This ideal does not have to be limited to democracies, but low levels of transparency are often found in authoritarian governments, and corruption also tends to be lower in countries where government activities are relatively transparent.

### Social Movements

**Social movements** refer to organized collective activities that aim to bring about or resist fundamental change in an existing group or society. Social movements try to influence political leaders to make policy decisions that support their goals. Members of social movements often step outside traditional channels for bringing about social change, and they usually take stands on issues that push others in mainstream society to reconsider their positions. For example, early leaders in the women's suffrage movement in Great Britain and the United States were considered to be radicals, but their goals were eventually recognized and accomplished. The modern civil rights movement in the United States consisted of collective action that influenced state, local, and national governments to support racial equality. The African National Congress (ANC), a political organization that sought to overthrow the state-supported system of apartheid in South Africa, eventually pushed the government to lift the decades-old ban and release ANC leader Nelson Mandela from prison. The success of social movements varies from case to case, but even if they fail, they often influence political opinion.

### Civil Society

**Civil society** refers to voluntary organizations outside of the state that help people define and advance their own interests. Civil society is usually strong in liberal democracies where individual freedoms are valued and protected. The organizations that compose it may represent class, religious, or ethnic interests, or they may cross them, creating strong bonds among people that exist outside of government control. Political scientists are interested in civil society since it helps

to define the people's relationship to and role in politics and community affairs. Groups in civil society may be inherently apolitical, but they serve as a cornerstone of liberty by allowing people to articulate and promote what is important to them. In many ways, civil society checks the power of the state and helps to prevent the **tyranny of the majority**, i.e., the tendency in democracies to allow majority rule to neglect the rights and liberties of minorities. Advocacy groups, social networks, and the media all may exist within the civil society, and if they are strong enough, they may place considerable pressure on the state to bring about reform.

By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, a global civil society has emerged, with human rights and environmental groups providing international pressures that have a significant effect on government-citizen relations. Some argue that a global **cosmopolitanism** – a universal political order that draws its identity and values from everywhere – is emerging. This global civil society can take shape in **nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)** or more informally through people that find common interests with others that live in far corners of the globe. Nongovernmental organizations are national and international groups, independent of any state, that pursue policy objectives and foster public participation. Examples are Doctors without Borders and Amnesty International. Societal globalization, then, may change the definition of who are “us” and who are “them”, and reshape a world that formerly defined reality in nationalistic terms.

By their very nature, authoritarian states do not encourage civil society, and they often feel that their power is threatened by it. Civil society does not necessarily disappear under authoritarian rule, as is illustrated by the survival of the Russian Orthodox Church and social reform movements in eastern Europe during decades of communist rule. Generally, civil society is weak in most less-developed and 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 that might help them articulate their interests to the government. One step in the development of civil society is civic education, in which communities learn their democratic rights and how to use those rights to give meaningful input to political institutions. One positive sign in less developed countries

is the growing involvement of women in NGOs that deal with a variety of health, gender, environmental, and poverty issues.

## TOPIC FIVE: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

An important part of studying comparative government and politics is developing an understanding of **political institutions**, which are structures of a political system that carry out the work of governing. Some governments have much more elaborate structures than others, but these structures often have similarities across cultures. However, just because you see the same type of institution in two different countries, don't assume that they serve the same functions for the political system. For example, a legislature in one country may have a great deal more power than a comparable structure in another country. Only by studying the way that the structures operate and the functions they fill will you be able to compare them accurately. Common structures that exist in most countries are legislatures, executives, judicial systems, bureaucracies, and armies.

### Levels of Government

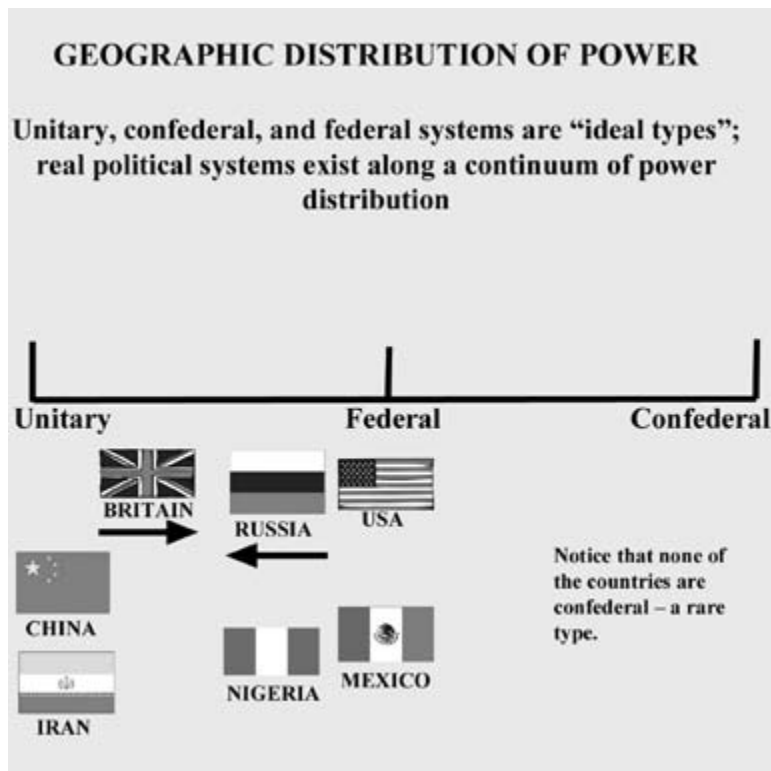
Every state has multiple levels of authority, though the geographic distribution of power varies widely. A **unitary system** is one that concentrates all policymaking powers in one central geographic place, and the central government is responsible for most policy areas. A **confederal system** spreads the power among many sub-units (such as states), and has a weak central government. A **federal system** divides the power between the central government and sub-units, and regional bodies have significant powers, such as taxation, lawmaking, and keeping order. Federalism is sometimes criticized for inefficiency, since power is dispersed among many local authorities whose policies may sometimes conflict.

All political systems fall on a continuum from the most concentrated amount of power to the least. Unitary governments may be placed close to one end, according to the degree of concentration; confederal governments are placed toward the other end; and federal governments fall in between. Most countries have unitary systems, although of the six core countries, Britain is devolving some power to regional governments and Russia, Mexico, and Nigeria have federalist

structures. In recent years, state governments in Mexico have gained some autonomy from the central government so that a real dispersal of power appears to have taken place.

### International Organizations and Globalization

All political systems exist within an environment that is affected by other governments, but more and more they are affected by international organizations that go beyond national boundaries. Some have more international and/or regional contacts than others, but most countries in the world today must cope with influences from their outside interactions with others. These organizations reflect a trend toward



**Geographic Distribution of Power in Seven Countries.** Above is a representation of the geographic distribution of power in seven countries: the six core countries of AP Comparative Government and Politics and the United States. Just as we might disagree about the actual balance of power between state and national government in the United States, we might also disagree about exactly where to place the other six countries. Nigeria and Russia in particular are difficult to place because although they have federalist structures, a great deal of power in both countries rests in the central executive.

**integration**, a process that encourages states to pool their sovereignty in order to gain political, economic, and social clout. Pooling of sovereignty creates a **supranational organization** that transcends the authority of the nation-state. Integration binds states together with common policies and shared rules. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many national governments established relationships with regional organizations – such as NATO, the European Union, NAFTA, and OPEC – and with international organizations, such as the United Nations. Most international organizations currently do not challenge national sovereignty, although the European Union illustrates a supranational organization with a great deal of authority over its member-states.

These international organizations reflect the phenomenon of globalization – an integration of social, environmental, economic, and cultural activities of nations that has resulted from increasing international contacts. Political globalization is a countertrend to the organization of political power by states, and it complicates the ability of states to maintain sovereignty since it binds them to international organizations that take responsibility for tasks that national governments normally conduct. Globalization has changed the nature of comparative politics, largely because it breaks down the distinction between international relations and domestic politics, making many aspects of domestic politics subject to global forces. Likewise, it also internationalizes domestic issues and events. Economic globalization intensifies international trade, tying markets, producers, and labor together in increasingly extensive and intensive new ways. Economic globalization also integrates capital and financial markets around the world so that banking, credit, stocks, and **foreign direct investments** (purchase of assets in a country by a foreign firm) are increasingly interrelated.

Because globalization deepens and widens international connections, local events, even small ones, can have ripple effects throughout the world. Perhaps most apparent is the effect of technology and its ability to ignore national boundaries. The internet allows news from every corner of the globe to rapidly spread to other areas, so that what happens in one place affects other parts of the world. On the other hand, many political scientists point out a counter-trend – **fragmentation** – a tendency for people to base their loyalty on ethnicity, language, religion, or cultural identity. Regional international organizations may

be seen as evidence of fragmentation because they divide the world into super blocs that often compete with one another. Although globalization and fragmentation appear to be opposite concepts, they both transcend political boundaries between individual countries.

### Modern Challenges to the Nation-State Configuration

Nation-states have always had their challenges, both internal and external, but today new international forces are at work that have led some to believe that the nation-state political configuration itself may be changing. Is it possible that large regional organizations, such as the European Union, will replace the smaller state units as basic organizational models? Or will international organizations, such as the United Nations, come to have true governing power over the nation-states? If so, then the very nature of sovereignty may be changing, especially if nation-states of the future have to abide by the rules of **international organizations** (cooperating groups of nations that operate on either a regional or international level) for all major decisions and rules.



### Centripetal vs. Centrifugal Forces

A recurring set of forces affects all nation-states: **centripetal forces** that unify them, and **centrifugal forces** that tend to fragment them.

- **Centripetal forces** bind together the people of a state, giving it strength. One of the most powerful centripetal forces is **nationalism**, or identities based on nationhood. It encourages allegiance to a single country, and it promotes loyalty and commitment. Such emotions encourage people to obey the law and accept the country's overall ideologies. States promote nationalism in a number of ways, including the use of symbols, such as flags, rituals, and holidays that remind citizens of what the country stands for. Even when a society is highly heterogeneous, symbols are powerful tools for creating national unity. Institutions, such as schools, the armed forces, and religion, may also serve as centripetal forces. Schools are expected to instill the society's beliefs, values, and behaviors in the young, teach the nation's language, and encourage students to identify with the nation. Fast and efficient transportation and communications systems also tend to unify nations. National broadcasting companies usually take on the point of view of the nation, even if they broadcast internationally. Transportation systems make it easier for people to travel to other parts of the country, and give the government the ability to reach all of its citizens.
- **Centrifugal forces** oppose centripetal forces. They destabilize the government and encourage the country to fall apart. A country that is not well-organized or governed stands to lose the loyalty of its citizens, and weak institutions can fail to provide the cohesive support that the government needs. Strong institutions may also challenge the government for the loyalty of the people. For example, when the U.S.S.R. was created in 1917, its leaders grounded the new country in the ideology of

communism. To strengthen the state, they forbid the practice of the traditional religion, Russian Orthodoxy. Although church membership dropped dramatically, the religious institution never disappeared, and when the U.S.S.R. dissolved, the church reappeared and is regaining its strength today. The church was a centrifugal force that discouraged loyalty to the communist state. Nationalism, too, can be a destabilizing force, especially if different ethnic groups within the country have more loyalty to their ethnicity than to the state and its government. These loyalties may lead to **separatist movements** in which nationalities within a country may demand independence. Such movements served as centrifugal forces for the Soviet Union as various nationalities – such as Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Latvians, Georgians, and Armenians – challenged the government for their independence. Other examples are the Basques of Northern Spain, who have different customs (and language) from others in the country, and the Tamils in Sri Lanka, who have waged years of guerrilla warfare to defend what they see as majority threats to their culture, rights, and property. Characteristics that encourage separatist movements are a peripheral location and the existence of social and economic inequality. One reaction states have had to centrifugal force is **devolution**, or the tendency to decentralize decision making to regional governments. Britain has devolved power to the Scottish and Welsh parliaments in an effort to keep peace with Scotland and Wales. As a result, Britain's unitary government has taken some significant strides toward federalism, although London is still the geographic center of decision-making for the country.

### **Devolution: Ethnic, Economic, and Spatial Forces**

Devolution of government powers to sub-governments is usually a reaction to centrifugal forces – those that divide and destabilize. Devo-

lutionary forces can emerge in all kinds of states, old and new, mature and newly created. We may divide these forces into three basic types:

- 1) **Ethnic forces** – An **ethnic group** shares a well-developed sense of belonging to the same culture. That identity is based on a unique mixture of language, religion, and customs. If a state contains strong ethnic groups with identities that differ from those of the majority, it can threaten the territorial integrity of the state itself. **Ethnonationalism** – the tendency for an ethnic group to see itself as a distinct nation with a right to autonomy or independence – is a fundamental centrifugal force promoting devolution. The threat is usually stronger if the group is clustered in particular spaces within the nation-state. For example, most French Canadians live in the province of Quebec, creating a large base for an independence movement. If ethnically French people were scattered evenly over the country, their sense of identity would be diluted, and the devolutionary force would most likely be weaker. Devolutionary forces in Britain – centered in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland – have not been strong enough to destabilize the country, although violence in Northern Ireland has certainly destabilized the region. Ethnic forces broke up the nation-state of Yugoslavia during the 1990s, devolving it into separate states of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Serbia-Montenegro.
- 2) **Economic forces** – Economic inequalities may also destabilize a nation-state, particularly if the inequalities are regional. For example, Italy is split between north and south by the “Ancona Line”, an invisible line extending from Rome to the Adriatic coast at Ancona. The north is far more prosperous than the south, with the north clearly part of the European core area, and the south a part of the periphery. The north is industrialized, and the south is rural. These economic differences inspired the formation of the Northern League, which advocated an independent state called Padania that would shed the north of the “economic drag” it considered the south to be. The movement failed, but it did encourage the Italian government

to devolve power to regional governments, moving it toward a more federal system. A similar economic force is at work in Catalonia in northern Spain, with Catalonians only about 17% of Spain's population, but accountable for 40% of all Spanish industrial exports.

- 3) **Spatial forces** – Spatially, devolutionary events most often occur on the margins of the state. Distance, remoteness, and peripheral location promote devolution, especially if water, desert, or mountains separate the areas from the center of power



**Economic Devolutionary Forces in Italy and Spain.** Geographically, southern Italy and most of Spain lie outside the European core, creating economic devolutionary forces within the two nation-states. In Spain, the Catalonians in the north are connected to the core, but the bulk of Spain is not. In Italy the core extends its reach over the northern half of the country, creating centrifugal tensions between north and south.

and from neighboring nations that may support separatist objectives. For example, the United States claims Puerto Rico as a territory, and has offered it recognition as a state. However, Puerto Ricans have consistently voted down the offer of statehood, and a small but vocal pro-independence movement has advocated complete separation from the U.S. The movement is encouraged by spatial forces – Puerto Rico is an island in the Caribbean, close to other islands that have their independence.

### Executives

The executive office carries out the laws and policies of a state. In many countries the executive is split into two distinct roles: **the head of state** and **the head of government**. The head of state is a role that symbolizes and represents the people, both nationally and internationally, and may or may not have any real policymaking power. The head of government deals with the everyday tasks of running the state, and usually directs the activities of other members of the executive branch. The distinction is clearly seen in a country such as Britain, where formerly powerful monarchs reigned over their subjects, but left others (such as prime ministers) in charge of actually running the country. Today Britain still has a monarch that is head of state, but the real power rests with the prime minister, who is head of government. Likewise, the Japanese emperor still symbolically represents the nation, but the prime minister runs the government. In the United States, both roles are combined into one position – the president. However, in other countries, such as Italy and Germany, the president is the head of state with weak powers, and the prime minister is the head of government. In still others, such as Russia and France, the president is head of state with strong powers, and the prime minister is the head of government with subordinate powers, although the relationship in Russia has changed, depending on whether Vladimir Putin was president or prime minister.

### Functions of the Chief Executive

Usually the chief executive is the most important person in the policy-making process, initiating new policies and playing an important role in their adoption. In presidential systems, the president usually has



the power to veto legislation, while the executive in a parliamentary system usually does not have that authority. The political executive also oversees policy implementation and can hold other officials in the executive branch accountable for their performance. The central decisions in a foreign policy crisis are generally made by the chief executive.

### The Cabinet

In parliamentary systems, the cabinet is the most important collective decision-making body. Its ministers head all the major departments into which the executive branch is divided, and the cabinet is led by the prime minister, or “first among equals.” The ministers are also leaders of the majority party in parliament, or if the country has a multi-party system with no clear majority party, a **cabinet coalition** will form, where several parties join forces and are represented in different cabinet posts. A common problem of cabinet coalitions is that they tend to be unstable, especially if they result from a fragmented legislature. In presidential systems, the president chooses the cabinet members from almost any area of political life, and his appointments may have to be approved by the legislature, as with the U.S. Senate. Because the cabinet members are not necessarily party leaders or members of the legislature, they often have more independence from

the president than ministers do from the prime minister. However, the president usually has the power to remove them from office, so they can’t stray too far from the president’s wishes.

### Bureaucracies

Bureaucracies consist of agencies that generally implement government policy. They usually are a part of the executive branch of government. Their size has generally increased over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, partly due to government efforts to improve the health, security, and welfare of their populations.

German political philosopher Max Weber created the classic conception of bureaucracy as a well-organized, complex machine that is a “rational” way for a modern society to organize its business. He did not see bureaucracies as necessary evils, but as inevitable organizational responses to a changing society.

According to Weber, a bureaucracy has several basic characteristics:

- **Hierarchical authority structure** – The chain of command is hierarchical; the top bureaucrat has ultimate control, and authority flows from the top down.
- **Task specialization** – A clear division of labor means that every individual has a specialized job.
- **Extensive rules** – All people in the organization follow clearly written, well-established formal rules.
- **Clear goals** – All people in the organization strive toward a clearly defined set of goals.
- **The merit principle** – Merit-based hiring and promotion requires that no jobs be granted to friends or family unless they are the best qualified.
- **Impersonality** – Job performance is judged by productivity, or how much work the individual gets done.

Bureaucracies have acquired great significance in most contemporary societies and often represent an important source of stability for states.

### Bureaucracies in Democracies

Max Weber formulated these characteristics of bureaucracies with European democracies in mind. He was less than enthusiastic about their growing importance largely because of the alienation that he believed they created among workers. A modern issue has to do with the **discretionary power** given to bureaucrats – the power to make small decisions in implementing legislative and executive decisions. These small decisions arguably add up to significant policymaking influence, but democratic beliefs require decisions to be made by elected officials, not by appointed bureaucrats. Yet the bureaucracy is often an important source of stability in a democracy, since the elected officials may be swept out of office and replaced by new people with little political experience. The bureaucrats stay on through the changes in elected leadership positions, and as a result, they provide continuity in the policymaking process.

### Bureaucracies in Authoritarian Regimes

Bureaucracies in authoritarian regimes differ from those in democracies in that the head of government exercises almost complete control over their activities. For example, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin placed his own personal supporters (members of the communist party) in control of bureaucratic agencies, such as the secret police and the network of political commissars who served as watchdogs over the military. These bureaucracies not only managed the economy but directly controlled vast resources, including human labor, and the number of prisoners in labor camps under secret police administration increased dramatically under Stalin's rule. Executive power over the bureaucracy was questioned in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States, when presidents had a great deal of control over government jobs under the **patronage system**, in which political supporters received jobs in return for their assistance in getting the president elected. However, this system was reformed after President James Garfield was assassinated by a disgruntled supporter, and was gradually replaced by a merit-based system meant to curtail the president's patronage powers. As a

result, bureaucratic appointments came to abide by more democratic, less authoritarian rules.

Other examples of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes developed in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay during the 1960s and 1970s. In these Latin American countries a military regime formed a ruling coalition that included military officers and civilian bureaucrats, or **technocrats**. The coalition seized control of the government and determined which other groups were allowed to participate. The authoritarian leaders were seen as modernizers seeking to improve their countries' economic power in the world economy. They controlled the state partly in the name of efficiency – democratic input into the government was seen as an obstacle in the modernization process, and so the governments in these countries have often been oppressive.

### Common Characteristics of Bureaucracies

All bureaucracies, whether they are democratic or authoritarian, tend to have many features in common:

- **Non-elected positions** – Bureaucrats are appointed, usually salaried, and are not elected by the public.
- **Impersonal, efficient structures** – Bureaucracies tend to be impersonal because they are goal oriented and have little concern for personal feelings. Bureaucracies are meant to be efficient in accomplishing their goals.
- **Formal qualifications for jobs** – Although authoritarian leaders may appoint whoever they want to government positions, they must at least factor in formal qualifications (education, experience) in making their appointments. Otherwise, the bureaucracy cannot fulfill its goals of efficiency and competent administration. Most democracies have institutionalized formal qualifications as prerequisites for appointments to the bureaucracy.





**COMPARATIVE BUREAUCRACIES**

Bureaucracies consist of agencies that implement government policy, but their functions generally depend on whether they exist in a democracy or an authoritarian regime.

Bureaucracies in Democracies	Bureaucracies in Authoritarian Regimes
Bureaucrats usually have <b>discretionary power</b> , which allows them to make small decisions that influence policy.	The head of government exercises almost complete control over bureaucratic activities.
Bureaucrats are usually appointed, not elected, so they often serve as a source of stability when elected officials are voted out of office.	Bureaucrats are more likely to receive their jobs through <b>patronage</b> (loyalty or favors to the leaders) than merit, although patronage exists in democratic systems as well.

- **Hierarchical organization** – Most bureaucracies are hierarchical, top-down organizations in which higher officials give orders to lower officials. Everyone in the hierarchy has a boss, except for the person at the very top.
- **Red tape/inefficiency** – Despite their common goal of efficiency, large bureaucracies seem to stumble under their own weight. Once the bureaucracy reaches a certain size and complexity, the orderly flow of business appears to break down, so that one hand doesn't appear to know what the other is doing.

## Legislatures

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. Today more than 80% of the countries belong-

ing to the United Nations have legislatures, suggesting that a government that includes a representative popular component increases its legitimacy.

## Bicameralism

Legislatures may be **bicameral**, with two houses, or **unicameral**, with only one. The most usual form is bicameral, and may be traced to Britain's House of Lords and House of Commons. Despite the fact that one house is referred to as "upper" and the other as "lower," the upper house does not necessarily have more power than the lower house. In the United States, it is debatable which house is more powerful than the other, and in Britain and Russia, the upper house has very little power.

Why do most countries have a bicameral legislature? If the country practices federalism, where power is shared between a central and subunit governments, bicameralism allows for one house (usually the upper chamber) to represent regional governments and local interests. Seats in the other chamber are usually determined by population, and so the body (usually the lower house) serves as a direct democratic link to the voters. Bicameralism may also counterbalance disproportionate power in the hands of any region. For example, in the United States, populous states such as California, New York, and Texas have large numbers of representatives in the lower house, so the voices of citizens in those states are stronger than those in more sparsely populated states. However, that large-state advantage is counterbalanced in the Senate, where all states are equally represented by two senators each. Even in a unitary state where all power is centralized in one place, bicameralism may serve to disperse power by requiring both houses to approve legislation. Some scholars view the upper house as a "cooling off" mechanism to slow down impulsive actions of the "hotheaded" lower house that is directly elected by the people.

Memberships in the legislature may be determined in different ways, with many houses being elected directly by voters. However, others are selected by government officials, or their membership may be determined by political parties. The six core countries offer a variety of contrasting methods for determining legislative memberships.

## Functions of Legislatures

Assembly members formulate, debate, and vote on political policies. They often control the country's budget in terms of both fund-raising and spending. Some assemblies may appoint important officials in the executive and judicial branches, and some (such as the British House of Lords until 2009) have served as courts of appeal. They may also play a major role in **elite recruitment**, i.e., identifying future leaders of the government, and they may hold hearings regarding behaviors of public officials.

Regarding policymaking, legislatures in different countries hold varying degrees of power. For example, the U.S. Congress plays a very active role in the formulation and enactment of legislation. In contrast, the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China is primarily a rubber-stamp organization for policies made by the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

## Judiciaries

The judiciary's role in the political system varies considerably from one country to another. All states have some form of legal structure, and the role of the judiciary is rarely limited to routinely adjudicating civil and criminal cases. Courts in authoritarian systems generally have little or no independence, and their decisions are controlled by the chief executive. Court systems that decide the guilt or innocence of lawbreakers go back to the days of medieval England, but **constitutional courts** that serve to defend democratic principles of a country against infringement by both private citizens and the government are a much more recent phenomenon. The constitutional court is the highest judicial body that rules on the constitutionality of laws and other government actions.

In some states the judiciary is relatively independent of the political authorities in the executive and legislative branches. It may even have the authority to impose restrictions on what political leaders do. **Judicial review**, the mechanism that allows courts to review laws and executive actions for their constitutionality, was well established in the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it has developed over the past decades in other democracies. The growth of judicial power over

the past century has been spurred in part by the desire to protect human rights. Some have criticized the acceptance of the constitutional court in liberal democracies today, saying that the judges are not directly elected, so they do not represent the direct will of the people. Despite these developments, the judiciary is still a relatively weak branch in most of the six core countries of the Comparative Government and Politics course, but it takes a different form in each of them.

## Linkage Institutions

In many countries we may identify groups that connect the government to its citizens, such as political parties, interest groups, and print and electronic media. Appropriately, these groups are called **linkage institutions**. Their size and development depends partly on the size of the population, and partly on the scope of government activity. The larger the population and the more complex the government's policy-making activities, the more likely the country is to have well developed linkage institutions.

## Parties

The array of political parties operating in a particular country and the nature of the relationships among them is called a party system. Political parties perform many functions in democracies. First, they help bring different people and ideas together to establish the means by which the majority can rule. Second, they provide labels for candidates that help citizens decide how to vote. Third, they hold politicians accountable to the electorate and other political elites. Most democracies have multi-party systems, with the two-party system in the United States being a more unusual arrangement. Communist states have one-party systems that dominate the governments, but non-communist countries have also had one-party systems. An example is Mexico during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was dominated by PRI.

The **two-party system** is a rarity, occurring in only about 15 countries in the world today. The United States has had two major political parties – the Republicans and the Democrats – throughout most of its history. Although minor parties do exist, historically those two parties have had the only reasonable chance to win national elections. The most important single reason for the existence of a two-party system

is the plurality electoral system. Most European countries today have **multi-party systems**. They usually arise in countries with strong parliamentary systems, particularly those that use a proportional representation method for elections.

### Electoral Systems and Elections

**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, but they use many different arrangements. The United States, India, and Great Britain use a system called **first-past-the-post**, in which they divide their constituencies into **single-member districts** in which candidates compete for a single representative's seat. It is also called the **plurality system**, or the **winner-take-all system**, because the winner does not need a majority to win, but simply must get more votes than anyone else. In contrast, many countries use **proportional representation** that creates **multi-member districts** in which more than one legislative seat is contested in each district. Under proportional representation, voters cast their ballots for a party rather than for a candidate, and the percentage of votes a party receives determines how many seats the party will gain in the legislature. South Africa and Italy use a system based solely on proportional representation, and many countries, including Germany, Mexico, and Russia (until 2007), have used a **mixed system** that combines first-past-the-post and proportional representation. For example, in Mexico, 300 of the 500 members of the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house) are elected through the winner-take-all system from single-member districts, and 200 members are selected by proportional representation.

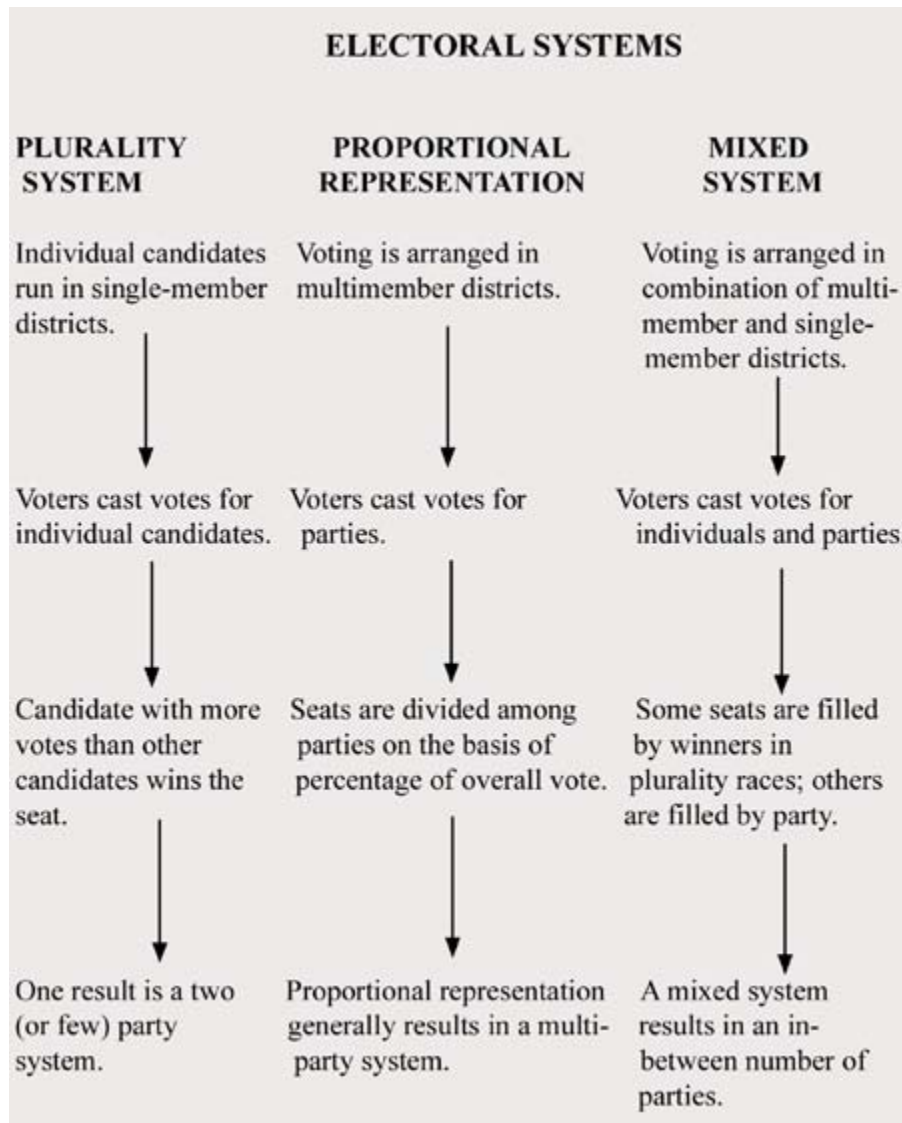
Plurality systems encourage large, broad-based parties because no matter how many people run in a district, the person with the largest number of votes wins. This encourages parties to become larger, spreading their "umbrellas" to embrace more voters. Parties without big groups of voters supporting them have little hope of winning, and often even have a hard time getting their candidates listed on the ballot. In contrast, the proportional representation electoral system encourages multiple parties because they have a good chance of getting some of their candidates elected. This system allows minor parties

to form coalitions to create a majority vote so that legislation can be passed.

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 to the position, and the prime minister is elected as a member of the legislature. The prime minister becomes head of government because (s)he is the leader of his or her party or coalition.

In general, these types of elections are found in democracies:

- **Election of public officials** – The number of elected officials varies widely, with thousands of officials elected in the United States, and far fewer in most other democracies. However, even in a unitary state, many local and regional officials are directly elected. Legislators are often directly elected, both on the regional and national levels. Now citizens of many European countries also elect representatives to the European Union's Parliament. Lower houses are more likely to be directly elected than upper houses, with a variety of techniques used for the latter.
- **Referendum** – Besides elections to choose public officials, many countries also have the option of allowing public votes on particular policy issues. A ballot called by the government on a policy issue is called a **referendum**. Such votes allow the public to make direct decisions about policy itself. Referenda exist only on the state and local level in the United States and Canada, but many other countries have used them nationally. The French and Russian presidents have the power to call referenda, and they have sometimes had important political consequences. For example, when a referendum proposed by French President Charles De Gaulle failed, he resigned his office in reaction to the snub by the voters. In Russia, the Constitution of 1993 was presented as a referendum for approval by the voters. In Britain, devolution of powers to the Scottish and Welsh parliaments was put before the voters in those



regions in the form of referenda. The European Constitution failed because it was voted down in referenda in the Netherlands and France. A variation of a referendum is a **plebiscite**, or a ballot to consult public opinion in a nonbinding way.

- **Initiative** – Whereas referenda are called by the government, an **initiative** is a vote on a policy that is initiated by the people. Although less common than the referendum, the initiative

must propose an issue for a nationwide vote and its organizers must collect a certain number of supporting signatures from the public. The government is then obliged to schedule a vote.

### Interest Groups

Interest groups are organizations of like-minded people whose main political goal is to influence and shape public policy. In liberal democracies, interest groups that are independent from the government are usually an important force in the maintenance of a strong civil society. Groups may be based on almost any type of common interest – occupation, labor, business interests, agriculture, community action, ethnic identities, or advocacy for a cause. Groups may be formally organized on a national level, or they may work almost exclusively on the local level. Interest groups often have nonpolitical goals, too. For example, a business group might organize to promote the growth of its products by directly advertising them to the public. Most interest groups have a political side, too, that focuses on influencing the decisions that governments make.

### *Differences between Parties and Interest Groups*

Parties and interest groups have a great deal in common because they represent political points of view of various people who want to influence policymaking. However, some significant differences still exist. Parties influence government primarily through the electoral process. Although they serve many purposes, parties always run candidates for public office. Interest groups often support candidates, but they do not run their own slate of candidates. Another important difference is that parties generate and support a broad spectrum of policies; interest groups support one or a few related policies. In a multi-party system, however, parties with a narrow base of interests tend to appear. For example, a number of “green parties” have appeared in many European party systems that have a particular interest in environmental issues.

### *The Strength of Interest Groups*

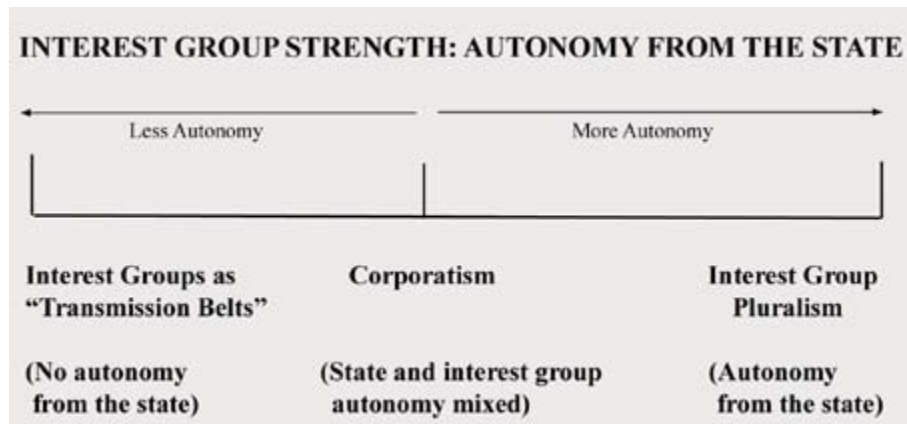
An important factor in assessing how important interest groups are in setting public policy is to determine the degree of autonomy they have

from the government. To exercise influence on public policy, groups need to be able to independently decide what their goals are and what methods they will use to achieve them.

In authoritarian states, groups have almost no independence. For example, in China, only government-endorsed groups may exist. Groups in communist China have often been agents to extend the party's influence beyond its own membership to shape the views of its citizens. The government cracks down on unrecognized groups, such as the religious organization, Falon Gong, so that they are either forced underground or out of existence. Political scientist Frank Wilson refers to interest groups in this type of system as “**transmission belts**” that convey to their members the views of the party elite.

At the other extreme are the interest groups in many western industrial democracies. These groups guard their independence by selecting their own leaders and raising their own funds. These autonomous groups compete with each other and with government for influence over state policies in a pattern called **interest group pluralism**. Working from outside the formal governmental structures, rival groups use a variety of tactics to pressure government to make policies that favor their interests.

In between these two extreme patterns is **corporatism**, where fewer groups compete than under pluralism, with usually one for each interest sector, such as labor, agriculture, and management. The group's



monopoly over its sector is officially approved by the state and sometimes protected by the state. There are two forms of corporatism: **state corporatism**, where the state determines which groups are brought in; and **societal corporatism** (or **neocorporatism**), where interest groups take the lead and dominate the state.

### Political Elites and Political Recruitment

All countries have **political elites**, or leaders who have a disproportionate share of policy-making power. In democracies, these people are selected by competitive elections, but they still may be readily identified as political elites. Every country must establish a method of elite **recruitment**, or ways to identify and select people for future leadership positions. Also, countries must be concerned about leadership **succession**, which is the process that determines the procedure for replacing leaders when they resign, die, or are no longer effective.

### TOPIC SIX: PUBLIC POLICY

All political systems set policy, whether by legislative vote, executive decision, judicial rulings, or a combination of the three. In many countries interest groups and political parties also play large roles in policymaking. Policy is generally directed toward addressing issues and solving problems. Many issues are similar in almost all countries, such as the need to improve or stabilize the economy or to provide for a common defense against internal and external threats. However, governments differ in the approaches they take to various issues, as well as the importance they place on solving particular problems.

Common policy issues include:

- **Economic performance** – Governments are often concerned with economic health/problems within their borders. Most also participate in international trade, so their economies are deeply affected by their imports and exports. The six core countries provide a variety of approaches that states may take, and they experience an assortment of consequences of both good and poor economic performances. Economic performance may be measured in any number of ways including 1) **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** – all the goods and services produced by

a country's economy in a given year, excluding income citizens and groups earn outside the country; 2) **Gross National Product (GNP)** – like GDP, but also includes income citizens earned outside the country; 3) **GNP per capita** – divides the GNP by the population of the country; 4) **Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)** – a figure like GNP, except that it takes into consideration what people can buy using their income in the local economy.

- **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: 1) the **Gini Index**, a mathematical formula that measures the amount of economic inequality in a society; and 2) the **Human Development Index (HDI)** that measures the well-being of a country's people by factoring in adult literacy, life expectancy, and educational enrollment, as well as GDP.
- **Civil liberties, political rights, and political freedoms** – Civil liberties refer to promotion of freedom, whereas civil rights usually refer to the promotion of equality. Although the two concepts overlap, the protection of political rights usually implies that the government should be proactive in promoting them. In addition to differences in how much proactive government support is advisable, liberal democracies also vary in terms of which civil liberties should be preserved. All liberal democracies uphold the rights of free speech and association, but they vary in terms of rights to assemble and/or criticize the government. The constitutions of many liberal democracies guarantee civil liberties and rights, and most communist, post-communist, developing, and less developed countries pay lip service to them. **Freedom House**, an organization that studies democracy around the world, ranks countries on a 1 to 7 freedom scale, with countries given a 1 being the most free

#### THE GINI INDEX FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES 2003-2012\*

Norway	.26
Canada	.33
United Kingdom	.36
Iran	.383
Russia	.401
United States	.41
China	.421
Mexico	.472
Nigeria	.488
South Africa	.631

\*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).

Source: UN Human Development Report, 2015

and those given a 7 being the least free. A number of post-communist countries have made significant strides in this area in recent years, but many others remain highly authoritarian.

- **Environment** – Many modern democratic states take a big interest in protecting the environment. European countries in particular have had a surge of interest expressed through the formation of "green" parties that focus on the environment.

Environmental groups have also promoted the development of a global civil society by operating across national borders. For example, environmental groups in the western democracies assist environmental groups in developing nations by providing advice and resources to address the issues facing their countries. National groups meet at international conferences and network via the internet to address environmental issues on a global level.



TABLE OF COMPARATIVE INDEXES

INDEX	CHINA	IRAN	MEXICO	NIGERIA	RUSSIA	BRITAIN
GDP (in trillions)	17,62	1.334	2,141	1.049	3.565	2.549
PPP per capita	12,900	17,100	17,900	6,000	24,800	39,500
HDI	.719	.749	.750	.504	.778	.892

Note: GDP and PPP per capita are converted and compared to U.S. dollars

Sources: International Monetary Fund (2012), CIA World Factbook, 2013, Human Development Report, United Nations, 2013

## COMPARATIVE INDEXES

A common way countries can be compared is with statistical data. Some of these measures are familiar ones, because they are often cited in news stories, journals, and textbooks. They are often presented as if they are an authoritative description of a country's economy and society. However, these statistics are estimates, compiled by statistical bureaus of each country's government, as well as by international agencies such as the United Nations and the World Bank. Here are some of the statistical indicators most commonly used by those who study comparative government:

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** is an economic indicator that compiles data on all forms of wealth produced within a country, including all goods (agricultural crops, for example, or industrial products such as cars) and services (such as banking, education, and even haircuts). GDP is calculated by each nation, but there are standards of accuracy established by the international organizations that use them.

**GDP per capita** is an economic measure that takes the total value of a country's GDP and divides it by the country's population. This can reveal more information than straightforward GDP numbers. Two countries with fairly similar GDPs, for example, might lead one to think they have similar standards of living. However, when measured against each other using GDP per capita, the country with a greater population will have a lower GDP than the other.

**Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) per capita** adjusts for relative costs of living in various countries and converts different economies into a single currency, usually the U.S. dollar. GDP can be deceiving, since the same amount of money will buy more in some countries than others. PPP per capita attempts to estimate the buying power of income in each country by comparing costs of basic commodities, such as housing and food, using prices in the U.S. as a benchmark.

**Human Development Index (HDI)** measures a country's standard of living. First developed by the United Nations in 1991. HDI combines population statistics of years of schooling, adult literacy, life expectancy, and income levels. The index scale is from 0 to 1; countries scoring over .8 are considered to have high levels of human development, those under .5 are low.

**IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

advanced democracies  
 authoritarian regime  
 bicameral, unicameral legislatures  
 bureaucratic authoritarian regimes  
 bureaucracy  
 cabinet coalition  
 causation  
 checks and balances  
 civil liberties  
 civil society  
 coinciding/crosscutting cleavages  
 command economies  
 common law/code law  
 communism  
 competitive elections  
 confederal system  
 conflictual political culture  
 consensual political culture  
 conservatism  
 constitutional courts  
 co-optation  
 corporatism  
 correlation  
 cosmopolitanism  
 coup d'état  
 democratic consolidation  
 democratic corporatism  
 direct democracy  
 economic liberalization  
 electoral systems  
 elites  
 empirical data  
 fascism  
 federal system  
 first-past-the-post (plurality, winner-take-all)  
 foreign direct investment

fragmentation  
 Freedom House ratings  
 Gini Index  
 globalization (economic and political)  
 GDP, GNP, GNP per capita  
 government  
 head of government  
 head of state  
 hypothesis  
 illiberal democracies  
 independent variable/dependent variable  
 indications of democratization  
 indirect democracy  
 informal politics  
 initiative  
 institutions, institutionalized  
 integration  
 interest group pluralism  
 judicial review  
 legitimacy (traditional, charismatic, rational-legal)  
 liberal democracies  
 liberalism as a political ideology  
 liberalism as an approach to economic and political change  
 linkage institutions  
 market economies  
 marketization  
 military rule  
 mixed economies  
 mixed electoral system  
 multi-member districts, single-member districts  
 multi-party system  
 nation  
 nationalism  
 normative questions  
 parliamentary system  
 party system  
 patronage  
 patron-client system



plebiscite  
 pluralism  
 political culture  
 political efficacy  
 political elites  
 political frameworks  
 political ideologies  
 political liberalization  
 political rights  
 political socialization  
 politicization of religion  
 presidential system  
 privatization  
 procedural democracy  
 proportional representation  
 purchase power parity (PPP)  
 radicalism  
 reactionary beliefs  
 recruitment of elites  
 referendum  
 reform  
 regime  
 revolution  
 revolution of rising expectations  
 rule of law  
 Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations"  
 semi-presidential system  
 separation of powers  
 social boundaries  
 social capital  
 social cleavages  
 social movements  
 socialism  
 societal corporatism (neo-corporatism)  
 sovereignty  
 state  
 state corporatism  
 subject activities

substantive democracy  
 succession  
 technocrats  
 "third wave" of democratization  
 third world  
 three-world approach  
 totalitarianism  
 "transmission belt"  
 transparency  
 two-party system  
 tyranny of the majority  
 unitary systems

### Questions for Concepts for Comparison

#### Multiple-choice Questions:

- Which of the following is a normative statement?
  - The presidents of Mexico and Russia are both directly elected by the people.
  - The head of government in Iran is the president.
  - The Chinese judicial system would serve the country better if it were more independent.
  - The European Union expanded rapidly during the first few years of the 21st century.
  - Iran's head of state is not directly elected by Iran's citizens.
- "Falling oil prices have had a serious negative impact on Russia's economy."

In the statement above, falling oil prices may be identified as a(n)

- independent variable
  - correlation
  - causation
  - dependent variable
  - hypothesis
- Which of the following can be considered to be a fundamental characteristic of a presidential system?
    - separation in the executive branch between a head of state and a head of government
    - selection of executive branch leaders by legislative representatives
    - a plurality electoral system
    - a consensual political culture
    - checks and balances

- If a country has a low level of social capital, a likely result is that it will be

- difficult to maintain economic health
- more inclined to develop a conflictual political culture
- difficult to establish reliable trade networks with other countries
- more inclined toward authoritarian government
- a parliamentary, rather than a presidential, system

- Countries that have democratic procedures in place but have significant restrictions on them are referred to as

- totalitarian regimes
- authoritarian regimes
- substantive democracies
- liberal democracies
- illiberal democracies

- Which of the following is the BEST description of the geographic distribution of power within states today?

- Most states are federal systems.
- Most states are confederal systems.
- Most states are unitary systems.
- States with federal systems are about equal in number to states with unitary systems.
- States with confederal systems are about equal in number to states with unitary systems.

7. An important difference between a head of state and a head of government is that a head of government
- A) symbolizes the people
  - B) deals with the everyday tasks of running the state
  - C) has no power to direct the activities of the legislature
  - D) does not have real policymaking power
  - E) is not directly elected by the people
8. In a federalist bicameral political system, the upper house of the legislature often provides
- A) representation to regional interests
  - B) a direct tie to popular interests
  - C) better representation to high population areas
  - D) representation for titled nobility and inherited wealth
  - E) support for the policies of the chief executive officer
9. If a state's boundaries do not closely follow the outline of a group bonded by a common political identity, the state is not consistent with
- A) its sovereignty
  - B) its core area
  - C) devolutionary forces
  - D) its size
  - E) the nation
10. Which of the following is MOST likely to serve as a centripetal force within a state?
- A) a tendency for the government to keep its power focused in a central geographical location
  - B) strong institutions that challenge the government
  - C) numerous separatist movements
  - D) minority ethnic groups that live in the periphery
  - E) overall strong sense of nationalism

11. Which of the following is the BEST definition of a regime?
- A) a group of people bound together by a common political identity
  - B) the rules that a state sets and follows in exerting its power
  - C) the organization that maintains a monopoly of violence over a territory
  - D) stable, long lasting organizations that help to turn political ideas into policy
  - E) the ability of a state to carry out actions or policies within their borders independently from outside or inside interference
12. A parliamentary system is usually characterized by
- A) a chief executive that is elected directly by the people
  - B) separation of powers among the branches of government
  - C) a prime minister that coexists with a president
  - D) fusion between the executive and legislative branches
  - E) a president with a disproportionate amount of power
13. A political system in which the state provides specific benefits or favors to a single person or small group in return for public support is called
- A) patron-clientelism
  - B) democratic corporatism
  - C) pluralism
  - D) traditionalism
  - E) totalitarianism
14. Common law differs from code law in that it is based more on
- A) written laws
  - B) tradition and past practices
  - C) the wishes of the chief executive
  - D) the wishes of the legislature
  - E) judicial review

15. Which of the following ideological groups would be MOST likely to advocate the elimination of inequality by the state taking over all resources to insure that true economic equality exists for the community as a whole?

- A) liberals
- B) socialists
- C) communists
- D) fascists
- E) Islamists

**THE GINI INDEX FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES  
2003-2012\***

Norway	.26
Canada	.33
United Kingdom	.36
Iran	.38
Russia	.40
United States	.41
China	.42
Mexico	.47
Nigeria	.49
South Africa	.63

16. According to the chart on the opposite page, of the ten countries listed, South Africa has the

- A) highest degree of income inequality
- B) lowest standard of living
- C) lowest PPP per capita
- D) lowest average level of education
- E) most authoritarian government

17. Which of the following changes is MOST likely to impact more than one area of life?

- A) social reform
- B) political reform
- C) a military coup d'état
- D) a revolution
- E) a economic depression

18. Which of the following democratic characteristics is an illiberal democracy MOST likely to display?

- A) guarantee of some civil liberties and rights
- B) rule of law
- C) regularly scheduled elections
- D) an open civil society
- E) neutrality of the judiciary

19. The anti-big government movements that began in the U.S. and western Europe in the 1980s promoted the 20<sup>th</sup> century trend toward

- A) democratization
- B) nationalization of industry
- C) fascism
- D) market economies

E) fragmentation

20. The most common type of political participation in most countries is

- A) voting in local elections
- B) protesting
- C) supporting candidates for office
- D) contacting government representatives concerning problems
- E) voting in national elections

21. Civil society is usually strongest in

- A) liberal democracies
- B) illiberal democracies
- C) authoritarian states
- D) less-developed countries
- E) Latin American countries

22. Which of the following countries clearly combines the roles of head of state and head of government into one political position?

- A) Great Britain
- B) The United States
- C) Japan
- D) France
- E) Germany

23. Which of the following is NOT a common reason why most countries have bicameral legislatures?

- A) to slow down impulsive legislation
- B) to disperse power
- C) to make the legislative process more efficient
- D) to represent regional governments in one house
- E) to counterbalance disproportionate power of one region

24. Which of the following is a likely outcome when a country has a plurality electoral system?

- A) a two (or few) party system
- B) low voter turnouts
- C) a parliamentary system
- D) separation of powers
- E) corporatism

(Questions 25 and 26 are based on the following chart):

Democracy Index 2014, by Regime Type

	No. of countries	% of countries	% of world population
Full democracies	24	14.4	12.5
Flawed democracies	52	31.1	35.5
Hybrid regimes	39	23.4	14.4
Authoritarian regimes	52	31.1	37.6

25. According to the chart, more than half the world's population lives in countries that are

- A) either full democracies or flawed democracies
- B) full democracies
- C) flawed democracies
- D) either hybrid regimes or authoritarian regimes
- E) authoritarian regimes

26. Which of the following core countries is not categorized by the Democracy Index 2014 as an authoritarian regime?

- A) China
- B) Mexico
- C) Iran
- D) Nigeria
- E) Russia

27. If a government's citizens and other nations recognize its authority to rule, then that government almost certainly has

- A) democratic consolidation
- B) a stable economy
- C) a high level of legitimacy
- D) integration
- E) strong linkage institutions

28. Which of the following is NOT a linkage institution?

- A) the British House of Commons
- B) American Broadcasting Corporation
- C) the Democratic Party in the United States
- D) an interest group that represents agriculture to the government
- E) *The New York Times*

29. Which of the following is the best definition of a political culture?

- A) the formal structure of the government and the relationship between central government and sub-governments
- B) the historical evolution of political traditions that shape the current government's policy actions
- C) the right to rule, as determined by the citizens of a country
- D) the collection of political beliefs, values, practices, and institutions that the government is based on
- E) the interaction between the government and the economy

30. Modern-day experiments with the transfer of some important powers from central governments to sub-governments encourage the process of

- (A) fragmentation
- (B) devolution
- (C) privatization
- (D) democratization
- (E) separatism

**Conceptual Analysis Question:** (30 minutes)

Bureaucracies are important institutions in both authoritarian and democratic regimes.

- (a) Describe two characteristics of bureaucracies that are common in both authoritarian and democratic regimes.
- (b) Describe one reason why bureaucracies are often an important source of strength in a democracy.
- (c) Explain two differences between the way that bureaucracies function in a democracy and an authoritarian regime.

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**PART TWO:**  
**COUNTRY CASES**

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## UNIT ONE: ADVANCED DEMOCRACIES

During the era of the Cold War, most political science scholars categorized countries of the world according to the “Three Worlds” approach. The First World included the United States and its allies; the Second World included the U.S.S.R. and its allies; and the Third World included all countries that could not be assigned to either camp. Today, with the Cold War over and the world encompassed by forces of globalization and fragmentation, we will use these three categories to more effectively compare political systems: advanced democracies, communist and post-communist countries, and developing/less-developed countries. In this section of the book, we will consider advanced democracies.

What do we mean by the term, “advanced democracies”? The term applies to countries that have a long history of democracy that has stabilized as the established form of government. We may consider these countries according to two dimensions: political type and level of economic development.

### POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

Politically, advanced democracies exemplify many facets of democracy, not just the characteristic of holding regular and fair elections. Other qualities of advanced democracies are:

- **Civil liberties**, such as freedom of belief, speech, and assembly
- **Rule of law** that provides for equal treatment of citizens and due process

- **Neutrality of the judiciary** and other checks on the abuse of power
- **Open civil society** that allows citizens to lead private lives and mass media to operate independently from government
- **Civilian control of the military** that restricts the likelihood of the military seizing control of the government

Advanced democracies generally have a high degree of legitimacy, partly because their systems have been in place for a long time. Another source of legitimacy is a large amount of **social capital**, or reciprocity and trust that exists among citizens, and between citizens and the state. All advanced democracies guarantee participation, competition, and liberty, but they differ in the methods that they use. For example, some have proportional representation electoral systems; others have plurality systems; and still others combine the two systems. Participation rates vary considerably, too. The uses of referenda and initiatives differ greatly across these countries; most advanced democracies use them, although the United States, Japan, Canada, and Germany do not allow such votes on the national level. In most of the countries, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that all eligible voters are automatically registered to vote. However, in the United States and France, the responsibility to register rests with the individual. In several Scandinavian countries, citizenship is not required for voting; anyone who is a permanent resident may vote. In Australia, Argentina, Uruguay, and Belgium, voting is mandatory.

### ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

In thinking about the values that form the political culture of advanced democracies, they may be described as reflecting **post-modernism**. **Modernism** is a set of values that comes along with industrialization. Values of modernism include secularism (an emphasis on non-religious aspects of life), rationalism (reasoning), materialism (valuing concrete objects and possessions), technology, bureaucracy, and an emphasis on freedom rather than collective equality. In other words,



POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN ADVANCED DEMOCRACIES		
PARLIAMENTARY	SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL	PRESIDENTIAL
Australia	Austria	The United States
Belgium	Finland	
Canada	France	
Denmark	Portugal	
Germany		
Israel		
Italy		
Japan		
Netherlands		
New Zealand		
Norway		
Spain		
Sweden		
Great Britain		

**Parliamentary, Semi-Presidential and Presidential Systems.** As the chart demonstrates, most advanced democracies have a parliamentary system. Although the United States is the only advanced democracy with a presidential system, other countries – such as Mexico and Nigeria – use it.

industrialization encouraged making money and gaining economic success. Advanced democracies, such as Britain and the United States, experienced this transformation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Others were later, but all advanced democracies have also experienced post-modernism, a set of values that emphasizes quality of life over concern for material gain. Some examples of post-modern values are the preservation of the environment and the promotion of health care and education. These values accompany the economic changes of **post-industrialism**, in which the majority of people are employed in the **service (tertiary) sector**, including such industries as technology, health care, business and legal services, finance, and education. These contrast to the most common type of job created earlier by industrialization, the **industrial (secondary) sector**, which employs people to create tangible goods, such as cars, clothing, or machinery. The **agricultural (primary) sector** of post modern societies is very small since mechanized farming (first developed during the industrial era) allows only a few farmers to produce enough food to feed all the workers in the industry and service sectors.

The sector percentages for some advanced democracies look something like this:

EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC SECTOR IN ADVANCED DEMOCRACIES			
	Services	Industry	Agriculture
United States	79.1%	20.3%	.7%
Canada	76%	19%	2%
Japan	70.9%	26.2%	2.9%
United Kingdom	83.5%	15.2%	1.3%
France	75.7%	21.3%	3%
Germany	73.8%	24.6%	1.6%

Source: *CIA Factbook*, 2006-2015 estimates, as percentage of employment by sector

We may also refer to advanced democracies as liberal democracies, which value individual freedoms in both economic and political realms. Many advanced democracies, but not all, established democratic political systems many years ago, and now operate under stable governments that have long followed democratic traditions.

Many countries in Europe are among the most stable democracies in the modern world. Although their political systems operate in a variety of ways, they share common characteristics that allow effective comparison of both similarities and differences. The citizens of each country are diverse, and they actively participate in political affairs. In the AP Comparative Government and Politics course, Britain represents this group. Britain has a well-organized, competitive party system and interest groups, as well as a representative form of government.

### INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NAFTA

One of the most important developments of the past few decades in Europe has been the slow but steady march toward integration of the continent's countries. After World War II the most obvious need was

to rebuild the infrastructures of countries devastated by the conflict. As the Cold War set in, the “Iron Curtain” separated western and eastern Europe based on economic and political differences, with countries in the east dominated by communism. Still, the urge to integrate, first economically and eventually politically, continued throughout the century. By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the European Union had emerged as a strong **supranational organization** that encourages cooperation among nations and promises to redefine the meaning of national sovereignty. Old nationalist impulses currently threaten to weaken or even dissolve the Union, but so far, the supranational organization has held together.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is an international organization that binds the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Created in 1995 mainly as a free trade area, NAFTA has much narrower integration goals than the EU, and its member-states still retain their sovereignty. Unlike the EU, no common currency has been adopted for North American countries, and no parliament or court systems have been set up.

In the first part of this section, the political system of Britain will be discussed, and students should note that the outline of concepts in Chapter One is followed throughout. The second part of this section is a brief review of the development and current status of international organizations, with a focus on the European Union, a major force that shapes policymaking in Britain and other European countries.

### IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONCEPTS

modernism  
 post-modernism  
 post-industrialism  
 sectors of the economy (agriculture, industry, service)  
 supranational organization



## CHAPTER TWO: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN BRITAIN

### GREAT BRITAIN OR LITTLE ENGLAND?

Britain clearly has had one of the most influential and powerful political systems in world history. It was the first country in Europe to develop a limited monarchy, which was achieved gradually so as to maintain stability. Modern democratic institutions and modern industrialization have their roots in English soil, and English influence spread all over the world during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries throughout a far-flung empire. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Britain was undoubtedly the most powerful country in the world, so truly the name “Great Britain” applies to its many accomplishments.

Yet many British subjects refer to their homeland affectionately as “Little England.” Perhaps there is something of the “David and Goliath” appeal – the little island that miraculously conquered the world. At any rate, the two names aptly define Britain’s dilemma in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a precursor in the development of modern democracy, industrialization, and imperialism, it is now a model in the art of growing old gracefully. Britain has lost much of its empire and has slipped out of the front rank of the economies of western Europe, and yet the country is still a major player in world politics.

Many other nations watch as Britain helps define the meaning of progress. However, it is not unilateral – onward ever, backward never. Instead, Britain is adjusting to its new reality as one European country among many, and yet the nation’s influence remains strong. Many believe that regeneration is in the making – politically, economically,

and socially – despite the challenges presented by the recent global economic recession.

## SOVEREIGNTY, AUTHORITY, AND POWER

Great Britain has the oldest democratic tradition of any country in the world, and as a result, has many sources of authority and power that provide stability and legitimacy. This section is divided into three parts:

- Social compacts and constitutionalism
- Historical evolution of national political traditions
- Political culture

### Social Compacts and Constitutionalism

The legitimacy of Britain’s government has developed gradually, so that today tradition is a primary source of stability. Like so many other advanced democracies in Europe, **traditional legitimacy** for many years was based on the belief that an hereditary ruling family had the right to rule. Although the tradition includes a monarchy, the limitation of the king’s power began early, until the power of Parliament gradually eclipsed that of the king by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Today most British citizens accept democracy as a basic component of their government. With the notable exception of Protestant/Catholic conflicts in Northern Ireland, most British citizens accept a church/state relationship in which the church does not challenge the authority of the government.

Ironically, the country that influenced the development of so many other modern democracies has never had a written constitution as such. Instead, the “constitution” has evolved over time, with important documents, common law, and customs combining to form what is often called the “**Constitution of the Crown.**”



### CHANGE OVER TIME: KEY FEATURES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTITUTIONALISM IN BRITAIN

By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Britain’s political system was clearly based on **rational-legal authority** – a system of well-established laws and procedures. Despite Britain’s beginnings centuries before in the traditional legitimacy of an hereditary monarch, the country had gradually developed a “Constitution of the Crown” through many important documents and legal principles, including these:

- **Magna Carta** – In 1215 King John signed this document, agreeing to consult nobles before he made important political decisions, especially those regarding taxes. Magna Carta, then, forms the basis of limited government that placed restrictions on the power of monarchs.
- **The Bill of Rights** – This document lists rights retained by Parliament, not by individual citizens. William and Mary signed this document in 1688, giving important policymaking power to Parliament, including the power of the purse.
- **Common law** – This legal system is based on local customs and precedent rather than formal legal codes. It developed gradually in Britain, and today is found in Great Britain, the United States, and other countries with a strong English influence. Common law allows the decisions that public officials and courts make to set precedents for later actions and decisions, eventually forming a comprehensive set of principles for governance.

### Historical Evolution of National Political Traditions

The British political system is influenced by many traditions from the country’s long history. Britain’s political culture has developed for the most part gradually and consensually, although not totally without conflict. However, many current political conflicts result from unresolved issues that rose from the dramatic changes brought by the Industrial Revolution in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The evolution of British political traditions may be analyzed in these historical categories:

- **The shaping of the monarchy** – The British monarchy has been in place for many centuries and has survived many transformations. Britain established a limited monarchy as early as the 13th century when nobles forced King John to sign the Magna Carta. During the English Civil War of the 1640s, the monarch, Charles I, was beheaded, but the monarchy was brought back later in the 17th century with powers seriously restricted by Parliament. Today, the monarchy has no decision-making power but plays an important symbolic role in British society.
- **The ascendancy of Parliament** – The English Civil War was a conflict between the supporters of the king, Charles I, and those of Parliament (the Roundheads). Parliament won, the king was executed, and the Roundhead leader, Oliver Cromwell, took over the country. However, the “Protectorate” that followed was short-lived, and the monarchy was restored when Parliament brought Charles II, the beheaded king’s son, to the throne. Succeeding kings did not always respect the power of Parliament, but the balance of power was decided by the Glorious Revolution of 1688. This bloodless revolution established the constitutional monarchy when William and Mary agreed to written restrictions on their power by signing the Bill of Rights. Parliament and its ministers continued to gain strength as the monarchy lost power through succeeding kings. The authority of the king’s prime minister was firmly established during the 18th century by Robert Walpole, minister to Kings George I and George II.
- **Challenges of the Industrial Revolution** – During the 18th century, two very important economic influences – colonial mercantilism and the Industrial Revolution – established England as a major economic power. The results radically changed traditional English society and its economic basis in the feudal relationship between lord and peasant. The brisk trade with colonies all over the world and the manufacture of goods created unprecedented wealth held by a new class of merchants and businessmen. The lives of peasants were transformed as they left rural areas, moved to cities, and went to work in factories.

Merchants, businessmen, and workers all demanded that the political system respond by including them in decision making. The 19th century reforms reflected their successes.

- **Colonialism** – During the era from about 1750 to 1914, the forces of nationalism and industrialization made it possible for European nations to build global empires that stretched across the continents. The famous statement, “The sun never sets on the British Empire”, describes the huge network of control that Britain was able to establish during the 19th century, making it among the most powerful empires in all of world history. Nationalism enabled the government to rally citizens’ support for overseas expansion. Industrialization allowed the British to produce goods to sell in foreign markets, and it encouraged them to look for raw materials not available at home. Claiming lands far away increased the country’s ability to create wealth and assert power. Industrialization also made communications and transportation so much more efficient that it became possible to link lands together across the globe under one imperial banner. Just as Britain’s democratization was gradual, so too was the erosion of the British Empire. It began with the loss of the American colonies in the late 18th century, although Britain actually gained in stature and wealth during the 19th century, with expansion in Asia and Africa.
- **Britain in the 20th and early 21st centuries** – At the dawn of the 20th century, Britain was the greatest imperialist nation in the world. By the early 21st century, its power had been diminished by two world wars, serious economic problems of the 1970s, and the rising power of the United States. After World War II, Britain developed a strong welfare state, which was curtailed during the 1980s by a wave of “**Thatcherism**”, a conservative, capitalist backlash led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In more recent years, Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair charted a course toward what he called “A Third Way”, but Blair’s political fortunes waned when he supported the U.S.-led war in Iraq. His successor, Gordon Brown, lost the election of 2010, when no party won a majority in Parliament, forcing a coalition government between the Conserva-

tives and Liberal Democrats. Modern Britain, then, is adjusting to a new level of world power, and is trying to find the right balance between the benefits of the welfare state and the trend toward greater reliance on a market economy.

### Political Culture

“This fortress built by Nature for herself,  
Against infection and the hand of war,  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands;  
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.”

*Richard II*  
William Shakespeare

This famous quote tells us a great deal about the political culture of Great Britain. It reflects a large amount of **nationalism**, or pride in being English. It also reflects **insularity**, or the feeling of separation from the continent of Europe. In modern times, insularity has caused Britain to have a cautious attitude toward participation in the European Union. When most of the EU members accepted the euro as a common currency in January 2002, Britain refused, and instead kept the English pound. However, despite Shakespeare’s joy in this “fortress” state, his country has been far from isolated and has spread its influence around the world.

Other characteristics of the political culture include:

- **Noblesse oblige and social class** – Although the influence of social class on political attitudes is not as strong as it has been in the past, a very important tradition in British politics is **noblesse oblige**, the duty of the upper classes to take responsibility for the welfare of the lower classes. The custom dates to feudal times when lords protected their serfs and land in return for labor. Today, *noblesse oblige* is reflected in the general willingness of the British to accept a “**welfare state**,” in-

cluding the National Health Service. The welfare state gained support in many other European nations in the period after World War II, with a common acceptance of the government’s responsibility to provide public benefits, such as education, health care, and transportation. However, during the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher’s government brought Britain’s acceptance of the welfare state into question by cutting social services significantly. *Noblesse oblige* also supported the building of Britain’s colonial empire as the country extended its paternalism to overseas possessions.

- **Multi-nationalism** – Although Britain has a relatively large amount of **cultural homogeneity**, its boundaries include England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, all of which have been different nations in the past, but are united under one government today. Although English is a common language, it is spoken with different dialects, and religious differences between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland remain



### BRITAIN: THE INFLUENCES OF GEOGRAPHY

England’s geographic features have shaped its political culture through the years. Important features include:

- **An island** – Britain is far enough away from mainland Europe for protection as long as it has had a good navy. Yet the island is close enough to the mainland to allow interaction.
- **Small size** – As a result, its resources are limited. This geographical fact shaped its efforts to colonize other lands and become an imperial power.
- **A short supply of fertile soil, short growing season** – Britain’s ability to feed its population is limited as a result.
- **Temperate climate, but cold, chilly, and rainy** – Britain’s population density is one of the highest in the world, but population distribution is uneven, with considerably fewer people living in northern areas.
- **No major geographical barriers** – No large mountains, deserts, or raging rivers hamper transportation/communication within the country.

a major source of conflict today. These national identities are still strong today, and they greatly impact the way that the political system functions.

The legitimacy of the British government is evidenced by the willingness of the English people to obey the law. Britain's police force is smaller than that of most other advanced democracies, and crimes tend to be based on individual violence, and not on strikes against the state, such as assassinations. Until relatively recently, the only notable exception was Northern Ireland, where many crimes have been carried out with the political objective of overturning an elected government. In more recent years, Britain has experienced terrorist acts as part of the larger wave of terrorism that has swept over many advanced democracies in the post-9/11 world.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

Political change in Britain has always been characterized by its gradual nature. **Gradualism** in turn established strong traditions. This process helps to explain the transition in policymaking power from the king to Parliament. That transition may be traced to the days shortly after William the Conqueror defeated Harold II at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. In order to ensure his claims to English lands, William (a Norman) gathered support from the nobility by promising to consult them before he taxed them. This arrangement led to a gradual acceptance of a "House of Lords", and as commercialism created towns and a new middle class, eventually the establishment of a "House of Commons". Both were created through evolution, not revolution. Of course, there are important "marker events" that demonstrate the growing power of Parliament – the signing of the Magna Carta, the English Civil War, and the Glorious Revolution – but the process was gradual and set strong traditions as it developed.

Despite the overall pattern of gradualism, Britain's political system has had to adjust to internal economic changes, as well as international crises. Some sources of change have been the Industrial Revolution, imperialistic aspirations, the two world wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the economic crises of the 1970s and 2008. These events have had significant consequences for Britain's political system.

## Adjusting to the Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution that began in England during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century created two new social classes that were not accommodated under the parliamentary system: a business middle class and laborers. At first, Parliament resisted including them, thinking that it might lead to disaster, perhaps even a revolution like the one that France had in 1789. However, the tradition of gradualism guided the decision to incorporate the new elements into the political system. The decision is a reflection of *noblesse oblige*, an extension of elite obligations to the rest of the population. Starting in 1832, the franchise gradually broadened:

### Extension of Voting Rights and Work and Welfare Reforms

- **Great Reform Act of 1832** – About 300,000 more men gained the right to vote, and the House of Commons gained more power in relation to the House of Lords.
- **Reform Act of 1867** – The electorate reached 3,000,000, as many working-class people were given the right to vote.
- **Representation of the People Act of 1884** – The electorate was further expanded so that the majority of the voters were working class.
- **Women's suffrage** – In 1918, another Representation of the People Act enfranchised all males and women over the age of 30 who already had the right to vote in local elections. 8,400,000 women were enfranchised. By 1928, all women 21 and over were allowed to vote.

The gradual inclusion of the people in the political process meant that Marxism did not take root as it did in many other European countries, where the middle and lower classes had few political rights.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, labor unions formed to protect workers' rights on the job. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some basic provisions were made for social services. For example, in 1870, mandatory elementary

education was put into law. From 1906 until 1914, laws were enacted providing for old age pensions.

### Political Effects of the Extension of Rights to the “Common Man”

The balance of power between the House of Commons and the House of Lords changed slowly but surely, as the new commercial elites became Members of Parliament. By 1911, the House of Lords was left with only one significant power – to delay legislation. The House of Commons was clearly the dominant legislative house by the early 20th century. By then political party membership was determined largely by class lines. The **Labour Party** was created in 1906 to represent the rights of the newly-enfranchised working man, and the Conservative Party drew most of its members from middle-class merchants and businessmen.

With the enfranchisement of the working class, a demand for welfare measures put pressure on the political system to change. Reform measures were passed by Parliament, including legislation for public education, housing, jobs, and medical care. These demands supported the creation of a new party – Labour. By the end of World War I, Labour had pushed the Liberals into third party status where they have remained ever since. Labour was never Marxist, but it combined militant trade unionism with intellectual social democracy to create a pragmatic, gradualist ideology that sought to level class differences in Britain. The **Trade Union Council** emerged as a coalition of trade unions that became a major force in British politics. The British labor movement has always been tough and especially resentful of being treated like inferiors. That militancy carries through to today, although it was softened in recent years by party leaders Neil Kinnock, John Smith, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, and Ed Miliband. Many speculate that the selection of left-leaning Jeremy Corbyn as the Labour Party leader in 2015 indicates a redirection of the party back to its roots.

### Reacting to the Loss of Its Status as an Imperialist Power

In contrast to World War I, when physical destruction was limited to the front lines around the trenches on the Continent, the nature of warfare during World War II brought much more widespread damage

to Britain. German bombing raids decimated roads, bridges, public buildings, and homes, and Britain had many war debts. Although the economic aid by the United States-sponsored Marshall Plan eventually aided economic recovery in Britain, an important price that the country paid was the loss of many of its colonies in Africa and Asia. In most cases, Britain helped the colonies to prepare for independence, and as a result retained economic and political bonds to them, which contributed to Britain’s eventual economic recovery. However, because other European powers were also letting their colonies go because they could no longer afford to maintain them, World War II marks the collapse of the old imperialist order and the beginning of the global hegemony of the United States and the Soviet Union. Britain, then, had to adjust to its new place in world politics, and since then, has had to balance its relationship with the United States against a history-ridden relationship with the European continent. This new reality has shaped British foreign policy through to the present.

### Collective Consensus

Britain joined the allied forces during World War II under the leadership of Winston Churchill. Churchill emphasized the importance of putting class conflicts aside for the duration of the war. Although he gained the Prime Minister’s post as leader of the Conservative Party, he headed an all-party coalition government with ministers from both major parties. The primary objective was to win the war. After the war was over, the spirit of **collective consensus** continued until well into the 1960s, with both Labour and Conservative Parties supporting the development of a modern welfare system. Before the war was over, both parties accepted the **Beveridge Report**, which provided for a social insurance program that made all citizens eligible for health, unemployment, pension, and other benefits. One goal of the Beveridge Report was to guarantee a subsistence income to every British citizen. In 1948, the **National Health Service** was created under the leadership of the Labour Party. Even when Conservatives regained control in 1950, the reforms were not repealed. Although the electorate was divided largely by social class, with 70% of working class voting Labour and even larger percentages of middle class voting Conservative, both parties shared a broad consensus on the necessity of the welfare state. As a result, the foundations were laid for a **mixed economy**,

with the government directing the economy and nationalizing major industries without giving up basic principles of capitalism, such as private ownership of property.

### Challenges to the Collective Consensus since 1970

During the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, Britain has experienced considerable economic and political turmoil. The era began with a serious decline in the economy, followed by a growing divide between the Labour and Conservative Parties. Labour took a sharp turn to the left, endorsing a socialist economy and serving as a mouthpiece for labor union demands. The Conservatives answered with a sharp turn to the right, advocating denationalization of industries and support for a pure market economy. During the 1990s, both parties moderated their stances, and the economy showed some signs of recovery.

### Economic Crises of the 1970s

The collective consensus began to break apart with social and economic problems beginning in the late 1960s. Britain's economic problems included declining industrial production and international influence, which were exaggerated by the loss of colonies and the shrinking of the old empire. The impact of **OPEC** (Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries) was devastating. The quadrupling of oil prices and the embargo by oil-producing countries caused recession, high unemployment rates, a drop in the GNP, and inflation.

The economic problems led labor unions to demand higher wages, and crippling strikes – such as the coal strike of 1972-73 – plagued the nation. The Labour Party lost membership, and many voters turned to the Liberals, the Conservatives, or the various nationalist parties. Many middle-class voters reacted against Labour, and the Conservatives selected Margaret Thatcher as their leader. Her very conservative stance on political and economic issues was appealing enough to sweep the Conservatives to power in 1979.

### Thatcherism

**Margaret Thatcher** blamed the weakened economy on the socialist policies set in place by the government after World War II. Her poli-

cies were further influenced by a distinct turn toward leftist politics by the Labour Party that gave a great deal of power to labor unions. In response, she privatized business and industry, cut back on social welfare programs, strengthened national defense, got tough with labor unions, and returned to market force controls on the economy. Her policies reflect the influence of **neoliberalism**, a term that describes the revival of classic liberal values (p. 33) that support low levels of government regulation, taxation, and social expenditures as well as the protection of individual property rights. She was prime minister for eleven years. Her supporters believed her to be the capable and firm “**Iron Lady**”, but her critics felt that her policies made economic problems worse and that her personality further divided the country. Thatcher resigned from office in 1990 when other Conservative Party leaders challenged her authority. Despite the controversial nature of her leadership, her policies redirected Britain's path to the welfare state, and although her successors moderated her stances, privatization and downsizing of government have remained important trends in policymaking.

### The Third Way and the “Big Society”

After the jolts of the economic crisis of the 1970s and Margaret Thatcher's firm redirection of the political system to the right, moderation again became characteristic of political change in Britain. Thatcher's hand-picked successor, **John Major**, at first followed her policies, but later abolished the poll tax, reconciled with the European Union, and slowed social cutbacks and privatization. The Conservative Party retained the majority in the 1993 parliamentary elections, but only by a very slim margin. Then, in 1997, Labour's gradual return to the center was rewarded with the election of **Tony Blair**, who promised to create a “New Labour” Party and rule in a “**third way**” – a centrist alternative to the old Labour Party on the left and the Conservative Party on the right. Tony Blair's popularity slipped sharply after he supported the United States in the Iraq War in 2003. By sending troops and publicly committing his support to U.S. President George Bush, he not only alienated other European leaders, but much of the British public as well. In 2007, Blair stepped down from his post to be replaced by long-time cabinet member **Gordon Brown**, who despite his attempts to step out from the shadow of his controversial predecessor, had a



great deal of trouble convincing the British public to remain loyal to the Labour Party. The economic recession of 2008 hit Britain particularly hard, making it even more difficult for Brown to maintain control of the government.

By the election of 2010, the “third way” was in trouble, and challenges to Labour control of government were abundant. Although Labour went down to defeat, the Conservatives could not muster a majority, and so a coalition government was formed between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. The new prime minister, **David Cameron**, initiated his vision of a “**Big Society**,” one that is energized by grass-roots volunteers and private organizations, no longer harnessed by “big government.” In 2015, the Conservative Party regained its majority in the House of Commons, as both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democratic Party lost a significant number of seats.

### CITIZENS, SOCIETY, AND THE STATE

In many ways, Britain is a homogeneous culture. English is spoken by virtually all British citizens, and only about 13% of the United Kingdom’s 64 million people are ethnic minorities. For much of British history, the major **social cleavages** that shape the way the political system worked were based on multi-national identities, social class distinctions, and the Protestant/Catholic split in Northern Ireland. In recent years a major cleavage has developed based on race and ethnicity, with tensions regarding Muslim minorities increasing, as evidenced in race riots in May 2001 in the northern town of Oldham, and similar disturbances in Burnley, Leeds, and Bradford a few weeks later. In more recent years, terrorist activities have deepened the divisions, a situation that many advanced democracies of Europe and North America now face.

#### Multi-National Identities

The “United Kingdom” evolved from four different nations: England, Wales, Scotland, and part of Ireland. England consists of the southern 2/3 of the island, and until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, did not rule any of the other lands. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, England ruled the entire island, and became known as “Great Britain.” In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Northern Ireland

was added, creating the “United Kingdom.” These old kingdoms still have strong national identities that greatly impact the British political system.

- **England** – The largest region of Great Britain is England, which also contains the majority of the population. Throughout most of the history of the British Isles, the English have dominated other nationalities, and they still have a disproportionate share of political power. Today the challenge is to integrate the nationalities into the country as a whole, but at the same time allow them to keep their old identities.
- **Wales** – west of England – became subject to the English king in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and has remained so till the present. Modern Welsh pride is reflected in the flag – the **Plaid Cymru** – and in the fact that the language is still alive and currently being taught in some Welsh schools. Even though Wales accepted English authority long ago, some resentment remains, as well as some feelings of being exploited by their richer neighbors.
- **Scotland** – For many years the Scots resisted British rule, and existed as a separate country until the early 1600s. Ironically, Scotland was not joined to England through conquest, but through intermarriage of the royalty. When Queen Elizabeth I died without an heir in 1603, the English throne went to her nephew James I, who also happened to be king of Scotland. A century later both countries agreed to a single Parliament in London. However, Scots still have a strong national identity, and tend to think of themselves as being very different from the English. The Scots too have their own national flag, and the Scottish Parliament has recently been revived. In 2015, a vote for Scottish Independence was narrowly defeated.
- **Northern Ireland** – England and Ireland have a long history of arguing about religion. After Oliver Cromwell won the English Civil War in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, he tried to impose Protestantism on staunchly Catholic Ireland to no avail. English claims to Irish lands were settled shortly after World War I ended, when Ireland was granted **home rule**, with the ex-

ception of its northeast corner, where Protestants outnumbered Catholics by about 60% to 40%. Home rule came largely because of pressure from the **Irish Republican Army (the IRA)**, who used guerrilla warfare tactics to convince the British to allow Irish independence. Finally, in 1949, the bulk of Ireland became a totally independent country, and Northern Ireland has remained under British rule, but not without a great deal of conflict between Protestants and Catholics.

### Social Class Distinctions

Distinctions between rich and poor have always been important in Britain, with the most important distinction today being between working and middle-class people. The two classes are not easily divided by income, but psychologically and subjectively, the gulf between them is still wide. German sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf explains the divide in terms of **solidarity**, particularly among the working class. The point



**The British Settlement with Ireland, 1922.** In December 1922, after intense guerilla warfare in Ireland, the Irish parliament sitting in Dublin proclaimed the existence of the Irish Free State, a self-governing dominion which included all of Ireland except the six northern counties of Ulster, where Protestants outnumbered Catholics by about 60% to 40%. These counties formed Northern Ireland, which still sends representatives to the British Parliament.

is that keeping the old job and living in the old neighborhood – the sense of family and friends – is more important than individual success.

British social classes have traditionally been reinforced by the education system. “**Public schools**” were originally intended to train boys for “public life” in the military, civil service, or politics. They are expensive, and they have educated young people to continue after their parents as members of the ruling elite. A large number of Britain’s elite have gone to “public” boarding schools such as Eton, Harrow, Rugby, St. Paul’s, and Winchester. Middle-class students commonly attend private grammar schools, where students wear uniforms but do not reside. The percentage of British seventeen-year-olds that are still in school is lower than in many other industrialized democracies. However, the leaving age for compulsory education was raised from 16 to 18 by the Education and Skills Act of 2008. The change took effect in 2013 for 16-year-olds and 2015 for 17-year-olds.

The most important portal to the elite classes is through Oxford and Cambridge Universities, or **Oxbridge**. Nearly half of all Conservative Members of Parliament went to Oxbridge, as have about one quarter of all Labour MPs. Percentages in cabinet positions are even higher, and prime ministers almost always graduate from one or the other school. Since World War II, more scholarships have been available to Oxbridge, so that more working and middle-class youths may attend the elite schools. Also, the number of other universities has grown, so that higher education is more widespread than before. However, this trend was recently challenged, since Parliament raised the maximum level of tuition to English universities from \$5,400 to \$14,500 in 2012, making higher education less accessible to many students.

### Ethnic Minorities

According to the 2011 census, about 13% of the British population is of non-European origins, with most coming from countries that were formerly British colonies. However, most members of the minority ethnic population grew rapidly, increasing from about 7% in the 2001 census. The main groups are:

- black/African/Caribbean/black British 3%
- Asian/Asian British: Indian 2.3%,
- Asian/Asian British: Pakistani 1.9%,
- mixed 2%,
- other 3.7%

Because of tight immigration restrictions in the past, most ethnic minorities are young, with about half of the population under the age of 25. Percentages of minorities have grown despite the restrictions that were placed on further immigration during the Thatcher administration of the 1980s. The Labour government kept the restrictions in place, and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government pledged to halve net immigration, which was about 200,000 people in 2010. Since it cannot curb arrivals from the European Union, that almost certainly means a cutback on non-Europeans.

The British have often been accused of adjusting poorly to their ethnic population. Reports abound of unequal treatment by the police and physical and verbal harassment by citizens. The May 2001 race riots in several cities increased tensions, and new fears of strife have been stoked by post 9/11 world politics. Widespread rioting in the summer of 2011 was triggered when a young black man was killed by the police, leading to accusations of racial bias. Today there is some evidence that whites are leaving London to settle in surrounding suburban areas, resulting in a higher percentage of minority population living in London. Despite this segregation, the mixed-race population appears to be increasing, with the census of 2001 offering for the first time in British history a category for mixed-race people.

#### Muslim Minorities

Terrorist attacks, successful and attempted, have occurred in Britain over the past few years, with a major attack in 2005, schemes foiled by the government in the summer of 2006, and car-bombings in 2007. Other advanced democracies have suffered attacks and plots as well. Of course, the United States was attacked on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and the Madrid bombings in 2004 were Europe's most lethal terrorist

incidents. In Canada 17 people were arrested in June 2007 on suspicion of scheming to blow up buildings.

In recent years, concern about radicalized British Muslims has increased as some have joined extremist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The British government estimates that 500 or more British men and women have gone to fight for militant groups in Iraq and Syria. The 2014 beheading of American journalist James Foley drew renewed attention to the dangers posed by radicalized young British Muslims, and the government turned to anti-extremist imams for help to prevent their followers from adopting radical views.

Although many European countries face these problems, Britain's risk for home-grown terrorist attacks may be greater than many other countries. Several problems for Britain are:

- **Distinct minority/majority cleavages** – Muslims have an identity of being a minority distinct from a well-established majority, such as the English in Britain, the French in France, and the Germans in Germany. In contrast, many people in the United States are immigrants, and the “majority” ethnicity of white Americans in many U.S. cities has already become a minority. With so many different ethnic and racial identities, the majority identity in the United States is not as clear-cut as it is in most European countries.
- **Social class differences of Muslims** – In the United States, many Muslims tend to be relatively well-off, while many British Muslims are disaffected and unemployed. Many British Muslims are the children of illiterate workers who entered as cheap industrial labor, and their childhood experiences have not endeared them to British culture.
- **Pakistani Muslims** – Many Muslims in the rest of Europe came from Turkey and Africa, but the largest group of British Muslims comes from Pakistan. Since Osama bin Laden and his companions were found in Pakistan, some scholars think that a higher percentage of British Muslims are linked to al-Qaeda than are Muslims in other countries.

- **Lack of integration of minorities** – Polls suggest that alienation of minorities in Britain may be higher than it is in other countries because the national culture has not absorbed the groups into mainstream culture. This problem is apparent in France as well, where girls are not permitted to wear head scarves at school. In Britain they may attend classes in full *hijab*, but many minorities still feel as if they are treated as second-class citizens.

#### Immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Middle East

Another major change in British demographics is an influx of about one million immigrants from the eight central and eastern European countries that joined the European Union in 2004. Poles, who have made up about two-thirds of the newcomers, are now the largest group of foreign nationals in Britain, up from 13<sup>th</sup> place in 2004. The main draw has been better job opportunities in Britain than in eastern Europe, but the recession in 2008 led many newcomers to return home since the British job market withered. However, since the job market has been even worse in eastern Europe, at least some of the new workers stayed in Britain. Many are migrant workers who pick crops in rural areas or fill other low-paying jobs that British workers shun, although with unemployment rates going up, the potential for labor conflict is real. By 2012, more than 130,000 immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria were living in Britain, and the numbers of immigrants coming from these two countries is continuing to grow.

In 2015, as the civil war in Syria intensified, refugees poured out of the country and into Europe. The exodus created a crisis in Europe, and the British reaction was criticized by many. Britain did not accept quotas set by the European Union, but instead came up with a separate policy. In September 2015, the prime minister announced the government's decision to accept 20,000 refugees from camps neighboring Syria, but none who have already travelled to Europe, sparking intense debate about the appropriate response to the refugee crisis. According to Prime Minister Cameron, the refugee crisis "complicates" the issue of whether or not Britain will remain in the European Union.

#### Political Beliefs and Values

In the early 1960s political scientists Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba wrote that the "**civic culture**" (political culture) in Britain was characterized by trust, deference to authority and competence, pragmatism, and harmony. The economic crisis of the 1970s and the continuing conflicts regarding Northern Ireland challenged this view of citizenship in Britain, as have fears of terrorism in recent years. However, the overall characteristics seem to still be in place today.

British citizens reflect what Almond and Verba saw as good qualities for democratic participation: high percentages of people that vote in elections, acceptance of authority, tolerance for different points of view, and acceptance of the rules of the game. However, social and economic changes during the 1970s altered these characteristics so that today British citizens are less supportive of the collective consensus and more inclined to values associated with a free market economy. Many observers believe that the "**politics of protest**" – or the tendency to disagree openly and sometimes violently with the government – have become increasingly acceptable. The rioting in 2011 confirmed this analysis, although the reasons for the riots are far from clear.

Some manifestations of changing political beliefs and values include:

- **Decreasing support for labor unions** – British labor unions have strong roots in the Industrial Revolution, and class solidarity supports union membership. However, when unions staged crippling strikes during the 1970s, public opinion turned against them, as people began to view unions as "bullies" to both the government and the general population. Margaret Thatcher's tough stance against the unions intensified strife between unions and the Conservative government.
- **Increased violence regarding Northern Ireland** – The issues surrounding British claims to Northern Ireland intensified during the early 1970s after British troops killed thirteen Catholics in a "bloody Sunday" incident in January 1972. The IRA

and Protestant paramilitaries stepped up their campaigns of violence. Although in recent years the groups have consented to negotiate with the government, the threat of violent eruptions remains strong today.

- **Thatcherism** – The Conservative Party controlled British government from 1979 until 1997. Although later modified by Prime Minister John Major, Margaret Thatcher’s “revolution” toward a free market economy certainly affected political attitudes. She rejected collectivism and its emphasis on the redistribution of resources from rich to poor and government responsibility for full employment. Thatcherism fostered entrepreneurial values of individualism and competition over the solidarity of social classes and the tradition of *noblesse oblige*.
- **New Labour** – Despite the radical changes of the 1970s and 1980s, Britain has not deserted its traditional political culture. **Tony Blair** led a Labour Party that loosened its ties to labor unions, and a new “Good Friday” Agreement on Northern Ireland was reached in 1998. Thatcherism has been incorporated into political attitudes, but in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, both parties are more inclined toward a middle path, or “**third way**.” The coalition government formed in 2010, at first criticized as unworkable, also encouraged compromise, although significant differences of opinion existed among cabinet members. The election of 2015 left the Labour Party much weakened, and the choice of left-leaning Jeremy Corbyn as the party leader may represent a move away from the “third way.”
- **Protests over the Iraq War** – Not only did ordinary citizens vocally protest Britain’s involvement in the Iraq War, many political leaders openly criticized it as well. In a political system where party loyalty is valued above all, many Labour MPs (Members of Parliament) withdrew their support for Blair’s policy in Iraq. Their resistance to the party leadership extended to the cabinet, with several party leaders resigning their posts, despite the strong tradition of collective consensus. The ill will spread into domestic affairs as well, so that Blair had little choice but to resign from office in June 2007.

## Voting Behavior

As in most other European countries, a relatively high percentage of qualified British voters go to the polls. Although there was a notable decline in recent elections (66% voted in 2015) more than 70% of eligible citizens normally vote in parliamentary elections. Today voters have less party loyalty than they once did, but voting behavior is still clearly tied to social class and region.

- **Social class** – Until World War II, voting in Britain largely followed class lines. The working class supported the Labour Party, and the middle class voted Conservative. However, today the lines of distinction are blurred, partly because the society and the parties themselves have changed. For example, some middle-class people who grew up in working-class homes still vote the way their parents did. On the other hand, many in the working classes have been attracted to the Conservative platform to cut taxes and keep immigrants out. In recent years, both parties have come back to the center from the extreme views of the 1970s and 1980s, as reflected in Labour leader Tony Blair’s program to provide a “third way,” or a centrist alternative. However, the Labour victories of 1997, 2001 and 2005 showed that the party was strongest among people who feel disadvantaged: the Scots, the Welsh, and the poor. In the post-Blair years, the distinctions between Labour and Conservative Parties have continued to blur, leaving room for other parties, particularly the Liberal Democrats, to compete for votes in all social classes.
- **Regional factors** – The Labour Party usually does well in urban and industrial areas and in Scotland and Wales. However, in 2015, Labour lost seats to the Scottish National Party, with SNP picking up 56 of the 59 seats in Scotland. The industrial cities of the north – around Liverpool, Manchester, and Newcastle, and in Yorkshire – almost always support the Labour candidates, as do people that vote in central London. The areas where Conservatives usually win are mostly in England, especially in rural and suburban areas. These voting patterns

are tied to social class, but they also reflect urban vs. rural values.

## POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Strong political traditions and institutions that have been in place for hundreds of years guide Britain's stable democratic regime. The monarch still rules as head of state, but the prime minister and the cabinet form the policymaking center. The system is **parliamentary**, which means that the prime minister and cabinet ministers are actually members of the legislature. In this section, we will explore the parts of the British political system and the ways that they interact to make policy.

### Linkage Institutions

Linkage institutions play a very important role in British government and politics. Political parties, interest groups, and print and electronic media have long connected the government to British citizens. The British government's policymaking activities are complex, and its linkage institutions are well developed.

### Political Parties

Britain's political parties began to form in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and their organization and functions have shaped the development of many other party systems (including the United States) through the years. At first they were simply **caucuses**, or meetings of people from the same area or of like mind. Only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century did a two-party system emerge with roots in the electorate. The labels "**Whig**" and "**Tory**" first appeared under Charles II, with the Tories supporting the king and the Whigs opposing. Both were derisive names: Whigs were Scottish bandits; Tories, Irish bandits. The Whigs eventually became the Liberal Party and the Tories (still a nickname today) the Conservatives. The Labour Party emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in response to new voter demands created by the Industrial Revolution.

Today the two major political parties are **Labour** and **Conservative**, but several other significant parties are represented in Parliament. Historically, Britain has had strong third parties that significantly affect

election results. For example, in the 1980s, the **Liberal Democratic Alliance Party** garnered as much as 26% of the popular vote, but because of Britain's single-member plurality election system (one member per district who only has to get more votes than anyone else, not a majority), it never claimed more than 62 seats in the House of Commons. The House of Commons is dominated by the two largest parties, but three or four-way elections for MPs are usual. The 2010 parliamentary elections resulted in an unusual, but not unprecedented, **hung parliament**, in which no party gained a majority and a coalition government formed. The Conservative Party recaptured the majority in the 2015 elections, winning 330 seats.

### *The Labour Party*

The largest party on the left is the Labour Party. It controlled the British government between 1997, when **Tony Blair** became prime minister, and 2010, when Labour ceded power to a coalition government. The party began in 1906 as an alliance of trade unions and socialist groups that were strengthened by the expansion of rights for the working class during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Traditionally, labor unions have provided most party funds, although Blair loosened the union ties and sought to broaden the base of party membership.

The early history of the party was defined partially by the controversial "**Clause 4**" that called for nationalization of the "**commanding heights**" of British industry. The growing moderation of the party was reflected by the removal of the clause from the Labour Party Constitution in the early 1990s. The shift in policies toward the center became apparent shortly after **Neil Kinnock** became the party leader in the early 1980s, and has continued under leaders **John Smith** (1993-1994), **Tony Blair** (1994-2007), **Gordon Brown** (2007-2010), and **Ed Miliband** (2010 to 2015). After Labour's serious losses in 2015, Miliband resigned, and many predict that the new leader, Jeremy Corbyn, may reverse the party's move toward moderation.

Labour's 1992 loss in an election that they were widely predicted to win almost certainly was a turning point in its development. Its failure to capture the majority led to the resignation of Neil Kinnock as party leader, and the appointment of John Smith, a moderate Scotsman

who the party hoped would solidify support from Scottish nationalist groups. Smith died suddenly in 1994, and was replaced by Tony Blair, a young leader who did not come from union ranks. Instead, he was an Oxford educated barrister-turned-politician who hoped to bring more intellectuals and middle-class people into the party. Labour won the elections of 1997, 2001, and 2005, and tried to redefine itself as a moderate party with support from many different types of voters. Even though the party won the 2005 election, its margin of victory was much smaller than before, contributing to Blair's resignation as party leader in 2007.

Labour's prospects for the future continued to fall after Britons in the local elections across England in June 2009 gave the party only 23% of the vote, its worst showing ever and well behind the opposition Conservatives' 38%. In the elections for the European Parliament on the same day, Labour won less than 16% of the vote. Labour lost the election of 2010, and Gordon Brown resigned, leaving the party leadership to **Ed Miliband**, whose political preferences were left of center. As the coalition government formed between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, the Labour Party was left to struggle to regain voter support. The party's losses in the election of 2015 reinforced its waning influence.

### *The Conservative Party*

The Conservative Party dominated British politics between World War II and 1997, holding the majority in Parliament for all but sixteen years during that period. The Conservative Party is the main party on the right, but it has prospered partly because it traditionally has been a pragmatic, rather than an ideological party. Although the party supported a market-controlled economy, privatization, and fewer social welfare programs during the 1980s under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, the Conservatives moved back toward the center under Prime Minister John Major (1990-1997).

The party is characterized by *noblesse oblige*, and its power is centered in London. The organization of the party is usually viewed as elitist, with the MPs choosing the party leadership. No formal rules for choosing their leader existed until recently, but now the leadership

must submit to annual leadership elections. This new process proved to be problematic for Margaret Thatcher in 1990, when she was challenged strongly in the election and virtually forced to resign.

After Labour seized control of the government in 1997, the Conservative Party was weakened by deep divisions between two groups:

- **The traditional wing (one-nation Tories)** values *noblesse oblige* and wants the country ruled by an elite that takes everybody's interests into account before making decisions. This wing generally supports Britain's membership in the European Union.
- **The Thatcherite wing** of strict conservatives wants to roll back government controls and move to a full free market. The members of this wing are often referred to as **Euroskeptics** because they see the EU's move toward European integration as a threat to British sovereignty.

The current party leader and prime minister is **David Cameron**, who won the position in December 2005. Cameron's youth and debating ability, as well as Tony Blair's vulnerability as Labour leader, revived the Conservative Party's hope of recapturing the majority. During 2006 and early 2007 the party established a lead in opinion polls, but with Blair's resignation and the rise of **Gordon Brown** to the prime minister's post, Labour regained its lead in major polls during the summer of 2007. However, with Brown's growing unpopularity during 2008, the Conservatives again gained support and were well positioned for the election in 2010. Cameron has generally been more of a "one-nation" Tory, and at first he distanced himself from the Thatcherite wing, but by 2009 his words were more conciliatory as he hoped to unite his party for victory in the election of 2010. When his party won a plurality, but not a majority of seats, Cameron became prime minister of a coalition government formed with the Liberal Democrats, with **Nick Clegg** – the Liberal Democrat leader – serving as deputy prime minister. The party regained its majority in 2015, extending Cameron's leadership for another few years.



**COMPARISON:  
LABOUR AND CONSERVATIVE  
PARTIES IN BRITAIN**

**LABOUR PARTY**  
Main party on the left; began as an alliance of trade unions and socialist groups; have moved toward the center since the 1990s; was the majority party from 1997 until 2010; generally more supportive of EU membership

**CONSERVATIVE PARTY**  
Main party on the right; split between the traditional wing (*noblesse oblige*) and “Thatcherites” who want to roll back government controls and move to a full free market; tend to see EU as threat to British sovereignty

### *The Liberal Democrats*

Two parties – the Liberals and the Social Democrats – formed an alliance in the 1983 and 1987 elections, and formally merged in 1989, establishing the Liberal Democratic Party. The goal was to establish a strong party in the middle as a compromise to the politics of the two major parties: Thatcher’s extremely conservative leadership and Labour’s leftist views and strategies. The party won an impressive 26% of the votes in 1983, but because of the single member district **plurality voting system** (see the section on Elections, p. 128) in Britain, it only won 23 seats (3.5%). Liberal Democrats have campaigned for **proportional representation**, which would give them an equal percentage of the MP seats, and for a **Bill of Rights** modeled after the first ten amendments of the U.S. Constitution.

The party’s strength declined in the early 1990s as both the Conservative and Labour Parties moved to the center of political opinion, and in

the 1992 election the party picked up only about 17% of the total votes cast. The party held on, though, partly due to the popularity of its leader, Paddy Ashdown, and to some strong stands on the environment, health, and education. Ashdown retired in 1999, and was replaced by a Scottish MP, Charles Kennedy, and the Liberal Democrats picked up seven seats in the 2001 election. The party also benefited from public disillusionment with the Blair government’s support for the war in Iraq when it picked up 11 more MPs in the election of 2005. In December 2007, party leadership passed to **Nick Clegg**, who criticized the Labour government for its erosion of individual civil liberties, a stand that the party has long supported. However, the party still remains tremendously underrepresented in Parliament, considering their relative popularity at the polls. After the 2005 elections, the Liberal Democrats had 62 MPs (out of 646), even though they won more than 22% of the vote. In 2010, the party won 23% of the vote, but only managed to capture 57 seats in the House of Commons. However, since no party won a majority, the Conservative leader, David Cameron, invited the Liberal Democrats to help form a coalition government, and Nick Clegg became deputy prime minister.

The formation of the coalition was controversial among long-time supporters of the party, with some criticizing Clegg for supporting the center-right policies of the Conservative Party. The coalition showed signs of stress, since the two parties took increasingly different positions on issues such as Britain’s role in Europe – with Liberal Democrats generally being more supportive of the EU – and on reform of Britain’s unelected upper house of parliament. The Liberal Democrats’ poor showing in the election of 2015 forced Clegg’s resignation, leaving the party seriously weakened.

### *Other Parties*

Britain has many smaller parties including nationalist groups in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. **Plaid Cymru** in Wales and the **Scottish National Party** in Scotland both won seats in the House of Commons during the 1970s, and they have managed to virtually shut the Conservative Party out in the elections in their regions since the late 1990s. The parties’ fortunes were strengthened after Labour’s return to power in 1997, when the Blair leadership created regional assem-



blies for Scotland and Wales. However, Labour has been strong in the two regions, and the two parties combined won only nine seats in the House of Commons in 2010. The Scottish National Party surged in popularity in 2015, winning 56 of Scotland's 59 seats in Commons, largely at the expense of the Labour Party. The Plaid Cymru currently has 11 of 60 seats in the Welsh Assembly, and the Scottish National Party has 64 of 129 seats in the Scottish Parliament. Northern Ireland has always been dominated by regional parties, including **Sinn Fein** (the political arm of the IRA) and the **Democratic Unionist Party**, led by Protestant clergymen. Together they captured 12 parliamentary seats in 2015.

Two parties on the far right benefitted from the growing criticism of the Labour government before the 2010 election: the **British National Party**, and the **UK Independence Party**. The British National Party formed in 1982, but has never been represented in Parliament. Historically the BNP has been overtly anti-Semitic, but in recent years it has focused on ousting Muslims from Britain. During the 2010 General Election, the BNP received 1.9% of the vote and failed to win any seats. All three mainstream political parties in the UK openly condemn the BNP. The UK Independence Party has focused more on its opposition to British membership in the European Union. In the 2009 European elections, the BNP won two seats in the European Parliament, representing the first time that the party ever won in a national poll. The UKIP, which had previously held twelve seats in the European Parliament, picked up an extra seat, giving it a total of 13 (finally settling to 11 due to defections), which tied the number of seats that the Labour Party won. In the 2010 UK general election, the party polled 3.1% of the vote (up 0.9%). Despite being the fourth largest party in terms of vote share, UKIP failed to win any seats. In 2015, the party only won one seat in Parliament, but it picked up 12.6% of the vote, reflecting its growing popularity.

## Elections

The only national officials that British voters select are members of Parliament. The prime minister is not elected as prime minister but as an MP from a single electoral district, averaging about 65,000 registered voters. Elections must be held every five years, but traditionally, the

**BRITISH PARTIES: ELECTED MEMBERS  
IN PARLIAMENTS, 2015**

Party	UK House of Commons	Scottish Assembly	Assembly of Wales	Northern Ireland Assembly	European Parliament
Conservative	330	15	14	0	19
Labour	232	38	30	0	20
Liberal Democrats	8	5	5	0	.1
Democratic Unionist	8	0	0	38	1
Scottish Nationalist	56	64	0	0	2
Sinn Fein	4	0	0	29	1
Plaid Cymru	3	0	11	0	1
UK Independence Party	1	0	0	0	24

**British Parliamentary Elections.** Regional differences are apparent in the chart above. Especially notable is the jump in support for the Scottish Nationalist Party in the UK House of Commons election in 2015. The SNP almost certainly benefited from the strong movement for Scottish independence in 2013-2014.

prime minister could call them earlier. Officially, elections occur after the Crown dissolves Parliament, but that always happens because the prime minister requests it. The power to call elections has always been very important, because the prime minister – as head of the majority party – always calls them when (s)he thinks that the majority party has the best chance of winning.

The **Fixed-term Parliaments Act of 2011** altered these traditions by introducing fixed-term elections to Parliament. Under the provisions of the Act, parliamentary elections must be held every five years, beginning in 2015. Fixed-term Parliaments, where general elections ordinarily take place in accordance with a schedule set far in advance, were part of the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition agreement that was produced after the 2010 general election. The act limits the


prime minister's power to call elections, except in the case of a vote of no confidence. An early election might also be called if 2/3 of the MPs vote to do so.

### *The Plurality Electoral System*

As in the United States, British parliamentary elections are “winner-take-all,” with no runoff elections. Within this single-member plurality system, each party selects a candidate to run for each district post, although minor parties don't always run candidates in all districts. The person that wins the most votes gets the position, even if (s)he does not receive the majority of votes in the district. The British nickname for this system is “first-past-the-post” (like a race horse). Since MPs do not have to live in the districts that they represent, each party decides who runs in each district. So party leaders run from safe districts where the party almost always wins. Political neophytes are selected to run in districts that a party knows it will lose. They are usually happy to just make a good showing by receiving more votes than the party usually gets.

The “winner-take-all” system often exaggerates the size of the victory of the largest party and reduces the influence of minor parties. This system is the main reason that the Liberal Democrats have not been able to get a good representation in Parliament. Regional parties tend to fare better. For example, the Scottish National Party generally has a good chance of picking up districts in Scotland, as it did in 2015. However, Parliament still remains a two-party show, even though many other parties may get a sizeable number of votes. For example, in the election of 2005, the Labour party received 35.3% of the vote (not a majority), but they received 356 out of 646 seats (i.e., a majority). Likewise, in 2015, UKIP won 12.6% of the vote but only won one seat in Parliament.

In 2010, Liberal Democrats garnered 23% of the popular vote, but only won 57 of 650 seats in the House of Commons. This situation inspired Nick Clegg, the Liberal Democrat leader and deputy prime minister, to call for a referendum in May 2011, on an **alternate vote (AV)**, which would have allowed voters to rank candidates on the



**BRITISH GENERAL ELECTION, 2015**

650 seats total

Leader	David Cameron	Ed Miliband	Nick Clegg
Party	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
Seats before	306	258	57
Seats won	330	232	8
Seat change	↑24	↓26	↓49
Popular Vote	11,334,576	9,347,304	2,415,862
Percentage of popular vote	36.9%	30.4%	7.9%

**The Effects of First-past-the-post Voting.** Even though the Conservative Party won only 36.9% of the vote, it still won a majority of the seats in the House of Commons. The Liberal Democratic Party won 7.9% of the popular vote, but only won 8 seats, whereas the Scottish Nationalist Party won only 4.7% of the popular vote but won 56 seats. The SNP vote was concentrated in the districts in Scotland, so they won a disproportionate number of seats, especially as compared to the Liberal Democratic Party, whose supporters were more spread out across the country.

ballot in order of preference. If after a first round no candidate had more than 50% of the votes, cast, the votes of the least popular candidate would be redistributed, following the second preferences indicated by supporters of that eliminated candidate. Rounds of redistribution continue until someone crosses the 50% line. Along with the Liberal Democrats, the Labour leader Ed Miliband supported the AV, but Conservatives and many Labour MPs opposed it. The referendum went down to decisive defeat, so national elections in Britain continue to follow the first-past-the-post model.

The election of 2015 reflected a strong surge in the popularity of the Scottish Nationalist Party, which captured 56 seats in the House of Commons. The feat eclipsed the Liberal Democratic Party's 8 seats, so that the SNP gained a larger presence in Parliament, especially as articulated by **Nicola Sturgeon**, the party's leader.

### *Elections for Regional Governments*

Some signs of change in the electoral system have emerged in very recent years. For example, in the **Good Friday Agreement** of April 1998, Britain agreed to give Northern Ireland a regional government in which all parties would be represented on a proportional basis. In other words, the religion-based parties would each have a percentage of representatives that matched the percentage of the total vote each received. According to later agreements with Scotland and Wales, their regional parliaments also are based on **proportional representation**. As a result, both bodies have often not had a clear majority party. However, the largest party in the Welsh Assembly after the election of 2011 was Labour, with 30 of 60 members. In the Welsh Assembly, the Plaid Cymru won 11 seats, and the Conservatives won 14. After the Scottish election of 2011, the Scottish National Party had 68 of 129 total members, with Labour at 37 and Conservatives at 15. Other changes have occurred on the local level, with the mayor of London now elected directly for the first time ever.

### *European Parliament Elections*

Britain participates in the elections to the European Parliament, which is the directly elected parliamentary institution of the European Union. The elections are held every five years by people of the EU's member-states. In 2014, 73 members were elected from Britain using proportional representation, with 19 seats going to the Conservatives, 24 to the UK Independence Party, and 20 to Labour. Most notable was the drop in support for Conservative Party candidates, with the UK Independence Party actually garnering more votes than any other party. The Scottish Nationalists won 2 seats, and the Liberal Democrats secured only 1 seat.

### U.S. vs. British Elections\*

United States	Britain
Parties are less powerful.	Party determines who runs where.
Members must live in districts.	Members usually don't live in their districts.
Party leaders run in their respective districts.	Party leaders run in "safe districts."
Individual votes for four officials on the national level.	Individual votes for only one official on the national level.
Between 30 and 60 percent of the eligible voters actually vote (more in recent elections)	About 70 percent of the eligible voters actually vote (less in 2001, 2005, 2010, and 2015).
Elections are by first-past-the-post single-member districts; almost no minor parties get representation.	Elections are by first-past-the-post, single-member districts; minor parties get some representation, but less than if they had proportional representation (regional elections in Ireland, Scotland and Wales use proportional representation).

\*Note: The Comparative AP Exam does not require knowledge of U.S. government, but this chart is intended to help students understand British elections.

### *Campaign Financing*

British campaigns for public office are much shorter and less expensive than those in the United States. However, in 2006 both major political parties were under police investigation for campaign financing. The two areas of investigation were the use of peerages (seats in the House of Lords) and the disclosure of non-commercial loans. In the first, parties were investigated for breaking a parliamentary act of 1925 that prohibited the offering of peerages in return for money. Secondly, parties were suspected of breaking a 2000 law, which requires parties to

disclose the benefits they derive from personal loans. In question were secret loans from wealthy well-wishers. The investigation increased the pressure on Tony Blair to step down as Labour leader.

### Interest Groups

Like most other advanced democracies, Britain has well-established interest groups that demonstrate **interest group pluralism** (pp. 71-72) with relatively autonomous groups competing with one another for influence in policymaking. British politics are also characterized by **neocorporatism**, in which interest groups take the lead and sometimes dominate the state. Perhaps the greatest influence of British interest groups comes through **quangos** (quasi-autonomous nongovernmental organizations), or policy advisory boards appointed by the government. Using a neocorporatist model, quangos, together with government officials develop public policy, working in different policy areas. Some simply advise on policy while others deliver public services. Quangos weakened while Margaret Thatcher was prime minister, and their numbers have declined even more during recent years. In recent years, a number of quangos have been abolished under Conservative plans to reduce the overall budget deficit. However, about a thousand still remain.

Not surprisingly, the most influential interest groups have been those linked to class and industrial interests. Between 1945 and 1979, business interests and trade unions fiercely competed for influence over the policymaking process. The powerful **Trade Unions Congress (TUC)**, which represents a coalition of unions, had a great deal of clout because the government often consulted them on important decisions. While no comparable single group represents business interests, they too had an open door to inner government circles. For example, in 1976, Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healy negotiated with TUC and the **Confederation of Business Industries (CBI)** to limit TUC's wage demands in exchange for 3% reduction in income tax rates. All of this changed when Margaret Thatcher took control in 1979. Thatcher wanted to reduce the power of interest groups in general, and she slammed the door shut on TUC. As labor unions lost public support, they also lost political sway, and the Labour Party loosened its ties to unions and began to broaden its voter base. Since Thatcher left

in 1990, interest groups have regained power, but the government has partnered not only with unions, but with businesses as well.

### The Role of the Media

Not surprisingly, British newspapers reflect social class divisions. They are sharply divided between quality news and comment that appeals to the middle and upper classes, and mass circulation tabloids that carry sensational news. Radio and television came to life during the collective consensus era, so originally they were monopolized by the **British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)**. The BBC sought to educate citizens, and it was usually respectful of government officials. Commercial television was introduced in the 1950s, and now there are five stations that compete, as well as cable. A variety of radio stations also exist. Despite the competition from private companies, the government strictly regulates the BBC and the commercial stations. For example, no advertisements may be sold to politicians, parties, or political causes.

#### *BBC and Government Relations*

The BBC had a significant clash with the Blair government in 2003 over support for the war in Iraq. BBC reporter Andrew Gilligan wrote that a government statement that Iraqi forces could deploy weapons of mass destruction within 45 minutes was based on false intelligence that officials knew was unreliable. The conflict grew into a crisis when weapons inspector Michael Kelly (the alleged source of the "false intelligence") committed suicide. Tony Blair appointed appeals judge Lord Hutton to investigate the death, and the judge ended the crisis when he exonerated the Blair government in early 2004 and criticized the BBC for its reporting. The report prompted the chairman of the BBC board of governors to resign, an action that signaled an almost unprecedented embarrassment for the network.

Despite this disagreement, the Labour government continued to support the BBC with a license fee levied on any household in Britain with a television that receives broadcasts. This fee has allowed the BBC to maintain its large presence on television and the internet and to support BBC Worldwide, the corporation's commercial arm. The Conservatives have been critical of raising the license fee, and they

have advocated for a more transparent BBC, with full audits and expenditures published online.

### *Media Scandal of 2011*

An investigation into phone-hacking practices of major British tabloids led to the closing of one of Rupert Murdoch's most influential newspapers, *The News of the World*, in the summer of 2011. When it was discovered that the paper's employees hacked the cell phone of a murdered 13-year-old, the scandal snowballed as it became apparent that phone hacking was a common practice among the tabloids. Even though David Cameron called for an investigation, his own credibility was questioned, since his former media chief, Andy Coulson, who had been an editor for the Murdoch paper, was questioned and arrested by the police. The scandal escalated to include London's Metropolitan Police, who were charged with failing for years to fully investigate phone-hacking at *The News of the World*.

The scandal brought the relationship between government and the media into question, as revelations unfolded of political favoritism and coziness between media moguls and elected officials, as well as the tabloids' harassment and manipulation of government officials. For example, the *New York Times* reported on July 10, 2011, an incident in which a Labour member of Parliament criticized *The Sun* for its features of topless women that appeared regularly on Page 3 by saying, "I'd like to take the pornography out of our press." The paper responded with this headline: "Fat, Jealous Clare Brands Page 3 Porn", accompanied by a photograph of the MP's head over the body of a topless woman. Press regulation clearly came to the fore as an issue for the Cameron coalition government.

## THE INSTITUTIONS OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Just like most other countries of the world today, the British government has three branches of government and a bureaucracy. Furthermore, the legislature is divided into two houses, a model that the British invented, and is now widely copied. However, their system is **parliamentary**, and the interactions among the branches are very different from those in a **presidential system**, such as in the United

States. In a parliamentary system, the executive branch is fused with the legislative branch because the prime minister and the cabinet are actually the leaders of parliament. As a result, separation of powers – a major principle of American government – does not exist. Also, the judicial branch lacks the power of judicial review, so it has no role in interpreting the "Constitution of the Crown".

Britain is a **unitary state** with political authority centralized in London. Decisions made by the central government – both laws passed by Parliament and regulations prepared by the bureaucrats in Whitehall – are binding on all public agencies.

### The Cabinet and the Prime Minister

The cabinet consists of the prime minister and ministers, each of which heads a major bureaucracy of the government. Unlike the U.S. cabinet, the British cabinet members are party leaders from Parliament chosen by the prime minister. The **collective cabinet** is the center of policymaking in the British political system, and the prime minister has the responsibility of shaping decisions into policy. The cabinet does not vote, and all members publicly support the prime minister's decisions. In other words, as the leaders of the majority party elected by the people, they take "**collective responsibility**" for making policy for the country. The unity of the cabinet is extremely important for the stability of the government.

The prime minister is the "**first among equals**", but (s)he stands at the apex of the **unitary government**. Despite many recent changes, political authority in Britain is still centralized in the London-based government. The prime minister is not directly elected by the people, but is a member of Parliament and the leader of the majority party. In 2010, no majority party emerged from the election, so a coalition government formed with David Cameron, the Conservative leader, as prime minister, and Nick Clegg, the Liberal Democrat leader, as deputy prime minister. Since the system is designed to work with a clear majority party, the coalition cabinet had to incorporate the points of view of both parties in the coalition, and Labour and minor parties were left as the "loyal opposition." After the Conservative Party regained the majority in 2015, the system returned to normal.

COMPARATIVE EXECUTIVES*	
PRIME MINISTER OF BRITAIN	PRESIDENT OF THE U.S.
Serves only as long as he/she remains leader of the majority party/coalition	Elected every four years by an electoral college based on popular election
Elected as a member of Parliament	Elected as president
Has an excellent chance of getting his/her programs past Parliament	Has an excellent chance of ending up in gridlock with Congress
Cabinet members always MPs and leaders of the majority party/coalition	Cabinet members usually not from Congress (although they may be)
Cabinet members not experts in policy areas; rely on bureaucracy to provide expertise	Expertise in policy areas one criteria for appointment to cabinet; members head vast bureaucracies

\*Note: The Comparative AP Exam does not require knowledge of U.S. government, but this chart is intended to help students understand the British executive.

### The prime minister

- speaks legitimately for all members of Parliament
- chooses cabinet ministers and important subordinate posts
- makes decisions in the cabinet, with the agreement of the ministers
- campaigns for and represents the party in parliamentary elections

### Parliament

Although British government consists of three branches, little separation of powers exists between the cabinet and parliament. Like most other parliamentary systems, the executive and legislative branches are fused, largely because the leaders of the majority party in Parliament are also the cabinet members.

### The House of Commons

Even though Britain has multiple political parties, the House of Commons is based on the assumption that one party will get the majority number of seats, and another will serve as the “opposition.” One way to look at it is that Britain has a multi-party system at the polls, but a two-party system in the House of Commons. Whichever party wins a plurality at the polls becomes the majority party, and the second party becomes the “**loyal opposition**”.

### *Set-up of the House of Commons*

The House of Commons is set up with long benches facing one another with a table in between that is by tradition two-sword-lengths wide. The prime minister – who is elected as an MP like all the rest – sits on the front bench of the majority side in the middle. He or she becomes prime minister because the members of the majority party have made that selection. The majority party members may vote to change their leader, and the prime minister will change as a result. Right across from the prime minister sits the leader of the “opposition” party, whose members sit on benches facing the majority party. Between them is the table. Cabinet members sit on the front rows on the majority side, and the “**shadow cabinet**” faces them on the opposition side. On the back benches sit less influential MPs – the “**back-benchers**” – and MPs from other political parties sit on the opposition side, but at the end, far away from the table.

### *Debate*

The “**government**”, then, consists of the MPs on the first rows of the majority party side, and they are the most important policymakers as long as they hold power. Debate in the House is usually quite spirited, especially once a week during **Question Time**. During the hour the prime minister and his cabinet must defend themselves against attack from the opposition, and sometimes from members of their own party. The **speaker of the house** presides over the debates. Unlike the



**House of Commons.** The chamber is small enough that it is crowded when all MPs are present. The majority party faces the opposition parties, with the prime minister sitting in front by the table with the leader of the opposition directly across – two sword lengths away.

speaker in the U.S. House of Representatives, the speaker is supposed to be objective and often is not a member of the majority party. The speaker's job is to allow all to speak, but not to let things get out of hand. (S)he often has to gavel MPs down that get too rowdy.

One reason that debate can be so intense is that the floor of Parliament is the place where MPs gain attention from others, possibly casting themselves as future leaders. Also, the opposition is seen as the “check” on the majority party, since checks and balances between branches do not exist.

### *Party Discipline*

Because the majority party in essence is the government, party discipline is very important. If party members do not support their leadership, the government may fall into crisis because it lacks legitimacy. Above all, the majority party wants to avoid losing a “**vote of no confidence**”, a vote on a key issue. If the issue is not supported, the cabinet by tradition must resign immediately, and elections for new MPs must be held as soon as possible. This drastic measure is usually avoided by settling policy differences within the majority party mem-

bership. If a party loses a vote of no confidence, all MPs lose their jobs, so there is plenty of motivation to vote the party line. A vote of no confidence occurred in early 2005, when the Labour government's Higher Education Bill squeaked by with an approval vote of 316 to 311. The bill proposed raising university fees, a measure criticized by not only the opposition, but also by some outspoken Labour MPs. The vote narrowly allowed Blair's government to continue to control Commons. The policymaking power of the House is very limited since many government decisions are ratified by the cabinet and never go to Parliament.

Since the 1970s, backbenchers have been less deferential to the party leadership than in the past. A backbencher rebellion against John Major's EU policy weakened the prime minister significantly. Tony Blair faced a major rebellion of Labour backbenchers on key votes in February and March 2003 regarding the use of force in Iraq. After the disastrous 2009 local and European elections, many Labour MPs called for Gordon Brown's resignation, and five cabinet members resigned. In an effort to shore up his support, Brown reshuffled his cabinet, giving choice positions to key people in the government, and breaking the momentum of the cabinet meltdown that threatened to force him out. The near-collapse of the government came on the heels of the exposure of a widespread parliamentary expenses scandal, in which Parliament members charged thousands of pounds' worth of expenses to the taxpayers. The scandal questioned the very nature of **parliamentary sovereignty** (the principle that Parliament's decisions are final), and the government had a great deal to do to restore its image with the public.

Parliament has some substantial powers because its members

- debate and refine potential legislation
- are the only ones who may become party leaders and ultimately may head the government.
- scrutinize the administration of laws
- keep communication lines open between voters and ministers

## The House of Lords

Britain is no exception to the rule in its bicameral legislative structure. However, many of the benefits of bicameralism (including the dispersing of power between two houses) do not operate because the House of Lords has so little power. The House of Lords is the only hereditary parliamentary house in existence today, and although historically it was the original parliament, today it has minimal influence. The House of Commons established supremacy during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Lords gradually declined in authority. Since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the only remaining powers are to delay legislation, and to debate technicalities of proposed bills. Lords may add amendments to legislation, but the House of Commons may delete their changes by a simple majority vote. Until 2009, the chamber also included five law lords, who served as Britain's highest court of appeals, but they could never rule acts of Parliament unconstitutional.

Until 1999 about one-half of the members of Lords were **hereditary peers**, who hold seats that have been passed down through family ties over the centuries. The remaining were **life peers**, people appointed to nonhereditary positions as a result of distinguished service to Britain. In 1999 the Labour government took seats away from most of the hereditary peers, so that today only 92 hereditary seats remain among 567 life peers. In late 2001, the government announced plans for a new upper house with about 550 mostly appointed members, but with no hereditary posts. In March 2007 the House of Commons voted, in principle, in favor of replacing the Lords with an elected chamber, either 100% elected or 80% elected, 20% appointed.). However, the House of Lords, feeling threatened by the idea of dismantlement, rejected this proposal and voted for an entirely appointed House of Lords. In 2008 Jack Straw, a top cabinet member, introduced a "white paper" (an announcement of government policy) that proposed to replace the House of Lords with an 80-100% elected chamber, with one third being elected at each general election, for a term of 12 to 15 years. The current system continues, despite the ongoing debate.

One criticism of the British parliamentary system is that the lack of separation between the prime minister and the legislature creates a

dangerous concentration of power, since both are controlled by the same party. Supporters of the parliamentary system praise its efficiency, since it does not experience the crippling "gridlock" found between Congress and the president in the United States.

## The Bureaucracy

Britain has hundreds of thousands of civil servants who administer laws and deliver public services. Most civil servants do clerical work and other routine work of a large bureaucracy. However, a few hundred higher civil servants directly advise ministers and oversee work of the departments. They actually coordinate and implement the policies that cabinet members set.

The British bureaucracy is a stable and powerful force in the political system. Top-level bureaucrats almost always make a career of government service, and most are experts in their areas. Because the ministers are party leaders chosen by the prime minister, they understand a great deal about British politics, but they generally are not experts in particular policy areas. In contrast, the top bureaucrats usually stay with their particular departments, and the ministers rely on their expertise. As a result, the top civil servants often have a great deal of input into policymaking, including **discretionary power** to make many decisions in implementing legislative and executive decisions. The minister has a powerful position in the cabinet, but (s)he relies heavily on the advice of the bureaucrats. Bureaucrats almost never run for public office and are usually not active in party politics. Therefore, as cabinets come and go, the bureaucrats stay and fulfill an important role in government.

## The Judiciary

English ideas about justice have shaped those of many other modern democracies. For example, the concept of trial by jury goes back to the time of Henry II in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Britain has had a judicial branch for centuries, but ironically, the modern judiciary has much more limited powers than those in the United States, France, and Germany. In Britain, the principle of **parliamentary sovereignty** (Parliament's decisions are final) has limited the development of judicial review (the



courts' ability to decide whether or not actions, laws, and other court decisions are unconstitutional). British courts can only determine whether government decisions violate the common law or previous acts of Parliament. Even then, the courts tend to rule narrowly because they defer to the authority of Parliament. By tradition, the courts may not impose their rulings on Parliament, the prime minister, or the cabinet.

The British legal system based on **common law** contrasts to the stricter **code law** (see p. 29) practiced in the rest of Europe. Code law is much less focused on precedent and interpretation than common law. British courts, like those in most other advanced democracies, do make distinctions between original and appellate jurisdiction. District Courts hear cases that may be appealed to the High Courts, which until 2009 were in turn appealed to the highest court in the land – the **law lords**. They were actually members of the House of Lords who were designated as the highest judicial authority in Great Britain to settle disputes from lower courts.

In 2009, a **Supreme Court** was created to replace the law lords as the highest judicial authority in the United Kingdom. The court consists of a president and eleven justices appointed by a panel of lawyers. Its chief function is to serve as the final court of appeal on points of law in cases across the country, although Scotland maintains a separate legal system. The British Supreme Court has much more limited powers than its counterpart in the United States. It can nullify government actions if they are judged to exceed powers granted by an Act of Parliament, but it cannot declare an Act of Parliament unconstitutional. Parliament remains the supreme authority under the principle of parliamentary sovereignty.

In general, judges have the reputation of being independent, impartial, and neutral. Few have been MPs, and almost none are active in party politics. Judges are appointed on “good behavior,” but they are expected to retire when they reach the age of 75. Most judges are educated in public schools and at Oxford and Cambridge, and their positions are prestigious.

Despite the limited policymaking power of the judiciary, Britain's membership in the European Union has given judges a new responsibility that promises to become even more important in the future. Since Britain is now bound by EU treaties and laws, it is the judges' responsibility to interpret them and determine whether or not EU laws conflict with parliamentary statutes. Since the British tend to be skeptical about their EU membership, the way that possible conflicts between supranational and national laws are settled by British judges could impact the policymaking process considerably.

## PUBLIC POLICY AND CURRENT ISSUES

Many serious issues confront the British political system today. Some of the most important are:

- **The evolving relationship between government and the economy**
- **Transparency in government**
- **Relationships with the European Union**
- **Terrorism and cohesion**
- **Relationships with the U.S.**
- **Devolution and constitutional reform**

### The Evolving Relationship between Government and the Economy

The historical basis for Britain's political economy is **liberalism**, the philosophy that emphasizes political and economic freedoms for the individual and the market. Yet liberalism in Great Britain has been reshaped over the years, particularly in recent decades. The recession that began in late 2007 deepened the economic issues that preoccupy the government, as unemployment rates went up and business earnings decreased. The state-owned Bank of England, which is the central bank for all of Britain, responded to the economic crisis in September 2008 by cutting interest rates and by buying government bonds and corporate debt. The Bank has kept interest rates low since then, but Britain's economy was slow to recover until 2013, when GDP began to grow and unemployment rates began going down.

Since the end of World War II, the British government has redefined its relationship with the economy several times. Until the 1970s, the **collective consensus** philosophy was based on social democratic values that support a great deal of government control of the economy, including the nationalization of many major industries. The approach taken is called **Keynesianism** (after British economist John Maynard Keynes), in which the government took action to secure full employment, expand social services, maintain a steady rate of growth, and keep prices stable. Then, Margaret Thatcher reversed this trend by emphasizing **neoliberalism**, a revival of the old political and economic philosophy of liberalism that had guided Britain in earlier years. Thatcher's policies moved toward a free market economy and denationalization of industries. Since then, the government has tried to establish a middle way, but the best balance between state control and the free market is a matter of great dispute.

During the Blair years (1997-2007) the prime minister teamed with Gordon Brown, the chancellor of the exchequer (treasury), to craft the direction of the political economy. By 2001 the Blair-Brown team had succeeded in bringing Britain's "**misery index**" (inflation plus unemployment) down to a new low. While holding income tax rates steady, the government still managed to fund a variety of welfare programs, including those intended to improve living standards and job opportunities for the poor. However, with the recession that began in late 2007, economic growth stagnated, and the new coalition government faced growing deficits. As GDP growth slowed significantly, the government looked for ways to cut the budget, putting a particular squeeze on public sector spending, such as health care and education. In response, David Cameron advocated his "**Big Society**", a vision of Britain's future that emphasizes greater roles for private companies, charities and employee-owned cooperatives: groups funded by the state, but embedded in society. Cameron's argument is that the British state has become too big, impersonal and monolithic, and he wants to devolve more power to local councils and individual citizens.

#### Austerity Programs

The Liberal Democrats generally shared Cameron's vision, but the coalition suffered criticism for its drastic reductions in public spending.

In 2010, the government introduced an **austerity program**, a series of reductions in public spending, intended to cut welfare and other public institutions. One example is the government plan to shift college tuition costs from the state to students by raising the maximum fees English universities can charge. In 2010, Parliament voted to increase the maximum from \$5,400 to \$14,500 by 2012, an action that sparked angry protest demonstrations from students. Most universities appear to be setting tuitions at the maximum level, leaving Cameron's government open to further criticism. Although austerity programs were meant to end in 2016, in 2014, the Treasury extended the austerity period until at least 2018.

Protests to the government's austerity plans have grown louder as the economy has improved, with many people concerned about welfare cuts that have reduced social security benefits. Disability rights groups have argued that budget cuts disproportionately affect disabled people. Critics point out that the use of food banks has increased as benefit claimants feel the pinch of government cuts.

#### Health Care Issues

The attempt to balance the budget is illustrated by debates over what to do with the National Health Service (NHS). Many support it, saying that the British population is much healthier than it used to be, and that the British working class has especially benefited. However, the system is challenged by the aging population, a general trend in most mature democracies today. Others criticize the service for the increasing expense to the government and for a long wait lists for medical treatment. Private medical care is becoming more common, but many Britons want to keep the NHS, especially if it can be reformed. The NHS and education were "ringfenced" and protected from the austerity program's spending cuts, but the high cost of health care is still controversial.

In 2012, after much debate, Parliament passed the Health and Social Care Act. At its heart are plans for a radical restructuring of the health service, which gives general practitioners control of much of the NHS's annual budget, cuts the number of health bodies, and introduces more competition into services, all with the intention of reduc-

ing administrative costs, something the government says is essential if the health service is to cope with the ever-rising cost of caring for an aging population, and new, expensive medicines and treatments.

### Transparency in Government

The British government has long had a solid reputation for its transparency, so the parliamentary scandal that broke in the spring of 2009 was surprising to many people around the globe. The *Daily Telegraph* reported first on expense reports from Labour ministers, then on Labour backbenchers, and finally on Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs. The reports revealed huge amounts of personal expenses charged to the government, ranging from small, everyday purchases to thousands of pounds' worth of home improvements. One particularly controversial type of spending was categorized as the "second-homes allowance" for MPs who maintain homes in both London and their constituencies. Some MPs were getting reimbursements for improvements to both of their homes, and others were spending money on their homes just before they re-classified them as main residences, even though both practices were against the rules for the second-homes allowance. The depth of the damage to Parliament's image was reflected by the resignation of Michael Martin, the House of Commons speaker, who claimed thousands of pounds for a chauffeur-driven car that drove him about his Glasgow constituency, one of Britain's poorest.

The British public reacted strongly against these exposures, causing the leadership to apologize for the entire Parliament and promise that colleagues would pay back unjustified claims. Brown called for an end to the functioning of Parliament as "a gentlemen's club" that makes its own rules on members' benefits. Other reforms demanded wider changes that would make Parliament and the government more accountable to the people. Some suggestions included reducing the number of MPs, parliamentary committees with real powers of oversight and investigation, and primary elections to select parliamentary candidates. This scandal caused British citizens, already beleaguered by recession, to lose trust in their government.

Even before the scandal, an April 2009 YouGov poll showed very low political efficacy rates among Britons, with a third of the respondents indicating that they trusted no politician to tell the truth. Of

course, the fact that the scandals have been exposed indicates that the transparency level is still high, since an independent press may freely criticize the government. The coalition government elected in 2010 made increased transparency a priority, with the prime minister's office announcing in late 2010 the launching of a new website ([www.number10.gov.uk](http://www.number10.gov.uk)) whose purpose it was to provide users with information about government activities and policies. The website features detailed information about ministers' schedules and access to videos of the prime minister's statements and questions in Parliament.

### Relations with the European Union

British insularity has always meant that the country tends to keep its allies at arm's length. The British government did not enter the Common Market (a precursor to the European Union) when it was established in 1957. When Britain finally decided to enter in the early 1960s, its membership was vetoed twice by French President Charles De Gaulle. Finally, in 1978, Britain joined the Common Market, but the Thatcher government was opposed to rapid integration of European markets, and she was adamantly opposed to the adoption of the euro in place of the pound. Under Prime Minister John Major, Britain signed the Maastricht Treaty that created the European Union, and under Labour's Tony Blair, the government was still more favorable. When the Labour government first took power, it openly advocated adoption of the euro and further integration with the EU. However, once in power, Labour backed away from its initial commitment, although during the 2005 campaign Blair promised future referenda on the new EU constitution and the euro. Since Blair's time in office, the EU constitution has been abandoned, but Britain's membership in the EU is still controversial, with the Conservative Party openly split over EU matters.

Recent polls indicate that the percentage of the British public who want to hold on to the British pound hovers around 50%, so it appears as if Britain will continue to play its age-old cat and mouse game with the European continent. However, Gordon Brown was much less vocal in his support for strong ties with the EU than Tony Blair was, and David Cameron has been caught between the conflicting wings of the Conservative Party, which cannot agree on Britain's role in the

EU. Meanwhile, many British citizens expressed their disapproval of the EU in the 2015 elections by supporting UKIP candidates, who received about 12.6% of the total vote. In 2013, bowing to pressure from Euroskeptics in his party, David Cameron promised a renegotiation of the U.K.'s membership of the EU, followed by popular vote on whether to stay in the bloc, if his party won the 2015 general election outright, which it did. Cameron reiterated the party's commitment to hold an "in-out" referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union by the end of 2017, following negotiations with EU leaders. Government-sponsored legislation to authorize the referendum was introduced in the House of Commons in May 2015.

### Terrorism and Violence

Tony Blair aptly described changes in the nature of terrorism in Britain in an essay published in *The Economist* at the end of his tenure:

“Over ten years I have watched this [terrorism] grow. (If you had told me a decade ago that I would be tackling terrorism, I would have readily understood, but thought you meant Irish Republican terrorism.)”

The meaning of terrorism certainly changed after four British Muslim suicide bombers attacked the London transit system in July 2005, killing 52 people. Two other major terrorist plots were uncovered in 2006, and in 2007 several car bombs exploded – one outside a London nightclub, one near Trafalgar Square in London, and one in the Glasgow airport. Within four days of the car bombs, the main players had been arrested. The government is now earmarking extra money for security, a mosque watchdog is in operation, and the M15 (British security service) is keeping track of many suspected terrorists.

In his first press conference as prime minister, Gordon Brown reacted to the 2007 attacks by affirming his government's commitment to non-violence, and expressed his distaste for the “extreme message of those who practice violence and would maim and murder citizens on British soil.” Shortly afterward, the government began a pilot curriculum to be taught in some Muslim religious classes that emphasizes nonviolence among British Muslims. The program has been criticized for singling out young Muslims for civics lessons, and the British gov-

ernment is still struggling with how to isolate the extremist Muslim minority from the moderate majority. One of the thorniest issues of all is maintaining a cohesive society, despite the demographic changes of recent years.

Torn between the task of narrowing the social, economic and cultural gap between Muslims – especially in poor urban areas of northern Britain – and the rest of society – and simply fighting terrorism, the government believes that it must at least do the latter. Probing and preempting attacks by Muslim extremists occupies about 75% of the energy of the British security services, who have had a fair amount of success in uncovering terrorist plots before the last minute, according to a report in *The Economist* in February 2009. The riots that broke out across Britain in the summer of 2011 also increased anxiety over maintaining law and order, even as Britons struggled to understand why the rioting occurred. Recent budget cuts have made it more difficult for the police to do their job, and security pressures were strong as London hosted the Olympics in 2012. Tensions increased after G4S, a company hired by the government to provide security during the games failed to fulfill its contract. However, the army deployed troops to make up the shortfall, and the games passed without notable security scares.

### Relationship with the United States

When Tony Blair became prime minister of the United Kingdom in 1997, he took on a very ambitious agenda. Domestically, he wanted to sustain economic prosperity and increase social equality, as well as reinforce traditional British national identity and political institutions. Internationally, he sought to develop a new relationship with Europe in which the United Kingdom would play a central and self-confident role, and yet maintain a special relationship with the United States that had been in place since World War II.

Blair's efforts seemed to succeed until the Iraq crisis drove Washington in the opposite direction from Paris and Berlin. France and Germany were outspoken in their criticism of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and of Britain's support for the war under Blair's watch. The crisis challenged the cornerstone of Tony Blair's vision that the United

Kingdom could act as a bridge across the Atlantic. It damaged Britain's relationship with France and raised questions about the wisdom of its special relationship with the United States. It caused dissent within the Labour leadership and seriously undermined Blair's popular support, a situation that resulted in the party losing many seats in the House of Commons in the election of 2005, and eventually led to Blair's resignation in 2007.

Since the election of American president, Barack Obama, in November 2008, the direction of U.S./British relations has been positive. The global economic crisis required Obama and Brown, and then Cameron, to work together to address the problems. During Obama's state visit to Britain in 2011, both leaders referred to their "essential relationship," and the two countries are crucial allies in building coalitions to deal with international crises. However, British budget cuts have seriously impacted the country's defense capabilities, so that the country's ability to provide real international military support is in question.

### Devolution and Constitutional Reform

The British government is still a **unitary** one, with the most authority emanating from London. However, continuing desire by the Scottish and Welsh for their independence and the problems with Northern Ireland have led to the development and implementation of the policy of **devolution**, or turning over of some political powers to regional governments. Even before Margaret Thatcher delayed the process when she took office in 1979, the Labour party supported devolution. However, a 1977 referendum to create Scottish and Welsh assemblies failed. In 1999, though, referenda in both regions passed, and each now has its own regional assembly, which has powers of taxation, education, and economic planning.

#### Northern Ireland

In the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, a parliament was set up for Northern Ireland as well, although London shut down its activities after violence broke out in 2002. The Northern Ireland Assembly remained suspended for almost five years, not reopening until May 2007. A new challenge was presented to the Assembly in early 2009, when two British soldiers and a police constable were killed and dissident re-

publican terrorists claimed responsibility for both killings. These first murders of members of the security forces since 1998 brought thousands out in peaceful protest rallies across Northern Ireland. Some observers found hope in the response by political leaders of Sinn Fein, the Democratic Union Party, and the English boss of the Northern Ireland police, who appeared and were photographed standing shoulder-to-shoulder outside the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Just how much these new parliaments will affect London's authority is yet to be seen. Devolution has also included the creation of the office of mayor and a general assembly for London, giving the city more independence from the central government.

#### Scottish Independence

In recent years, the movement for Scottish independence has gained momentum, coming up for a vote in a referendum in September 2014. The Scottish Parliament set the arrangements for the referendum in November 2013, when it passed the Scottish Independence Referendum Act, following an agreement between the Scottish and the UK governments. The campaign was intense, with both sides presenting heated arguments for their points of view. The question was "Should Scotland be an independent country?" The "No" side won with 55.3% of the voters, while 44.7% voting "Yes." The voter turnout of 84.6% was much higher than for any election or referendum in the United Kingdom in recent memory. Although the campaign for independence failed, it has many supporters, and most believe that the issue remains a viable one.

Some critics have argued that devolution should be only one step toward modernizing the political system. Other reforms under consideration include a written Bill of Rights for individual citizens, a written constitution, freedom of information, and a new electoral system. One crucial reform – proportional representation – was rejected by British voters in 2011, but its supporters are still numerous. Whatever reforms are made, Britain still retains a strong attachment to its many traditions, and the government's long lists of accomplishments are not all in the past. As the nation redefines both external and internal political relationships, Britain still serves as a role model for the development of democratic traditions in the modern world.

**IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

alternate voting (AV)  
 austerity program  
 backbenchers  
 Beveridge Report  
 Blair, Tony  
 British Broadcasting Corporation  
 British National Party  
 Brown, Gordon  
 Cameron, David  
 caucuses  
 “civic culture”  
 Clause 4  
 Clegg, Nick  
 coalition government  
 collective consensus  
 collective responsibility  
 Confederation of Business Industries  
 Conservative Party  
 “Constitution of the Crown”  
 cultural heterogeneity  
 Democratic Unionist Party  
 devolution  
 the English Bill of Rights  
 Euroskeptics  
 “first-past-the-post” voting system  
 Fixed-term Parliaments Act of 2011  
 the Glorious Revolution  
 the “government”  
 gradualism  
 hereditary peers  
 home rule  
 hung parliament  
 insularity  
 Irish Republican Army  
 “Iron Lady”  
 Keynesianism  
 Labour Party  
 law lords  
 Liberal Democratic Alliance  
 liberalism  
 life peers  
 limited government  
 “loyal opposition”  
 Magna Carta  
 Miliband, Ed  
 “misery index”  
 mixed economy  
 multi-nationalism  
 neo-corporatism  
 neo-liberalism  
*noblesse oblige*  
 OPEC  
 Oxbridge  
 parliamentary system  
 Plaid Cymru  
 plurality voting system  
 politics of protest  
 proportional representation  
 quangos  
 Question Time  
 rational-legal legitimacy  
 referendum  
 safe districts  
 Scottish Independence Movement  
 Scottish National Party  
 “shadow cabinet”  
 Sinn Fein  
 solidarity  
 Speaker of the House  
 Thatcherism  
 the third way  
 Tories  
 Trade Union Congress

traditional leadership  
 UK Independence Party  
 unitary government  
 “vote of no confidence”  
 welfare state  
 Whigs

## Questions for Advanced Democracies and Britain

### Multiple-choice Questions

1. If the percentage of a country's labor force in the primary sector decreases and the percentage in the secondary sector increases, the most likely cause is
  - A) industrialization
  - B) increasing uniformity in types of crops raised
  - C) deindustrialization
  - D) developments in biotechnology
  - E) increasing international trade
  
2. A major goal of both the European Union and NAFTA is the establishment of
  - A) a common currency
  - B) a free trade system
  - C) tightened restrictions for border crossings
  - D) rule of law that applies equally to all member-states
  - E) common agricultural regulations
  
3. Which of the following is NOT a necessary characteristic of advanced democracies?
  - A) civil liberties
  - B) neutrality of the judiciary
  - C) private ownership of property
  - D) rule of law
  - E) open civil society
  
4. An important source of rational-legal legitimacy in Britain is
  - A) common law
  - B) the monarchy
  - C) the written constitution
  - D) a tradition of charismatic prime ministers
  - E) the “three pillars”

5. Which of the following is the BEST description of the historical development of the British Parliament?
- A) The British Parliament emerged for the first time during the Civil War in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
  - B) The British Parliament developed gradually, and eclipsed the king's power by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
  - C) The British Parliament consisted only of the House of Lords until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the House of Commons was created.
  - D) The British Parliament developed relatively late in the country's history, not gaining any real power until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
  - E) The British Parliament was created by the first British Constitution, written in 1756.
6. Which of the following is an accurate description of the influence of social class on voting in modern Britain?
- A) The working class strongly supports the Labour Party, and the middle class strongly supports the Conservative Party.
  - B) British voters have few loyalties to political parties, so social class has no consistent influence on voting behavior.
  - C) Social class is not as important an influence on voter loyalties and opinions as is age.
  - D) Social class is still a strong influence on voter choices in England, but it has little impact on voters in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
  - E) The working class tends to support Labour and the middle class tends to support the Conservatives, but the lines of distinction have blurred in recent years.
7. In which of the following areas would British voters be MOST likely to vote for Conservative Party candidates?
- A) cities of the industrial mid-section
  - B) Scotland
  - C) Wales
  - D) central London
  - E) rural England
8. This British political party generally supports a market controlled economy, privatization of industry, and fewer social welfare programs. They also attract supporters who are "Euroskeptics." Who are they?
- A) Labour Party
  - B) Liberal Democratic Party
  - C) Conservative Party
  - D) UK Independence Party
  - E) Scottish Nationalist Party
9. Which political party in Britain has campaigned most openly for proportional representation in electing Members of Parliament?
- A) Labour Party
  - B) Conservative Party
  - C) Liberal Democratic Party
  - D) Scottish Nationalist Party
  - E) Sinn Fein
10. In the election of 2015, in what region of the country did the Labour Party lose the most seats that it had previously held?
- A) Scotland
  - B) London
  - C) Northern Ireland
  - D) Wales
  - E) industrial cities of northern England



11. Which of the following is the best description of the responsibilities of the British speaker of the House?
- A) the speaker is the leader of the “loyal opposition”
  - B) the speaker is the leader of the majority party
  - C) the speaker serves as a liaison with the Queen
  - D) the speaker coordinates legislative activities and process with the House of Lords
  - E) the speaker objectively presides over debates in the House of Commons
12. All of the following are powers of the British House of Commons EXCEPT:
- A) debating and refining potential legislation
  - B) serving as a source of all current and future ministers
  - C) holding the prime minister and cabinet accountable for policymaking practices
  - D) initiating policy and legislation
  - E) keeping communication lines open between voters and ministers
13. Which of the following is the BEST description of the role the British bureaucracy plays in the political system?
- A) It is a major source for recruitment of new cabinet members.
  - B) Most are in tune with the legislative process because they have held seats either in the House of Commons or the House of Lords.
  - C) Top level bureaucrats serve as a major source of stability because they make a career of government service.
  - D) Although bureaucrats don’t often run for public office, they are often leaders of political parties.
  - E) Bureaucrats only carry out decisions made by the cabinet and have little policy making power.

(Questions 14 and 15 are based on the following chart):

HYPOTHETICAL ELECTION FOR A SEAT IN THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS	
MP Candidate	Percent of Vote in District
Mr. Smith	35%
Ms. Brown	29%
Mr. Dillon	20%
Ms. Potter	16%

14. Suppose that above chart summarizes the election results for a seat in the British House of Commons. According to the British electoral system, what would happen next?
- A) A second round of elections would be held, with Mr. Smith, Ms. Brown, and Mr. Dillon competing.
  - B) Mr. Smith would win the seat.
  - C) The prime minister would choose which candidate fills the seat.
  - D) A second round of elections would be held between Mr. Smith and Ms. Brown.
  - E) The percentages would be applied to party lists for determining the winner.
15. The electoral system that is used for the British House of Commons is
- A) proportional representation
  - B) a mixed system
  - C) patron-client system
  - D) a hybrid presidential-parliamentary system
  - E) a plurality system

16. In regard to integration with Europe, which of the following measures has Britain so far refused to adopt?
- A) elimination of significant trade tariffs
  - B) the establishment of a separate European Parliament
  - C) setting minimum GNP requirements for new EU members
  - D) adoption of the euro as the main currency
  - E) the establishment of common agricultural policies
17. The concept of “home rule” is most associated with the British political policy of
- A) devolution
  - B) integration with the European Union
  - C) geographic concentration of power in London
  - D) insularity
  - E) support for U.S. policy in Iraq
18. Which of the following is the BEST description of Britain’s ethnic and racial minority population?
- A) Most of Britain’s minority population comes from Sub-Saharan Africa.
  - B) Britain’s minority population is small and very stable in numbers.
  - C) Britain’s minorities live primarily in rural areas.
  - D) Britain’s minority population is relatively small, but it is growing rapidly.
  - E) Britain’s ethnic and racial minorities have intermarried freely with the native population.
19. Oxbridge serves the British political system as an important source for
- A) recruitment of political elites
  - B) Labour Party financial support
  - C) propaganda ideas to garner popular support for controversial government programs
  - D) interest group activity and coordination
  - E) educating foreigners about British politics
20. “Collective responsibility” for policy making in the British political system belongs to the
- A) House of Commons only
  - B) House of Commons and the House of Lords
  - C) cabinet
  - D) law lords
  - E) bureaucracy
21. The British parliamentary system is most fundamentally characterized by
- A) clear separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches
  - B) very little separation of powers between the cabinet and parliament
  - C) a strong judicial branch with powers of judicial review
  - D) a bureaucracy that strictly follows orders from the cabinet
  - E) local governments that have a great deal of sovereign powers separate from the central government

22. Which of the following policymakers in Britain is MOST likely to hold on to his/her position the longest?

- A) the prime minister
- B) a cabinet member
- C) a member of parliament
- D) a mayor of a major city
- E) a top level bureaucrat

23. Which of the following principles of governance has been MOST directly responsible for blocking the development of judicial review in Britain?

- A) fusion of church and state
- B) multi-nationalism
- C) plurality voting system
- D) *noblesse oblige*
- E) parliamentary sovereignty

24. Interest groups in Britain are less likely to lobby members of Parliament than they are to put pressure on cabinet members because

- A) British MPs do not represent constituents
- B) interest groups are relatively weak in Britain
- C) British MPs do not need much money for their election campaigns
- D) most policymaking decisions are made by cabinet members
- E) cabinet members are generally more corrupt

25. In British politics, the most significant “check” on the prime minister and cabinet is the

- A) House of Commons
- B) House of Lords
- C) loyal opposition
- D) bureaucracy
- E) Supreme Court

26. Which of the following accurately describes a recent trend in the House of Commons?

- A) Question Time has become less confrontational.
- B) Backbenchers have become less deferential to the party leadership.
- C) Representation from regional parties has increased.
- D) The threat of a vote of confidence no longer is taken seriously.
- E) Criticism from the House of Lords is more likely to shape decisions made by the House of Commons.

27. Which of the following is the best overall description for political and economic change over time in the British political system?

- A) Britain’s history is marked with many violent revolutions and radical changes.
- B) Britain’s history is remarkably stable, and the country has changed very little in the last 200 years.
- C) Britain has experienced a few coup d’états, but has not been characterized by change through reform or revolution.
- D) Britain’s change has mainly been gradual, with significant social reforms along the way.
- E) Britain has been subjected to dramatic, violent political change, but its economic changes have been gradual.

28. Which political body is most clearly the center of policymaking power in British government?

- A) the cabinet
- B) the House of Commons
- C) the House of Lords
- D) the High Court
- E) the bureaucracy

29. Which of the following issues was addressed directly by the Good Friday Agreement of 1998?

- A) socialism v. market economic
- B) integration of the British economy with the EU
- C) devolution of power to the Scottish Parliament
- D) devolution of power to a Northern Ireland Parliament
- E) the role of the Anglican Church in shaping political policies

30. Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland have different political traditions, but what do they all have in common?

- A) The government of Ireland at one time ruled all of them.
- B) All have been independent countries at some time in the past.
- C) All are currently part of the United Kingdom, but London has devolved some powers to their regional governments.
- D) None have been granted representation in the House of Commons in London, although all have demanded it.
- E) They all were at one time part of the United Kingdom, but today they are independent nations.

### Country-Context Question (20 minutes):

An important characteristic of British political culture is multi-nationalism. An increasingly important characteristic of British political culture is ethnic diversity.

- a) Describe multi-nationalism in Britain, and explain one problem that multi-nationalism has posed for the British government.
- b) Describe one policy that the British government has enacted to address the problem you identified in a).
- c) Describe ethnic diversity in Britain, and explain one problem that ethnic diversity has posed for the British government.
- d) Describe one policy that the British government has enacted to address the problem you identified in c).



As we have seen, one major trend in Britain is **devolution**, or the process of decentralizing the unitary state to share policymaking power with regional governments. Yet all the countries of Europe, including Britain, are deeply affected by a countertrend – **integration**. Integration is a process that encourages states to pool their sovereignty in order to gain political, economic, and social clout. Integration binds states together with common policies and shared rules. The **supranational organization** that integrates the states of Europe is called the European Union.

### INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

International organizations have been around for some time now, but their nature is changing, with some real implications for the sovereignty of individual nation-states. Several countries formed the Concert of Europe in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in an effort to restore balance of power after the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte. It was a voluntary agreement, and it did not prevent the outbreak of several limited wars. However, many scholars believe that the effort to balance power that the agreement sparked was at least partly responsible for the relative peace among quarrelsome European neighbors until World War I began in 1914. That war stimulated another more global effort to form a lasting international organization, and resulted in the creation of the League of Nations, whose fate was doomed with the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Even before the United States joined the war, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed to try again when the war ended. In this spirit the United Nations was formed in 1945.

## The United Nations

Only 49 nation-states signed the original charter of the United Nations in 1945, but because many new nations have been created since then, the membership of the U.N. has grown to 193 by 2015. It has lasted for 70 years, and its membership makes it a truly global organization. Membership in the U.N. is voluntary, but it has some limited powers to force its members to abide by the organization's peacekeeping principles. As a result, it plays an important role in geopolitics, and changes the dynamics of international relationships from the previous almost exclusive focus on nation-states as individual actors on the world stage. The U.N. encourages collective action, but it alters the nature of national sovereignty only in limited ways.

An important power of the U.N. is that its members can vote to establish a peacekeeping force in a "hotspot" and request states to contribute military forces. The body responsible for making this decision is the **Security Council**, and any one of its five permanent members (the U.S., Britain, France, China, and Russia) may veto a proposed peacekeeping action. During the era of the Cold War, the Security Council was often in gridlock because the U.S. and Russia almost always disagreed. Today that gridlock is broken, but it is still difficult for all five countries to agree on a single course of action. Peacekeeping forces have been sent to calm warring forces in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa. U.N. forces are supposed to remain neutral, and they usually have restrictions on their rights to use weapons against either side in a dispute. Despite its limitations, the United Nations is a forum where most of the states of the world can meet and vote on issues without resorting to war.

The U.N. is an umbrella organization that includes many sub-organizations that promote the general welfare of the world's citizens and monitor and aid world trade and other economic activities. These efforts are funded by membership dues, and represent an extension of international cooperation into areas other than peacekeeping. Examples of such organizations are the World Bank, the International Court of Justice, and UNESCO (an economic and social council).

## Other Worldwide Organizations

The United Nations continues to function as a major peacekeeping organization, although its authority is limited and its challenges are many. The organization's goals have broadened over the years, and other worldwide organizations have appeared in more recent years. Two other important international organizations of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries include:

- **The World Trade Organization** – Established in 1995, the WTO is an organization of member-states that have agreed to rules of world trade among nations. It is responsible for negotiating and implementing new trade agreements; it serves as a forum for settling trade disputes; and it supervises members to be sure that they follow the rules that the organization sets. Most of the world's trading nations belong to the WTO, with Russia joining the organization in 2012. The WTO oversees about 60 different agreements which have the status of international legal texts that bind its 159 members. The process of becoming a WTO member is unique to each applicant country, and the terms of membership are dependent upon the country's stage of economic development and current trade regime. The process takes about five years, but it can last longer if the country's economic status is questionable or if political issues make it objectionable. For example, China was denied WTO status for many years because of questions about human rights abuses, but its growing economic prowess finally influenced member-states to approve it.
- **The World Bank** – Although the World Bank was created in 1944 to aid countries in rebuilding after World War II, its focus today is on loaning money to low and middle-income countries at modest interest rates. The Bank's goals are to eliminate poverty in these countries and to support economic development through investment in projects that build businesses, improve transportation and communications, provide jobs, and eliminate corruption in government. The Bank has also supported health initiatives – such as vaccination programs for disease and research to combat AIDS – and efforts to reduce

greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. One of the strongest criticisms of the World Bank has been the way in which it is governed. While the World Bank represents 186 countries, a small number of economically powerful countries choose the leadership and senior management of the World Bank, and so critics say that their interests dominate the bank.

### Regional Organizations

During the Cold War era, regional military alliances appeared, and countries joined based on their affiliation either with the United States or Russia. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) formed in the late 1940s with 14 European members, the United States, and Canada. An opposing alliance – the Warsaw Pact – began in 1955 and was composed of the Soviet Union and six eastern European countries. Together the two organizations were designed to maintain a bipolar balance of power in Europe. The Warsaw Pact disbanded with the breakup of the Soviet Union, and NATO expanded to include many of its former members. Other regional organizations include the Organization of American States (OAS), created to promote social, cultural, political, and economic links among member states; the Arab League, which was founded to promote the interests and sovereignty of countries in the Middle East; and the Organization for African Unity (OAU), that has promoted the elimination of minority white-ruled governments in southern Africa. The number of regional international organizations has grown steadily over the past 70 years or so, but the one that has integrated states the most successfully so far is the European Union.

### THE EUROPEAN UNION

Europe's history is one of diverse national identities. Its wars have encompassed the continent as first its kingdoms, and then its countries, fought over religion, power, land, and trade. Perhaps most dramatically, its conflicts erupted in two devastating world wars during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Shortly after World War II ended, European leaders decided on a new direction – cooperation among nations – that led to the creation of the European Union, a supranational organization that has not supplanted nationalism, but has altered its members' policymaking practices substantially.

### A Brief History

The organization began in an effort to revitalize a war-torn Europe after World War II ended. The most immediate need was to repair the nations' broken economies, so the initial goals were almost completely economic in intent. In 1949 the Council of Europe was formed, and although it had little power, it provided an opportunity for national leaders to meet. The following year an international authority was formed to coordinate the coal and steel industries, both damaged heavily during the war. Later evolutions of the new organization included:

- **The EEC** (European Economic Community) – The Treaty of Rome established the EEC – informally named the “**Common Market**” – in 1957. Its most important provisions called for the elimination of all bilateral tariffs between European nations, and the creation of new ones that applied to all.
- **The EC** (European Community) – Established in 1965, the EC expanded the organization's functions beyond economics. One major concern other than tariffs and customs was a unified approach to the peaceful use of atomic energy. However, the development of the EC was limited by disagreements as to how much power it should be given, with many nations concerned that their national sovereignty would be weakened. The urge toward integration was given a boost by the collapse of Soviet dominance in eastern Europe in the late 1980s. With new democracies emerging, their transitions from communism to capitalism demanded guidance from an international regional power.
- **The EU** (European Union) – The 1991 **Maastricht Treaty** created the modern organization, and gave it authority in new areas, including monetary policy, foreign affairs, national security, transportation, the environment, justice, and tourism. An important goal was to coordinate economic policies, particularly through a common currency (the **euro**) to replace the national currencies of the member-states, such as the French franc and the German mark; and a common **European Central Bank**, with enormous supranational authority to influence

the economic policies of the member-states. The treaty established the **three pillars**, or spheres of authority:

1. Trade and other economic matters, including economic and monetary union into a single currency, and the creation of the European Central Bank
2. Justice and home affairs, including policy governing asylum, border crossing, immigration, and judicial cooperation on crime and terrorism
3. Common foreign and security policy, including joint positions and actions, and common defense policy

### Membership

Ongoing expansion is a major characteristic of the European Union, with a total membership of 28 countries as of 2015. The European Union began with six members in 1957: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Denmark, Great Britain, and Ireland joined in the early 1970s; Greece in 1981; Portugal and Spain in 1986; and Austria, Finland, and Sweden in 1995. Ten countries joined on May 2, 2004: Cyprus (Greek part), the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Bulgaria and Romania joined on January 1, 2007. Enthusiasm for further growth has waned in recent years, as questions of economic and political stability of newer members has threatened to break the union apart. Even so, Croatia was admitted for membership in June 2013.

Several countries are currently under consideration as candidates for membership, including Macedonia and Turkey. Turkey is controversial for many reasons, including its relatively low Gross Domestic Product per capita of about 12,000 euro, considerably less than the EU average. Turkey also has been questioned because of its history of authoritarian governments. Turkey's candidacy also brings up the question of whether or not it is actually a European country since most of the country is technically in Asia. A deeper issue is the largely Muslim population of Turkey. If the EU is mainly an economic organization,



**The European Union.** Ongoing expansion is a major characteristic of the European Union, with a total membership of 28 countries as of 2015.

then it shouldn't matter that all Turkey's religious leanings are quite different from those of current members, whose populations are overwhelmingly Christian. However, if the EU fulfills its other pillars (justice and home affairs, and common foreign and security policy), some fear that religious differences could hinder the integration process.

Even though the political and economic muscle of so many countries united is considerable, this rapid integration presents many difficult issues for the EU. First, organizational issues abound. Structures that work for six countries do not necessarily operate smoothly for 28. Second, the expansion brings in many former communist countries whose economies were relatively weak by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Older member-states worry that immigrants from the east will flood their labor markets and strain their economies. EU supporters believe that these problems will be overshadowed by the benefits of common markets, currencies, political policies, and defense.

In order to be accepted for membership, candidate nations must provide evidence to meet three important criteria:

- a stable and functioning democratic regime
- a market-oriented economy
- willingness to accept all EU laws and regulations

The rapid growth of the EU has brought about what some have called **enlargement fatigue**. Polls show a decline in support for enlargement among EU voters, and many believe that the French and Dutch rejections of the European Constitution (see p. 179) partly reflected dissatisfaction over the 2004 enlargement. Also, many EU governments have lost their enthusiasm for further growth, particularly France, Germany, and Austria. The economic benefits of the recent expansions are still questionable, and the concerns surrounding Turkey have cooled some support. Of course, there is a limited amount of growth potential remaining because only a few countries of the continent are non-members, including Norway, Switzerland, the Balkan states, Belarus, Moldova, and the Ukraine.

### Organization

The European Union is composed of four major bodies: The Commission, the Council of Ministers, the European Court of Justice, and the European Parliament.

- **The Commission** – This body currently has 28 members, one from each member state of the EU, supported by a bureaucracy of several thousand European civil servants. Each Commissioner takes responsibility for a particular area of policy, and heads a department called a Directorate General. The Commission is headed by a president, currently Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of Portugal. Although their home governments nominate them, commissioners swear an oath of allegiance to the EU and are not supposed to take directions from their national governments. The Commission forms a permanent executive that supervises the work of the EU, much in the way that a national cabinet operates.

- **The Council of Ministers** – Whereas the Commission acts cooperatively as the director of EU activities, the Council demonstrates the continuing power of the states. The Council consists of foreign ministers, finance ministers, the president of France, and all the prime ministers of the other members. They hold frequent meetings – some for only one type of minister – and the heads of state meet every six months as the **European Council**. The Council is central to the EU's legislative process. Until 2009, the president of the Council rotated every six months, but the Lisbon Treaty made the position permanent and full-time, with a 2½ year term of office, renewable once. The first president appointed under these conditions was Herman Van Rompuy of Belgium, who was reappointed in 2012. In 2014, Donald Tusk, the former Polish prime minister, became the second president under the new rules. The Commission may initiate legislation, but its proposals don't become law until they have been passed by the Council. Each country is assigned a number of votes in proportion to its share of population.
- **The European Parliament** – Contrary to the implications of its name, the European Parliament historically has not had a great deal of legislative power. However, since 1979 its members (MEPs) have been directly elected by the people of their respective countries, so they do have some independence from their national governments. Parliament may propose amendments to legislation, and it may reject proposals from the Council outright. However, the Council may override a rejection by a unanimous vote. EU citizens vote directly for representatives to the EP every five years. Apportionment of representatives is not strictly based on population, and smaller member-states have disproportionately greater representation than larger ones. The meetings of the EP are held in Strasbourg, although committees meet in Brussels. The Lisbon Treaty enhanced the power of the EP significantly, since new rules govern its relationship with the European Council.
- **The European Court of Justice** – The ECJ is the supreme court of the European Union, and it has the power of judicial



review. It meets in Luxembourg, where it interprets European law, and its decisions may limit national sovereignty. For example, the ECJ ruled against Italy's policy of jailing illegal migrants who do not obey expulsion orders. In 2011, it decided that insurance companies in Britain were not allowed to charge women drivers (less of an accident risk) a lower premium than men. As such, the ECJ is more powerful than most national judicial systems of the EU's member-states. It has a broad jurisdiction, and hears cases that rule on disagreements among the Commissioners, the Council of Ministers, and the members of parliament. It also may settle disputes among member nations, private companies, and individuals. The ECJ consists of 28 judges, with each one nominated by a different member state. Cases are decided by a simple majority.



## Policymaking Power

Although the European Union has made only rudimentary policy in many areas – such as defense and social policy – it clearly sets strong policies in other areas that previously were controlled by the individual countries. Three areas of active policymaking are:

- **Creating and maintaining a single internal market** – By and large, the EU has removed most of the old tariffs and other barriers to trade among its members. For example, trucking goods across national borders is much easier today than it was before the EU was created. Also, most professional licenses, such as those for doctors and beauticians, are accepted in all member states. An exception is that lawyers' licenses are only good in the country that issues them. So policy differences still exist among the nations, but the single market has greatly affected both European governments and their citizens. More options are available to shoppers and consumers now that goods are freely transported across national borders.
- **Union of monetary policy** – The EU has made remarkable strides in its ability to set European **monetary policy**, the control of the money supply. Today the euro has replaced many of the old national currencies, which are well on their way to being phased out. Also, the power to set basic interest rates and other fiscal policies is being passed from national banks and governments to the **European Monetary Union** and its new central bank. Today, in most of the member countries, the euro is accepted as a common currency both in banking and for everyday business transactions. Most of the newer members are in the process of changing their currencies to the euro, but two exceptions to the rule are Britain and Sweden, which still refuse to give up their national currencies in favor of a common European currency. The economic recession that began in late 2007 was a challenge for the viability of the euro, but so far there has been no strong movement to abandon it. For most of the newer members, the recession made conversion to the euro even more important, since their national currencies are generally not as stable as the euro. The recession also

put pressure on the economic coordination capabilities of the EU. Most of the stimulus money generated in Europe after the worldwide monetary crisis in September 2008 came from individual member-states. In November 2008 the European Commission set out proposals for a Europe-wide fiscal stimulus, but it had no authority to compel member-states to contribute, so it had to serve mainly a coordinating role. What followed was disagreement among member-states over how or whether to use the stimulus money, illustrating the reluctance that governments have in ceding control over their own revenues.

- **Common agricultural policy** – Implementation of policy in this area has generally been less successful than others, but the EU has put in place significant new agricultural programs, with almost half of the organization’s budget going to this policy. One goal has been to modernize inefficient farms so that they might compete in the common market. In order to meet this goal, the EU established **farm subsidies**, guarantees of selling goods at high prices. The subsidies have proved very expensive and have yet to improve farm efficiency in any measurable way. Recent reforms of the system have transferred subsidies away from price supports for specific crops and toward direct payments to farmers. A growing chunk of the money goes to rural-development projects, not farming as such.

By the late 1990s, the European Union began to lay the groundwork for future policies in these areas:

- **Common defense** – European integration began with economic policy, so EU defense policy is much less well developed than those for trade and common currency. However, the Maastricht Treaty made foreign and defense policy one of the three “pillars” of the EU, so some defense policies have been put in place. In 1999, the European Council placed **crisis management** tasks at the core of the development of common security and defense of EU members. Crises were defined as humanitarian, rescue, and peacemaking tasks. The Council set as a goal that the EU should be able to deploy up to 60,000

troops within sixty days that could be sustained for at least one year. The agreement left troop commitment and deployment up to the member-states, and, as a result, did not create a European army.

- **Justice and Home Affairs** – The 1997 **Treaty of Amsterdam** set major policy initiatives for judicial affairs. The aim was to establish within a few years the **free movement** of European Union citizens and non-EU nationals throughout the Union. Free movement has involved setting policy regarding visas, asylum, and immigration. Additionally, the Treaty of Amsterdam helped to define cooperation among national police forces and judicial authorities in combating crime. Although member nations may support an EU structure in areas of justice, freedom, and security, they are not compelled to participate. In these areas, Britain, Ireland, and Denmark restrict their participation to only a few select provisions.
- **Terrorism** – The EU has become very concerned about terrorism since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon in the United States. More recent bombings have rocked transportation systems in Spain (2004) and Britain (2005), reminding Europeans that terrorists have almost certainly taken advantage of the increasing ease of travel across country borders created by integration of nations. Beginning in April 2004, United States and European Union officials held a series of policy dialogues on border and transportation security that focused on better addressing common security concerns and identifying areas where U.S.-EU cooperation and coordination might be enhanced.

### **The European Constitution and the Lisbon Treaty**

On October 29, 2004, European heads of government signed a treaty establishing a **European Constitution**. The intention of the Constitution was to replace the overlapping sets of treaties that govern member-states’ interactions, and to streamline decision-making as the organization had grown to 27 states by then. The Constitution went through the process of ratification by member-states, and was scheduled to go

into effect on November 1, 2006. However, in mid-2005, French and Dutch voters rejected the treaty in separate referenda, prompting other countries, including Britain, to postpone their ratification procedures. In December 2007, in an effort to salvage the goals of the Constitution, the heads of state or government of the then-27 member-states signed the **Lisbon Treaty**, a document that attempted to consolidate previous treaties that were still in force. Some important provisions of the treaty are:

- **A strengthening role for the European Parliament** – The treaty gives the Parliament new powers over EU legislation that place it on an equal footing with the European Council, gaining new rights in farm subsidy policies, border controls, asylum, and integration. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) also have more say over the EU Budget, bowing to national government in only a handful of areas like tax and foreign policy.
- **A greater involvement of national parliaments** – National parliaments have more opportunities to be involved in the work of the EU, particularly through a new mechanism that ensures that the Union only acts where results can be better achieved at EU level. The aim is to enhance democracy and increase legitimacy in the functioning of the Union.
- **Clarification of the relationship between member-states and the EU** – The treaty created a system called “categorization of competencies” that more clearly delineates the realms of responsibility of the EU in contrast to the initiatives best left up to the national governments.
- **Withdrawal from the Union** – For the first time, the possibility for a member-state to withdraw from the EU was recognized.
- **The creation of a permanent president of the EU** – Before the treaty was signed, the presidency of the European Council rotated every six months and it was usually filled by the top executive of one of the member-states, and so the position has a limited amount of power. The Lisbon Treaty made that posi-

tion permanent and full-time, and provides for a 2 ½ year term of office, renewable once.

- **Introduction of a Charter of Fundamental Rights** – The Charter promotes individual civil, political, economic, and social rights for European citizens.

The negative reactions in France and the Netherlands to the European Constitution reflected a growing resistance to integration, especially as the European Union membership continues to grow. Many fear that the power shift from national to supranational institutions will result in a **democratic deficit**, the loss of direct control of political decisions by the people. The European Parliament is the only directly elected body, and it is the weakest of the major EU bodies. The EU, then, is perceived by many as lacking accountability to citizens in member-states. The provisions of the Lisbon Treaty were meant to address these concerns, but it too was rejected by a popular referendum, this time in Ireland in June 2008. However, the treaty was eventually ratified by all the member-states, and it went into effect in December 2009.

The post-World War II visionaries who first conceived of a European Union saw not only an economically united Europe, but one with close political cooperation as well. So far, the European Union has shown little movement toward political integration, although the Maastricht Treaty of 1991 did include it within the “three pillars”, or spheres of authority. More cooperation in foreign and national security policy is still on the EU’s agenda, but economic integration remains the focus today.

### **Economic Issues**

The European Union has long been defined by a tension between **economic liberalism** that favors open, free markets, and an economic nationalism that seeks to protect national economic interests from the uncertainty of free markets. The older, more established EU members tend to reflect the latter policy orientation, while the newer, less economically stable members often favor economic liberalism. Supranationalism encourages economic integration but the proper balance with national interests is often a controversial topic. The **sovereign**

**debt crisis** that began with the near-collapse of the Greek economy in 2010 illustrates this tough issue, and the arguments that have erupted since then strike at the heart of this old tension.

### Austerity Programs

In reaction to the sovereign debt crisis, many European countries put **austerity programs** in place. These programs were designed to reduce budget deficits by cuts in spending and tax increases, and they quickly became controversial as unemployment rates increased and GDPs stagnated. Countries that put austerity programs in place include Germany, the Czech Republic, Britain, Italy, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Romania, and Spain. In many places, the programs sparked protests, especially as government welfare programs were cut. Austerity programs became quite controversial as economists debated their effectiveness in solving the debt crisis.

### The Greek Crisis

It was no surprise that the debt crisis began in Greece, which failed to join the euro area when it was set up in 1999 because it did not meet the economic or fiscal criteria for membership. Revisions to its budget figures showed that it probably shouldn't have been allowed in when it did join in 2001. After the international banking crisis of 2008, concern for "sovereign debts" (debts of individual EU countries) increased, especially for those with high debt-to-GNP ratios. Attention focused first on Greece, and in May 2010, the eurozone countries and International Monetary Fund agreed to a large loan to Greece, conditional on the implementation of harsh austerity measures. The Greek bailout was followed by a rescue package for Ireland in November and another for Portugal in May 2011.

During the summer of 2015, Greece once again could not meet its credit obligations, and the Greek prime minister, Alexis Tsipras, staged a showdown with Greece's creditors — the other nations that use the euro, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Mr. Tsipras balked at further austerity measures, and sponsored a referendum in which Greek voters strongly supported him. However, the prime minister finally gave in and accepted a new package of budget cuts, tax increases and other economic policy changes in return

for an additional 86 billion euros, or \$97.2 billion, in aid necessary to reopen Greece's banks and avert default on its loans.

### Bailouts and Economic Restructuring

These bailouts have been controversial, with some arguing that they are essential for keeping the economic health of the entire EU region, but others complaining that it is unfair to expect taxpayers in healthier countries to pay for the economic woes of less stable members. The bailouts are particularly unpopular in Germany, where one poll showed that a majority of the public thinks that the rescue of Greece was a mistake. As talk of a second bailout for Greece materialized in mid-2011, there was strong resistance in Germany to further assistance to the Greek economy. At summit meetings in 2011, European political leaders discussed the possibility of "**restructuring**" the economies of Greece, Ireland, and Portugal. **Economic structural adjustment** would mean that at least part of the debt would be forgiven. Supporters of restructuring claim that it is the only way to allow the weakened countries to recover; critics believe that restructuring makes the stronger countries pay for the weaker ones, a process that they claim weakens the entire continent. The crisis seriously questions the economic stability of the euro and the European banking system, and so the solutions that European leaders find will almost certainly influence the future development of the EU.

The sovereign debt crisis has impacted the economies of almost all European countries, not just those with the most fragile economies. The countries that adopted the euro were supposed to adhere to strict spending standards to prevent their debt from getting too big. They agreed to a debt target of 60 percent of their economic output. Some did, but others could finance their deficit spending at relatively low interest rates as long as Europe's economy remained healthy. However, when the financial crisis erupted, the economies shrank and their debts ballooned. Investors began to lose faith in the ability of those countries to repay their debts. In 2012, according to estimates by the *New York Times*, not even the strongest economies in Europe met the target. Germany's ratio of gross government debt to gross domestic product was 79%, but other countries had much higher ratios, such as Greece, with a ratio of 153%.

## Migration Issues

Migration has long been an issue for EU member-states, but the rising number of refugees seeking asylum in Europe reached a crisis level in 2015. Most were fleeing war-ridden states, especially Syria, Afghanistan, and Eritrea. The crisis drew attention in April 2015, when five boats carrying almost two thousand migrants to Europe sank in the Mediterranean Sea, leaving more than 1,200 people dead. The European Union has struggled to cope with the crisis, with EU member-states receiving about 395,000 new asylum applications during the first half of 2015. In September 2015, EU interior ministers approved a plan to relocate 120,000 asylum seekers over two years from Italy, Greece, and Hungary to all other EU countries (except Denmark, Ireland, and Britain). These mandatory migrant quotas quickly became controversial, with the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia voting against them. Britain agreed to accept 20,000 migrants over five years, but only those coming from states outside Europe.

Does the European Union represent the trend toward globalization in the world? Or is it a better example of fragmentation? Perhaps the EU is forging the way toward global connections, particularly in terms of trade and economic cooperation. On the other hand, it may be forming a bloc that invites other parts of the world to create blocs of their own, setting the stage for fragmentation and conflict among cultural areas. Only time will tell.

### COMPARATIVE CAPITALISM: THE EUROPEAN AND U.S. MODELS

Whereas capitalism is the accepted economic philosophy in the United States and Europe today, two competing models had developed by the late 20th century. The U.S. model, largely shared by Britain since Thatcherism took hold in the 1980s, places greater emphasis on free enterprise and the market, whereas continental western Europe has evolved a **social market economy** that is team-oriented and emphasizes cooperation between management and organized labor. The European model provides a stronger economic safety net – such as universal health care, day care for children, and generous pensions for government workers. Government-subsidized transportation systems are also characteristic of the social market economy. The two systems are based on two different attitudes toward equality, with the U.S. culture emphasizing the individual's right to compete in the marketplace and accepting any inequality that results from that competition. Many Europeans tend to view unrestricted competition more as a threat than an opportunity, since it can lead to vast inequalities. One explanation for these different views is that Europeans are more accustomed to a strong government role in society, and Americans tend to distrust their government more. Another explanation is that Americans see more possibilities for upward mobility, with each individual believing that (s)he will someday be rich, too.

### IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The Commission  
Common Market  
The Council of Ministers  
crisis management  
democratic deficit  
EC  
economic liberalism  
economic structural adjustment  
EEC  
enlargement fatigue  
European Central Bank  
European Constitution  
European Council

European Court of Justice  
 European Parliament  
 European Monetary Union  
 EU  
 farm subsidies  
 free movement  
 integration  
 Lisbon Treaty  
 Maastricht Treaty  
 MEPs  
 mixed economy  
 monetary policy  
 requirements for EU membership  
 restructuring  
 social market economy  
 sovereign debt crisis  
 supranational organization  
 “three pillars”  
 Treaty of Amsterdam

## EU Questions

### Multiple-choice Questions

1. In order to gain political, economic, and social clout, states in Europe have gone through a process of integration that requires them to
  - A) compete with one another for scarce resources
  - B) pool their sovereignty
  - C) form alliances with North American states
  - D) form an international army
  - E) lose their democratic forms of government
  
2. In the years after it was created in 1991, the European Union brought about the most change in Europe in regard to its
  - A) ability to coordinate international security
  - B) creation of an international judicial system
  - C) ability to control border crossings and immigration
  - D) creation of a common currency for most of its members
  - E) coordination of common agricultural policies
  
3. Which of the following international organizations were created to be global in nature?
  - A) NATO and the United Nations
  - B) OAS and NATO
  - C) the WTO and the EU
  - D) the United Nations and the WTO
  - E) the World Bank and the OAU

4. An important difference between capitalist models in the United States and continental Europe is that the European model puts more emphasis on

- A) individual competition
- B) limited powers of government
- C) upward mobility
- D) economic opportunity
- E) a strong economic safety net

5. Many European countries adopted austerity programs in 2010 and 2011 in reaction to

- A) the sovereign debt crisis
- B) enlargement fatigue
- C) criticisms of democratic deficit
- D) an increase in the number of asylum seekers from the Middle East
- E) stimulus packages created by the EU

6. Which of the following most accurately describes current powers of the European Court of Justice?

- A) The ECJ has almost no power to make decisions that limit national sovereignty.
- B) The ECJ may settle disputes among member-states, but not among private companies or individuals.
- C) The ECJ has the power of judicial review, and its decisions may limit national sovereignty.
- D) ECJ decisions may be overridden by the Commissioners.
- E) The ECJ may settle disputes between the Commissioners and the Council of Ministers, but it may not settle disputes among member-states.

7. The body of the EU that BEST demonstrates the continuing power of the nation-states is the

- A) Council of Ministers
- B) Commission
- C) European Parliament
- D) European Court of Justice
- E) European Monetary Union

8. The European Parliament is the only directly elected body of the EU, and it is the weakest one. This fact may be used to argue that the EU

- A) has not successfully formed a common market
- B) can never replace national governments
- C) will have problems integrating its newest members
- D) does not have true separation of powers
- E) has a democratic deficit

9. Which of the following is the BEST description of the current relationship between Britain and the European Union?

- A) Britain has yet to join the EU, but trades with EU countries on a regular basis.
- B) Britain is a member of the EU, but has not adopted the euro.
- C) Britain is well integrated into the EU, and generally allows the European Court of Justice to exercise judicial review of decisions made by British courts.
- D) Britain is not a member of the EU, and trades primarily with the United States
- E) Britain is a member of the EU, and almost all of its citizens support EU membership

10. The members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are selected by

- A) the heads of state of their country's government
- B) a special all-European popular election
- C) direct popular election by the people of their respective countries
- D) the Council of Ministers
- E) the Commissioner

**Country-Context Question: (20 minutes)**

Devolution and integration are opposite trends in policymaking practices.

- a) Define devolution. Define integration.
- b) Describe two examples of devolution in British government and politics.
- c) Explain one benefit of integration for EU member-states.
- d) Explain one reason why an EU member-state might resist EU-sponsored integration.



Over the course of the past century, the advanced industrialized democracies (represented by Britain in this book) have become the wealthiest and most powerful countries in the world. However, these countries have been widely criticized for the degree of economic inequality that exists among their citizens, as well as the big divide in wealth and power between them and the other countries of the world. Have advanced democracies encouraged and valued freedom at the expense of equality to such a degree that we may see them as basically unjust societies? Communist countries answer this question with a resounding “Yes!” and base their governments on the belief that equality is undervalued in capitalist countries such as Britain and the United States.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century two large countries declared themselves to be communist nations – the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China. Together they were home to a large share of the world’s population, and the economic and political influence of communism was indisputable. Today the Soviet Union has collapsed, leaving in its wake dozens of fledgling democracies, all struggling for their survival. Among major nations, only China remains under communist rule, although Cuba and North Korea are well-known communist regimes as well.

Communism has taken many forms since its birth in the mid-nineteenth century. The variations are so vast that they often appear to have little in common, although all claim to have roots in Marxism.



## MARXISM

The father of communism is generally acknowledged to be Karl Marx, who first wrote about his interpretation of history and vision for the future in *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. He saw capitalism – or the free market – as an economic system that exploited workers and increased the gap between the rich and the poor. He believed that conditions in capitalist countries would eventually become so bad that workers would join together in a revolution of the **proletariat** (workers), and overcome the **bourgeoisie**, who were owners of factories and other means of production. Marx envisioned a new world after the revolution, one in which social class would disappear because ownership of private property would be banned. According to Marx, communism encourages equality and cooperation, and without property to encourage greed and strife, governments would be unnecessary, and they would wither away.

## MARXISM-LENINISM

Russia was the first country to base a political system on Marx's theory. The "revolution of the proletariat" occurred in 1917, but did not follow the steps outlined by Karl Marx. Marx believed that the revolution would first take place in industrialized, capitalist countries. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russia had only begun to industrialize by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was far behind countries like Britain, Germany, and the United States. However, revolutionary leader V. I. Lenin believed that the dictatorial tsar should be overthrown, and that Russian peasants should be released from oppression. Lenin changed the nature of communism by asserting the importance of the **vanguard of the revolution** – a group of revolutionary leaders who could provoke the revolution in non-capitalist Russia. The government he established in 1917 was based on **democratic centralism**, or the "vanguard" who would lead the revolution since the people were incapable of providing leadership themselves. Democratic centralism provided for a hierarchical party structure in which leaders were elected from below. Discussion was permitted by party members until a decision was made, but "centralism" took over, and the leaders allowed no questioning of the decision after the fact. Lenin proceeded to direct industrializa-

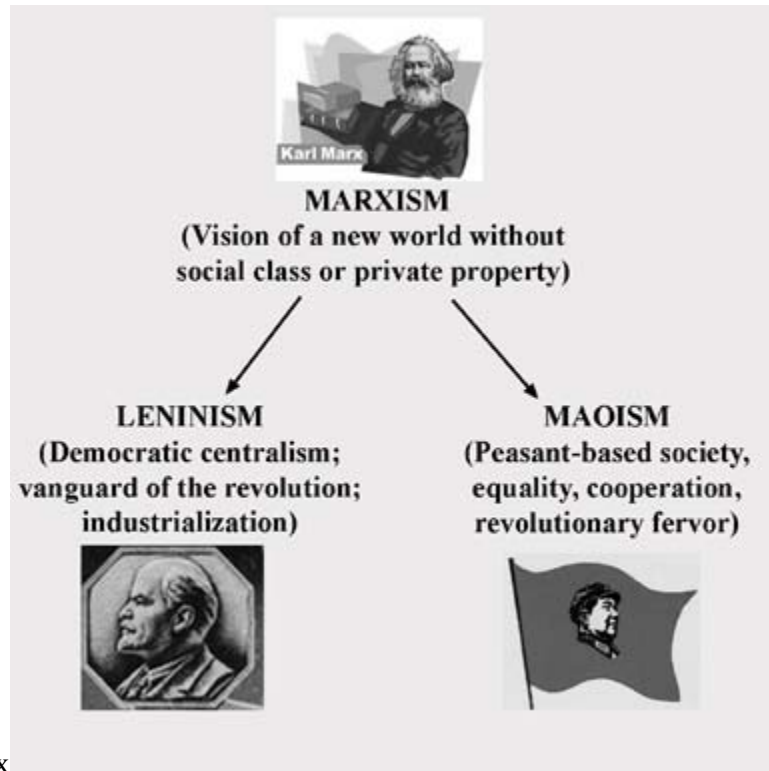
tion and agricultural development from a centralized government, and capitalistic ventures were severely restricted in the Soviet Union.

The system that Lenin set up has been incredibly influential because all communist countries that followed based their systems on the Soviet model. Political power rests with the Communist Party, a relatively small "vanguard" organization that by its very nature allows no competing ideologies to challenge it. The legitimacy of the state rests squarely on the party as the embodiment of communist ideology. Ironically, this feature of communist systems transformed Marxism, with all of its idealistic beliefs in equality for common citizens, into authoritarianism. Communist states are often associated with the use of force, but they also rely on **co-optation**, or allocation of power throughout various political, social, and economic institutions. Recruitment of elites takes place through **nomenklatura**, the process of filling influential jobs in the state, society, or the economy with people approved and chosen by the Communist Party. *Nomenklatura* includes not only political jobs, but almost all top positions in other areas as well, such as university presidents, newspaper editors, and military officers. Party approval translates as party membership, so the easiest way for an individual to get ahead is to join the party.

Despite the authoritarian nature of communist states, it is also true that the system does allow for a certain amount of **social mobility**, or the opportunity for individuals to change their social status over the course of their lifetimes.

## MAOISM AND MARKET-BASED SOCIALISM

China's version of communism began shortly after Lenin's revolution in Russia, but China's government was not controlled by communists until 1949. Almost from the beginning, China's communist leader was Mao Zedong, whose interpretation of Marxism was very different from that of the Soviet leaders. **Maoism** shares Marx's vision of equality and cooperation, but Mao believed very strongly in preserving China's peasant-based society. Although the government sometimes emphasized industrialization during Mao's long rule, by and large Mao was interested in promoting a revolutionary fervor that strengthened agriculturally-based communities.



After Mao's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping instituted **market-based socialism**, which today allows for a significant infusion of capitalism into the system. China chose a relatively gradual and smooth infusion of capitalism controlled by the government, in contrast to the internal upheavals that broke the Soviet Union apart after Mikhail Gorbachev tried to resuscitate the economy during the late 1980s. Russia's rocky road to capitalism continued during the first years of the new regime, as Boris Yeltsin tried to privatize the economy through "shock therapy".

### GENDER RELATIONS IN COMMUNIST REGIMES

Marxists often see traditional gender relations – with women in subservient roles to men – as resulting from the underlying inequality encouraged by capitalist societies. Men exploit women through the family structure in much the same way that the bourgeoisie exploit the proletariat in the workplace. Communism envisions complete economic, social, and political equality between men and women. As

we will see in Russia and China, this ideal was not followed in reality in any of the communist countries. However, it almost certainly increased opportunities for women, so that until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, women in communist countries were more likely to work outside the home than women in capitalist countries.

### COMMUNIST POLITICAL ECONOMY

Communist ideology led to political economies characterized by **central planning**, in which the ownership of private property and the market mechanism were replaced with the allocation of resources by the state bureaucracy. According to the basic tenets of Marxism, neither principle – ownership of private property nor the market economy – encourages equitable distribution of wealth. Countries with communist political economies have experienced these two problems:

- **Logistical difficulties** – Planning an entire economy is an extremely difficult task. The larger the economy, the more difficult the planning is and the less efficient the implementation is. In a market economy supply and demand interact spontaneously, and active management of an economy takes more work and energy.
- **Lack of worker incentives** – Capitalist countries often repeat this criticism of communist political economies. Workers have no fear of losing their jobs, and factories don't worry about going out of business, so there are few incentives for producing good quality products. In the absence of competition and incentives, innovation and efficiency disappear, and as a result, communist economies generally fall behind market economies.

In the case of the U.S.S.R., these problems were insurmountable, and they led to the dissolution of the Soviet Republics.

### NEW ECONOMIC TIES

Since Russia no longer has official ties to communism and China has now integrated capitalism into its economic system, just how important theoretical communism is to either country today is in question. New directions are indicated by both countries as they establish their roles in the global marketplace. In 2001 a chief economist of Gold-

man Sachs first coined the term “**BRIC**” for the fast-growing economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Goldman Sachs noted that the economies of the four countries are growing so fast that they might overtake the combined economies of the current richest countries of the world by 2050. In June 2009, the leaders of the BRIC countries held their first summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia, where they discussed common concerns and demanded more say in global policymaking. At the time of their meeting, the economies of Brazil, India, and China were recovering from the global monetary crisis of September 2008, but the Russian economy was still plagued by plunging oil prices. Since then they have met in various cities in the BRIC countries.

South Africa sought BRIC membership beginning in 2009 and the process for formal admission began in 2010. South Africa was officially admitted as a BRIC nation on December 24, 2010 after being invited by China and the other BRIC countries to join the group, altering the acronym to BRICS. South African President Jacob Zuma attended the BRICS summit in Sanya in April 2011 as a full member.

Both China and Russia today have authoritarian governments, although Russia (as we will see) set up democratic structures in the Constitution of 1993. Both have integrated capitalism into their economic systems, although they have taken very different paths to reach that end, and both have become important players in international markets. How these economic changes will impact their political systems is an unfolding drama, as both countries test the western assumption that capitalism and democracy go hand in hand. So far, China and Russia appear to be setting their own rules, and it is far from clear that democratic principles will be a part of their future.

In the pages that follow, we will examine in more detail the influence of communism on Russia and China. For Russia, has communism now been successfully replaced with capitalism? In China, has the system strayed so far from Marxism that it can hardly be seen as communism today?

## IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONCEPTS

bourgeoisie  
 BRIC  
 central planning  
*The Communist Manifesto*  
 co-optation  
 democratic centralism  
 Maoism  
 market-based socialism  
 Marxism  
 Marxism-Leninism  
*nomenklatura*  
 proletariat  
 social mobility  
 “vanguard of the revolution”



#### CHAPTER FOUR: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

### RUSSIA IN AN AGE OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Between 1945 and 1991, global politics was defined by intense competition between two superpowers: the Soviet Union and the United States. The competition encompassed almost all areas of the world and affected a broad range of economic, political, social, and cultural patterns. As a result, when the Soviet Union surprisingly and suddenly collapsed in 1991, the reverberations were heard everywhere. In the wake of its demise, the component republics broke apart, leaving the Russian Federation as the largest piece, with a population cut in half, but with a land space that allowed it to remain geographically the largest country in the world.

The first president of the Russian Federation was **Boris Yeltsin**, a former member of the Soviet Politburo who declared the end of the old Soviet-style regime. The “**shock therapy**” reforms that he advocated pointed the country in the direction of democracy and a free-market economy. Yet Yeltsin was an uneven leader, often ill or under the influence of alcohol, who reverted to authoritarian rule whenever he pleased. A small group of family members and advisers effectively took control from the weakened president, and they ran the country as an **oligarchy**, granting themselves favors and inviting economic and political corruption. However, despite this development, a new constitution was put in place in 1993, and regular, sometimes competitive elections took place in the years that followed.

A new president, **Vladimir Putin**, was elected in 2000 and 2004 without serious conflict, but many observers are still wary of the continu-

ing influence of the oligarchy. Putin often acted aggressively in containing the oligarchs’ political and economic powers, and followed a clear path toward increasing centralization of power. As the election of 2008 approached, he followed the Constitution of 1993 by stepping down after two terms, but he announced his intention to stay on as prime minister under the new president, **Dmitri Medvedev**. Putin maintained control of the government while prime minister, and in 2012, he successfully ran for president again. Is Putin’s continuing influence in policymaking a signal that Russia is again becoming an authoritarian state and that its fling with democracy is now over?

Modern Russia, then, is a very unpredictable country. Its historic roots deeply influence every area of life, and Russia has almost no experience with democracy and a free market. Is the new structure set in place during the 1990s proof that the global trend toward democratization has influenced the Russian political system? Or perhaps it is possible that Russia is settling in as an illiberal democracy, with direct elections and other democratic structures in place, but with little hope of strengthening the democratic principles of civil liberties and rights, competitive political parties, rule of law, and an independent judiciary. However, Russia’s long history of autocratic rule certainly leaves open the third possibility that democracy has little chance to survive in Russia. No one knows at this point, but Russian history and political culture leave room for all three paths. Slavic roots provide a strong tendency toward autocratic rule, but the desire to modernize and compete for world power has been apparent since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, even though there is little evidence that current Russian leaders see democratization as a model for their country’s political development. One way to categorize Russia is as a “hybrid,” a system with some characteristics of a democracy, but with some strong authoritarian tendencies as well, although *The Economist’s* Democracy Index (p. 27) categorizes Russia as an authoritarian regime.

### SOVEREIGNTY, AUTHORITY, AND POWER

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, public authority and political power emanated from one place: the Politburo of the Communist Party. The Politburo was a small group of men who climbed the ranks of the party through **nomenklatura**, an ordered path from local party soviets (com-

mittees) to the commanding heights of leadership. When the Soviet Union dissolved, its authority and power vanished with it, leaving in place a new government structure with questionable legitimacy. Still, the political culture and historical traditions of Russia are firmly entrenched and have shaped the genesis of the new regime, and undoubtedly will determine the nature of its future.

### Legitimacy

In the earliest years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the legitimacy of the Russian government was at very low ebb, partly because the regime change was so recent, and partly because the change appeared to be a drastic departure from the past. However, there is growing evidence that the system has stabilized since Vladimir Putin was first elected president in 2000, and since then, Putin and his successor, Medvedev, retreated from democratic practices to reestablish some of the old authoritarianism from Russia's traditional political culture.

Historically, political legitimacy has been based on strong, autocratic rule, first by centuries of **tsars**, and then by the firm dictatorship of party leaders during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Under communist rule, **Marxism-Leninism** provided the legitimacy base for the party, with its ideology of **democratic centralism**, or rule by a few instead of the many. Although it theoretically only supplemented Marxism-Leninism, **Stalinism** in reality changed the regime to **totalitarianism**, a more complete, invasive form of strong-man rule than the tsars ever were able to implement. After Stalin, two reformers – Nikita Khrushchev and Mikhail Gorbachev – tried to loosen the party's stranglehold on power, only to facilitate the downfall of the regime.

In an attempt to reconstruct the country's power base, the **Constitution of 1993** provided for a strong president, although the power of the position is checked by popular election and by the lower house of the legislature, the **Duma**. The institution of the presidency only dates to the late 1980s, but the Duma actually existed under the tsars of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Yeltsin attempted to strengthen the Constitution's legitimacy by requiring a referendum by the people to endorse its acceptance. In the 1990s, the Constitution's legitimacy was seriously tested by attempted coups and intense conflict between President Yeltsin and

the Duma. However, the 2000 presidential transition from Yeltsin to Putin went smoothly, an accomplishment that indicated that the Constitution is more resilient than it seemed to be during the 1990s. Under Putin's first two terms, government operations stabilized significantly, and the presidential transition from Putin to Medvedev went without incident, although Putin's retention of political power as the prime minister indicated that he continued to hold authoritarian control of the political system, as affirmed by his reelection as president in 2012.

### Historical Influences on Political Traditions

Several legacies from Russian history shape the modern political system:

- **Absolute, centralized rule** – From the beginning, Russian tsars held absolute power that they defended with brutality and force. One reason for their tyranny was geography: the Russian plain was overrun and conquered by a series of invaders, including Huns, Vikings, and Mongols. The chaos caused by these takeovers convinced Russian leaders of the importance of firm, unchallenged leadership in keeping their subjects in control. Centralized power also characterized the Communist regime of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many observers believe that Vladimir Putin has steered the country back to this style of leadership.
- **Extensive cultural heterogeneity** – Until the 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia was a relatively small inland culture, but even then, the numerous invasions from earlier times meant that the area was home to people of wide cultural diversity. This **cultural heterogeneity** intensified as Russia rapidly expanded its borders, until by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the empire stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean. Since then, the borders of Russia have been in an almost constant state of change, so that ethnicities have been split apart, thrown together with others, and then split apart again. The name “Russian Federation” reflects this diversity, with countless “republics” and “autonomous regions” based on ethnicity, but with borders impossible to draw along ethnic lines because of the blend and locations

of people. This heterogeneity has always been a special challenge to Russian rulers.

- **Slavophile v. Westernizer** – In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, American diplomat George Kennan identified this conflicting set of political traditions as a major source of problems for Russia. The Slavophile (“lover of Slavs”) tradition has led to a pride in Slavic customs, language, religion, and history that causes Russia to resist outside influence. This tendency to value isolation was challenged first by **Tsar Peter the Great** in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century. He used the western model to “modernize” Russia with a stronger army, a navy, an infrastructure of roads and communication, a reorganized bureaucracy, and a “**Window on the West**”. The window was St. Petersburg, a city built by Peter on newly conquered lands near the Baltic Sea. His efforts to build Russia’s power were followed by those of **Catherine the Great** of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, so that by the time of her death, Russia was a powerful major empire. However, their efforts set in place a conflict, since the affection for Slavic ways did not disappear with the changes.
- **Revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century** – The long, autocratic rule of the tsars suddenly and decisively came to an end in 1917 when **V. I. Lenin’s Bolsheviks** seized power, and renamed the country the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Communist leaders replaced the tsars, and they ruled according to socialist principles, although the tendency toward absolute, centralized rule did not change. The old social classes, however, were swept away, and the new regime tried to blend elements of westernization (industrialization, economic development, and technological innovation) with those of the Slavophile (nationalism, resistance to western culture and customs). A second revolution occurred in 1991, when the U.S.S.R. dissolved, and its fifteen republics became independent nations. The Russian Federation, born in that year, is currently struggling to replace the old regime with a new one, although many of the former republics have settled into authoritarianism.



**Comparative Geographic Sizes of Britain and Russia.** Geographically, Britain is still “Little England,” and Russia is still the largest country in the world in terms of land space, even after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

### Political Culture

Russia’s political culture has been shaped by its geographic setting, cultural orientation, and conflicting attitudes toward the state.

### Geographic Setting

Geographically, Russia is the largest country in the world and encompasses many different ethnicities and climates. Its republics and regions border the Black Sea in the southwest, the Baltic Sea in the northwest, the Pacific to the east, the Arctic Ocean to the north, and China to the south. Its borders touch many other nations with vastly different political cultures and customs. Russia is also one of the coldest countries on earth, partly because of northern latitude, but also because so many cities are inland. Ironically for a country of its size, warm water ports are few, and its history has been shaped by the desire to conquer countries that have blocked Russian access to the sea. Russia has many natural resources, including oil, gas, and timber, but much of it is locked in frozen Siberia, and very difficult to extract. However, in recent years these resources have been developed, and have fueled significant economic growth.

### Eastern Orthodoxy

Early in its history, Russians cast their lot with the flourishing city of Constantinople, establishing trade routes in that direction, and adopting the Eastern Orthodox religion. As Constantinople's influence waned and the influence of Western Europe increased, Russia's orientation meant that it did not share the values generated by the European Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution, and Enlightenment. Instead of individualism, Russians came to value a strong state that could protect them from their geographic vulnerabilities. In contrast to Russian **statism**, the West developed a taste for **civil society**, or spheres of privacy free from control by the state. Eastern Orthodoxy also was inextricably linked to the state, so the principle of separation of church and state never developed. Even when the Communist state forbid its citizens to practice religion, broad acceptance of government control remained.

### Equality of Result (contrasted to equality of opportunity)

The Communist regime instilled in the Russian people an appreciation for equality, a value already strong in a country of peasants with similar living standards. Russian egalitarianism has survived the fall of the Soviet Union, and most Russians resent wealth and income differences. This "equality of result" is very different from western "equality of opportunity" that sees "getting ahead" as a sign of initiative, hard work, and talent. As a result, the Russian political culture is not particularly conducive to the development of capitalism.

### Skepticism about Power

Despite their dependence on government initiative, Russian citizens can be surprisingly hostile toward their leadership. Mikhail Gorbachev found this out when in the late 1980s he initiated *glasnost* – a new emphasis on freedom of speech and press. As his reforms faltered, he received torrents of complaints from citizens that almost certainly contributed to the breakup of the Soviet Union. Today surveys show that citizens have little faith in the political system, although, until recently, people seemed to have more confidence in Putin than in any other individual leaders or institutions. During his first two terms as president, Putin's approval ratings remained between 70 and 80

percent and even reached almost 90 percent in 2008, but no other public officials have had comparable approval rates, including governors of regions, army generals, Duma members, or the police. According to Russia's most respected polling outfit, the Levada Institute, Putin's popularity declined after the oil bust of 2008, but since 2011, his approval rating has still remained above 60 percent. The Russian people appear to have little confidence in nongovernmental leaders, such as entrepreneurs, bankers, and media personalities.

### The Importance of Nationality

Even though cultural heterogeneity has almost always been characteristic of the Russian political culture, people tend to categorize others based on their nationality, and they often discriminate against groups based on long-held stereotypes. Russians generally admire the Baltic people for their "civility" and sophistication, but they sometimes express disdain for the Muslim-Turkic people of Central Asia. In return, governments in those areas have passed laws discouraging Russians from remaining within their borders. Anti-Semitism was strong in tsarist Russia, and today some nationalists blame Jews for Russia's current problems.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

In contrast to Britain, Russia has almost always had difficulty with gradual and ordered change. Instead, its history reflects a resistance to change by reform and a tendency to descend into chaos or resort to revolution when contradictory forces meet. The most successful tsars, such as Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, understood the dangers of chaos in Russia, and often resorted to force in order to keep their power. The 19<sup>th</sup> century tsars faced the infiltration of Enlightenment ideas of democracy and individual rights, and those who tried reforms that allowed gradual inclusion of these influences failed. For example, Alexander II, who freed Russian serfs and experimented with local assemblies, was assassinated by revolutionaries in 1881. The forces that led to his assassination later blossomed into full-blown revolution, the execution of the last tsar, and the establishment of a communist regime. Likewise, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century tsars' attempts to gradually industrialize Russia were largely unsuccessful, but Joseph



Stalin's Five-Year Plans that called for rapid, abrupt economic change led to the establishment of the Soviet Union as one of two superpowers that dominated the world for a half century after the conclusion of World War II. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mikhail Gorbachev's attempts to reform the political and economic systems failed, and change again came abruptly with a failed coup d'état, and the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union.

Russia's history is characterized by three distinct time periods:

- **A long period of autocratic rule by tsars** – Tsars ruled Russia from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Control of Russia was passed down through the Romanov family from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on, but transitions were often accompanied by brutality and sometimes assassination.
- **20<sup>th</sup> century rule by the Communist Party** – Communist rule began in 1917 when V.I. Lenin's Bolsheviks seized control of

the government after the last tsar, Nicholas II, was deposed. The regime toppled in 1991 when a failed coup from within the government created chaos.

- **An abrupt regime change to procedural democracy and a free market in 1991** – President Boris Yeltsin put western-style reforms in place to create the Russian Federation. Since 2000, Vladimir Putin has dominated Russian government and politics, limiting democratic reforms.

The two transition periods between the major time periods were sparked by revolution and quick, dramatic change. The Slavic influence has brought some continuity to Russia's history, but in general change has rarely been evolutionary and gradual. Instead, long periods of authoritarian rule have been punctuated by protest and violence.

### Tsarist Rule

The first tsars were princes of Moscow, who cooperated with their 13<sup>th</sup> century Mongol rulers, and in return for their assistance were rewarded with land and power. But when Mongol rule weakened, the princes declared themselves "tsars" in the tradition of the "Caesars" of ancient Rome. The tsars were autocratic from the beginning, and tightly controlled their lands in order to protect them from invasion and attack. The tsars also headed the **Russian Orthodox Church**, so that they were seen as both political and religious leaders. Early Russia was isolated from western Europe by its orientation to the Eastern Orthodox world, and long distances separated Russian cities from major civilizations to the south and east.

### Western Influence

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, **Tsar Peter the Great** introduced western technology and culture in an attempt to increase Russia's power and influence. From his early childhood, he was intrigued by the West, and he became the first tsar to travel to Germany, Holland, and England. There he learned about shipbuilding and other types of technology. He brought engineers, carpenters, and architects to Russia, and set the country on a course toward world power. **Catherine the Great**, who originally came from Germany, ruled Russia during



the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and managed to gain warm water access to the Black Sea, an accomplishment that had eluded Peter. Both looked to the West to help develop their country, but neither abandoned absolute rule. Catherine read widely, and was very interested in Enlightenment thought, but she checked any impulses she had to apply them to her rule. Instead, she became an **enlightened despot**, or one who rules absolutely, but with clear goals for the country in mind. Tsars after Peter and Catherine alternated between emphasizing Slavic roots and tolerating western style reform, although none of them successfully responded to the revolutionary movement growing within their country during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

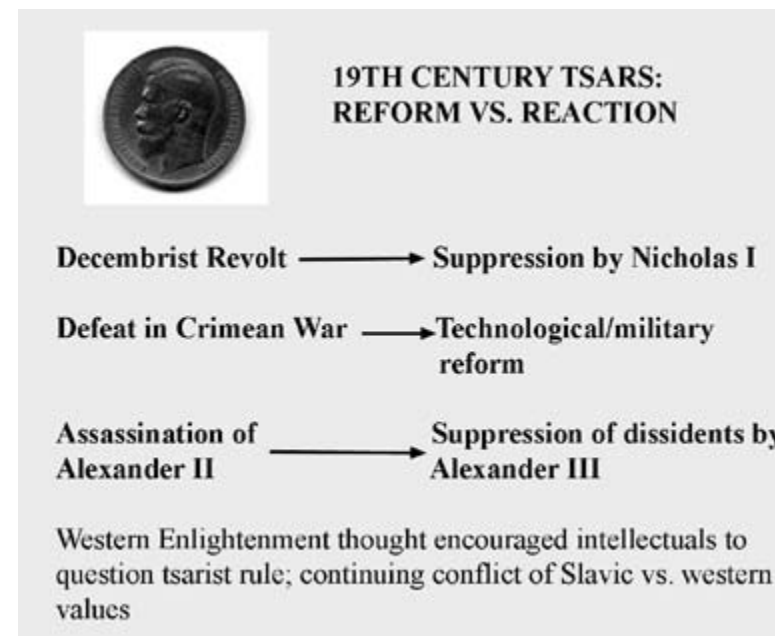
### Nineteenth Century Tsars

Russia was brought into direct contact with the West when Napoleon invaded in 1812. Alexander I successfully resisted the attack, but at great cost to the empire. Western thought influenced Russian intellectuals who saw no room for western political institutions to grow under the tsars' absolutism. Their frustration erupted in the **Decembrist Revolt of 1825**, which was crushed ruthlessly by Nicholas I. By mid-century the Russian defeat in the **Crimean War** convinced many of the tsar's critics that Russian ways were indeed backward and in need of major reform. Nineteenth century tsars reacted to their demands by sending the secret police to investigate and by exiling or executing the dissenters.

Of all the 19<sup>th</sup> century tsars, the only one who seriously sponsored reform was Alexander II. However, even though he freed Russia's serfs and set up regional *zemstvos* (assemblies), the increasingly angry *intelligentsia* did not think his actions went far enough. Alexander II was assassinated in 1881 by his critics, and his son Alexander III reacted by undoing the reforms and intensifying the efforts of the secret police.

### The Revolution of 1917, Lenin, and Stalin

The most immediate cause of the Revolution of 1917 was Russia's ineffectiveness in fighting the Russo-Japanese War and World War I. Tsar Nicholas II was indeed in the wrong place at the wrong time, but he also was a weak ruler who had no control over the armies. The first



signs of the revolution were in 1905, when riots and street fighting broke out in protest to Russian losses in the war with Japan. The tsar managed to put that revolution down, but the state finally collapsed in 1917 in the midst of World War I. Russian soldiers were fighting without guns or shoes, and mass defections from the war front helped send the state into chaos.

### Lenin and the Bolsheviks

By the 1890s, some of the revolutionists in Russia were **Marxists** who were in exile, along with other dissidents. However, according to Marxism, socialist revolutions would first take place not in Russia, but in capitalist countries like Germany, France, and England. At the turn of the century, Russia was still primarily an agricultural society with little industrial development. In his 1905 pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?*, **V. I. Lenin** changed the meaning of Marxism when he argued for **democratic centralism**, the idea of a “vanguard” leadership group that would lead the revolution because the people could not organize it themselves. Lenin believed that the situation in Russia was so bad that the revolution could occur even though it was a non-industrialized

society. Lenin's followers came to be called the **Bolsheviks**, and they took control of the government in late 1917. In 1922, Russia was re-named the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In 1918, a civil war broke out between the **White Army**, led by Russian military leaders and funded by the Allied Powers, and the **Red Army** led by Lenin. The Reds won, and in 1920, Lenin instituted his **New Economic Policy**, which allowed a great deal of private ownership to exist under a centralized leadership. The plan brought relative prosperity to farmers, but it did not promote industrialization. Would Lenin have moved on to a more socialist approach? No one knows, because Lenin died in 1924 before his plans unfolded and before he could name a successor. A power struggle followed, and Joseph Stalin, the "Man of Steel", won control and led the country to the heights of totalitarianism.

### Stalinism

Stalin vastly changed Lenin's democratic centralism (also known as **Marxism-Leninism**). Stalin placed the Communist Party at the center of control, and allowed no other political parties to compete with it. Party members were carefully selected, with only about 7% of the population actually joining. Communists ran local, regional, and national governments, and leaders were identified and promoted through *nomenklatura*, or the process of party members selecting promising recruits from the lower levels. Most top government officials also belonged to the **Central Committee**, a group of party leaders who met twice a year. Above the Central Committee was the **Politburo**, the heart and soul of the Communist Party. This group of about twelve men ran the country, and their decisions were carried out by government agencies and departments. The head of the Politburo was the **general secretary**, who assumed full power as dictator of the country. Joseph Stalin was the general secretary of the Communist Party from 1927 until his death in 1953.

### *Collectivization and Industrialization*

Stalin's economic plan for the U.S.S.R. had two parts: **collectivization and industrialization**. Stalin replaced the small private farms of

the NEP with "**collective farms**" that were state run and supposedly more efficient. Private land ownership was done away with, and the farms were intended to feed workers in the cities who contributed to the industrialization of the nation. Some peasants resisted, particularly those who owned larger farms. These **kulaks** were forced to move to cities or to labor camps, and untold numbers died at the hands of government officials.

With the agricultural surplus from the farms, Stalin established his first **Five Year Plan**, which set ambitious goals for production of heavy industry, such as oil, steel, and electricity. Other plans followed, and all were carried out for individual factories by **Gosplan**, the Central State Planning Commission. Gosplan became the nerve center for the economy, determining production and distribution of virtually all goods in the Soviet Union.

**Stalinism**, then, is this two-pronged program of collectivization and industrialization, carried out by central planning, and executed with force and brutality.

### *Stalin's Foreign Policy*

During the 1930s Stalin's primary focus was internal development, so his foreign policy was intended to support that goal. He advocated "socialism in one country" to emphasize his split with traditional Marxist emphasis on international revolution, and he tried to ignore the fascist threat from nearby Germany and Italy. Stalin signed a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in 1939, only to be attacked by Germany the following year. Russia then joined sides with the Allies for the duration of World War II, but tensions between east and west were often apparent at conferences, and as soon as the war ended, the situation escalated into the Cold War. These significant shifts in foreign policy all accommodated his main goal: the industrial development of the U.S.S.R.

### *The Purges*

Joseph Stalin is perhaps best known for his purges: the execution of millions of citizens, including up to one million party members. He became obsessed with disloyalty in the party ranks, and he ordered

the execution of his own generals and other members of the Politburo and Central Committee. Stalin held total power, and by the time of his death in 1953, some speculated that he had gone mad. His successor, **Nikita Khrushchev**, set about to reform Stalinism by loosening its totalitarian nature and publicly denouncing the purges.

### Reform under Khrushchev and Gorbachev

After Stalin died in 1953, a power struggle among top Communist Party leaders resulted in the choice of Nikita Khrushchev as party secretary and premier of the U.S.S.R. In 1956 he gave his famous “**secret speech**”, in which he revealed the existence of a letter written by Lenin before he died. The letter was critical of Stalin, and Khrushchev used it to denounce Stalin’s rules and practices, particularly the purges that he sponsored. This denouncement led to **deStalinization**, a process that brought about reforms, such as loosening government censorship of the press, decentralization of economic decision-making, and restructuring of collective farms. In foreign policy, Khrushchev advocated “peaceful coexistence,” or relaxation of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. He was criticized from the beginning for the suggested reforms, and his diplomatic and military failure in the Cuban Missile Crisis ensured his removal from power. Furthermore, most of his reforms did not appear to be working by the early 1960s. He was replaced by the much more conservative **Leonid Brezhnev**, who ended the reforms and tried to cope with the growing number of economic problems that were just under the surface of Soviet power.

After Brezhnev died in 1982, power fell to two short-lived successors, who were in turn replaced in 1985 by a reformer from a younger generation, **Mikhail Gorbachev**. Gorbachev was unlike any previous Soviet leader in that he not only looked and acted more “western”, but he also was more open to western-style reforms than his predecessors, including Khrushchev. Gorbachev inherited far more problems than any outsider realized at the time, and many of his reforms were motivated by sheer necessity to save the country from economic disaster. His program was three-pronged:

- **Glasnost** – This term translates from the Russian as “openness”; it allowed more open discussion of political, social,

and economic issues as well as open criticism of the government. Although this reform was applauded by western nations and many Russians, it caused many problems for Gorbachev. After so many years of repression, people vented hostility toward the government that encouraged open revolt, particularly among some of the republics that wanted independence from Soviet control.

- **Democratization** – Gorbachev believed that he could keep the old Soviet structure, including Communist Party control, but at the same time insert a little democracy into the system. Two such moves included the creation of 1) a new Congress of People’s Deputies with directly elected representatives and 2) a new position of “President” that was selected by the Congress. However, many of the new deputies were critical of Gorbachev, increasing the level of discord within the government.
- **Perestroika** – This economic reform was Gorbachev’s most radical, and also his least successful. Again, he tried to keep the old Soviet structure, and modernize from within. Most significantly, it transferred many economic powers held by the central government to private hands and the market economy. Specific reforms included authorization of some privately-owned companies, penalties for under-performing state factories, leasing of farm land outside the collective farms, price reforms, and encouragement of joint ventures with foreign companies.

None of Gorbachev’s reforms were ever fully carried out because the Revolution of 1991 swept him out of office.

### A Failed Coup and the Revolution of 1991

In August 1991, “conservatives” (those that wanted to abandon Gorbachev’s reforms), several high-ranking Communist Party and government officials led a coup d’état that tried to remove Gorbachev from office. The leaders included the vice-president, the head of the KGB (Russian secret police), and top military advisers. The coup failed when popular protests broke out, and soldiers from the military

defected rather than support their leaders. The protesters were led by **Boris Yeltsin**, the elected president of the Russian Republic and former Politburo member. Yeltsin had been removed from the Politburo a few years earlier because his radical views offended conservatives. He advocated more extreme reform measures than Gorbachev did, and he won his position as president of the Russian Republic as a result of new voting procedures put in place by Gorbachev.

#### MILESTONES IN RUSSIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 988 C.E.** Russian Tzar Vladimir I converted to Orthodox Christianity, setting Russia on a different course of development from Western Europe.
- 1613** The Romanov family came to power and ruled until 1917.
- 1689-1725** Peter the Great ruled Russia, bringing the dynamic of “Slavophile vs. Westernizer” to Russian political development.
- 1762-1796** Catherine the Great, the second great Westernizer, solidified and expanded Peter’s reforms, though she still ruled with an iron hand, as all Russian tsars did.
- 1917** The last tsar was deposed, and the Bolshevik Revolution put V. I. Lenin in control of the U.S.S.R.
- 1917-1921** The Russian Civil War raged as many factions inside and outside Russia fought to oust Lenin from power. Lenin solidified his power in 1921.
- 1927-1953** Joseph Stalin ruled the U.S.S.R., reinterpreting the meaning of communism and instituting his programs of collectivization and industrialization.
- 1991** A coup against General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev failed, but also instigated a process that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- 1993** The new Russian Constitution put in place the current regime.

Gorbachev was restored to power, but the U.S.S.R. only had a few months to live. By December 1991, eleven republics had declared their independence, and eventually Gorbachev was forced to announce the end of the union, which put him out of a job. The fifteen republics went their separate ways, but Boris Yeltsin emerged as the president of the largest and most powerful republic, now renamed the Russian Federation.

#### The Russian Federation: 1991 to the Present

Once the Revolution of 1991 was over, Boris Yeltsin proceeded with his plans to create a western-style democracy. The old Soviet structure was destroyed, but the same problems that haunted Gorbachev were still there. The **Constitution of 1993** created a three-branch government, with a president, a prime minister, a lower legislative house called the **Duma**, and a **Constitutional Court**. Conflict erupted between Yeltsin and the Duma, and the Russian economy did not immediately respond to the “**shock therapy**” (an immediate market economy) that the government prescribed. Yeltsin also proved to be a much poorer president than he was a revolutionary leader. His frequent illnesses and alcoholism almost certainly explain the erratic behavior that led him to hire and fire prime ministers in quick succession. Yeltsin resigned in the months before the election of 2000, and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin became acting president. Although Putin supported Yeltsin’s reforms, he was widely seen as a more conservative leader who many hoped would bring stability to the newly formed government. As his presidency progressed, Putin retreated significantly from the commitments that Yeltsin had made to the establishment of a democratic system. The fact that he honored the Constitution of 1993 by stepping down as president at the end of his second term is countered by his remaining on as prime minister, and most believed that he still controlled policymaking in Russia. The Constitution allowed Putin to run for president again in 2012, and his decision to run shapes the path that Russia takes as it balances its authoritarian past with democratization trends of the present.

#### CITIZENS, SOCIETY AND THE STATE

Russian citizens are affected by many contradictory influences from their political culture. When questioned, most say that they support the idea of a democratic government for Russia, although many do

not believe that one exists today. However, they also like the idea of a strong state and powerful political leaders, characteristics that help to explain the popularity of Vladimir Putin as a political leader.

### Cleavages

The Russian Federation has many societal cleavages that greatly impact policymaking, including nationality, social class, and rural/urban divisions.

#### Nationality

The most important single cleavage in the Russian Federation is **nationality**. Although about 80% of all citizens are Russians, the country includes sizeable numbers of Tatars, Ukrainians, Armenians, Chuvashes, Bashkirs, Byelorussians, and Moldavians. These cleavages determine the organization of the country into a “federation,” with “autonomous regions,” republics, and provinces whose borders are based on ethnicity. Like the breakaway republics of 1991, many would like to have their independence, although most have trade benefits from the Russian government that induce them to stay within the Federation.

A notable exception is **Chechnya**, a primarily Muslim region that has fought for years for its freedom. The Russian government has had considerable difficulty keeping Chechnya a part of Russia, and the independence movement there is still very strong. In recent years, Chechens have been involved in terrorist acts, including the 2004 seizure of a school in southern Russia that resulted in gunfire and explosions that killed more than 350 people, many of them children. Almost certainly, other regions within Russia’s borders are watching, and the government knows that if Chechnya is successful, other independence movements will break out in the country. In an effort to gain legitimacy for the Russian government in Chechnya, a referendum was held to vote on a new constitution for the region. The constitution was approved by the Chechen voters, even though it declared that their region was an “inseparable part” of Russia. With Putin’s support, former rebel Ramzan Kadyrov became president of Chechnya in 2007, but the fighting has not stopped, with killings and kidnappings remaining quite common. Kadyrov has ruled Chechnya virtually as a

separate Islamic State, with his own 20,000-strong army, his own tax system, and his own religious laws. Some have criticized Putin for allowing Kadyrov such free reign, especially since many are suspicious that Kadyrov’s men have been involved in murders, kidnappings, torture and extortion.

The entire area of the Caucasus is currently restive, and Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008 increased tensions all across the region. In the summer of 2009, a suicide bomber tried to kill the president of Ingushetia, a republic that borders Chechnya, with a Chechen group involved in the Beslan school siege taking responsibility for the attack. Explosions and bombings increased all across the Caucasus later in the summer, and suicide attacks returned after a few years of relative calm.

Russian nationalists have taken responsibility for kidnappings, beheadings and a 2006 bombing that killed 10 at a Moscow market operated mostly by immigrants. At least 37 people were killed and more than 300 injured in xenophobic attacks in 2010, according to the Sova center, a Moscow-based organization that tracks such violence. One of the most widely publicized cases came in December 2010, in the wake of a fatal shooting of an ethnic Russian soccer fan by a man from Russia’s North Caucasus region. Thousands of young people began an extended riot close to Red Square, chanting “Russia for Russians” and racial slurs.

In 2014, Russia hosts the Winter Olympics in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, almost on the doorstep of insurgent unrest in the Caucasus. Security always had been tight in Sochi, where Mr. Putin has a presidential residence that he uses often and where he frequently hosts visiting foreign leaders. The government further tightened security before the games, which officially began February 7, 2014. The games proceeded without serious incident.

#### Religion

Tsarist Russia was overwhelmingly Russian Orthodox, with the tsar serving as spiritual head of the church. In reaction, the Soviet Union prohibited religious practices of all kinds, so that most citizens lost their religious affiliations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Boris Yeltsin en-

couraged the Russian Orthodox Church to reestablish itself, partly as a signal of his break with communism, but also as a reflection of old Russian nationalism. Today most ethnic Russians identify themselves as Russian Orthodox, but they are still largely nonreligious, with only a small percentage regularly attending church services.

The growing acceptance of the church was demonstrated in 2007, when the Russian Church Abroad reunited with the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian Church Abroad had split off after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, vowing never to return as long as the “godless regime” was in power. In a meeting in 2003 in New York, Putin met with leaders of the church to assure them “that this godless regime is no longer there... You are sitting with a believing president.” (*New York Times*, May 17, 2007). After the reunion in 2007, Moscow still retained ultimate authority in appointments and other church matters, and many critics say that the church is too much under government control.

Other religions are represented in small percentages – Roman Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and Protestants. Since the current regime is

relatively new and political parties have few ideological ties, no clear patterns have emerged that indicate political attitudes of religious vs. nonreligious citizens. However, in the past Russia has generally followed a pragmatic combination of authoritarianism and flexibility toward minorities.

One pattern worth noting is the rapid rise in the Muslim share of the population in recent years. Russia has more Muslims than any other European state except Turkey, and some estimates show as many as 20 million Muslims in the country. Muslims are concentrated in three areas:

1. **Moscow** – Muslims form a large share of laborers who have migrated to Moscow in recent years to find work.
2. **The Caucasus** – In this area between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, many ethnicities (including Chechens) are Muslim. This area is often seen as a hot spot of trouble (along with Palestine, Kashmir, and Bosnia) for Muslims. The repression of Chechens, as well as intermittent violence in the entire region, was the biggest issue for Putin as he tried to cultivate Russia’s role in global Muslim affairs. The region remains highly volatile today.
3. **Bashkortostan and Tatarstan** – Muslim relations with Russians are generally calmer in these two regions than in the Caucasus. Tatarstan’s Muslim president, Mintimer Shaimiev, accompanied Mr. Putin around the Middle East in 2005, as the president tried to restructure Russia’s image as a country supportive of Islam.

In 2013, the government conducted several crackdowns on radical Islamists, largely in preparation for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. In June 2013, the police arrested 300 Muslims in Moscow, 170 of whom were foreigners. The Muslims were found with extremist literature, Radio Free Europe reported, and were considered to be a threat. Putin said in a meeting of security force officers that the country must continue with the systematic arrests in order to “fight against corruption, crime and the insurgency.”

RELIGION AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN RUSSIA			
RELIGION		ETHNIC GROUPS	
Russian Orthodox	15 - 20%	Russian	7.7%
Muslim	10 - 15%	Tatar	3.7%
Other Christian	2%	Ukrainian	1.4%
note: estimates are of practicing worshipers; Russia has large numbers of non-practice believers and non-believers, a legacy of Soviet rule		Bashkir	1.1%
		Chuvash	1%
		Other	10.2%

Reference: CIA World Factbook, 2006, 2010 estimates



**Muslims in the Caucasus Region of the Russian Federation.** Karachai-Cherkessia (92%), Kabardino-Balkariya (78%), Ingushetia (63%), Chechnya (91%), and Dagestan (85%) all have heavy concentrations of Muslims, a contributing factor to the persisting unrest in the region.

### Social Class

The Soviet attempts to destroy social class differences in Russia were at least partially successful. The old noble/peasant distinction in tsarist Russia was abolished, but was replaced by another cleavage: members of the Communist Party and non-members. Only about 7% of the citizenry were party members, but all political leaders were recruited from this group. Economic favors were granted to party members as well, particularly those of the Central Committee and the Politburo. However, egalitarian views were promoted, and the *nomenklatura* process of recruiting leaders from lower levels of the party was generally blind to economic and social background. Today Russian citizens appear to be more egalitarian in their political and social views than people of established democracies.

Many observers of modern Russia note that a new socioeconomic class is developing within the context of the budding market economy: entrepreneurs that have recently amassed fortunes from new business opportunities. Although the fortunes of many of these newly rich Russians were wiped away by the 1997 business bust, many survived and new ones have emerged since then. Boris Yeltsin's government contributed to this class by distributing huge favors to them, and a small

but powerful group of entrepreneurs sponsored the presidential campaign of Vladimir Putin in 2000. In the Putin era, oligarchs have come under fire for various alleged and real illegal activities, particularly the underpayment of taxes on the businesses they acquired. Vladimir Gusinsky (MediaMost) and Boris Berezovsky were both effectively exiled, and the most prominent, Mikhail Khodorkovsky (Yukos Oil), was arrested in October 2003, and sentenced to eight years in prison, with his company trying to protect itself from being dismantled. In 2011, his prison term was extended, but Putin pardoned him in late 2013.

### Rural/Urban Cleavages

Industrialization since the era of Joseph Stalin has led to an increasingly urban population, with about 73% of all Russians now living in cities, primarily in the western part of the country. The economic divide between rural and urban people is wide, although recent economic woes have beset almost all Russians no matter where they live. City dwellers are more likely to be well educated and in touch with western culture, but the political consequences of these differences are unclear in the unsettled current political climate.

### Beliefs and Attitudes

In the old days of the Soviet Union, citizens' beliefs and attitudes toward their government were molded by Communist Party doctrines. At the heart of these doctrines was **Marxism**, which predicted the demise of the capitalist West. This belief fed Russian nationalism and supported the notion that the Russian government and way of life would eventually prevail. The ideals of the revolutionary era of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century envisioned a world transformed by egalitarianism and the elimination of poverty and oppression. As **Stalinism** set in, the ideals shifted to pragmatic internal development, and many of the old tendencies toward absolutism and repression returned. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought out much hostility toward the government that is reflected in the attitudes of Russian citizens today.

- **Mistrust of the government** – Political opinion polls are very recent innovations in Russian politics, so information

about citizens' attitudes and beliefs toward their government is scarce. However, the limited evidence does reflect a great deal of alienation from the political system. Most polls show that people support democratic ideals, including free elections and widespread individual civil liberties and rights. However, most do not trust government officials or institutions to convert these ideals to reality. Alienation is also indicated by a low level of participation in interest groups, including trade unions and other groups that people belonged to in the days of the Soviet Union. An interesting bit of contradictory evidence, though, is the high level of approval that Vladimir Putin enjoyed during his first two terms. Even though his approval ratings have vacillated since 2008, they remain high, and other Russian public officials have not shared his relatively high level of popularity.

- **Statism** – Despite high levels of mistrust in government, Russian citizens still expect the state to take an active role in their lives. For most of Russian history, citizens have functioned more as subjects than as participants, and the central government of the Soviet Union was strong enough to touch and control many aspects of citizens' lives. Today Russians expect a great deal from their government, even if they have been disappointed in the progress of reform in recent years.
- **Economic beliefs** – Boris Yeltsin's market reforms created divisions in public opinion regarding market reform. Nearly all parties and electoral groups support the market transition, but those with more favorable opinions of the old Soviet regime are less enthusiastic. At the other end of the spectrum are those that support rapid market reform, including privatization and limited government regulation. The latter approach was favored by Yeltsin, and his "shock therapy" marketization was blamed by his critics for the steep economic decline that characterized the 1990s.
- **Westernization** – Political opinions follow the old divide of **Slavophile vs. Westernizer**. Some political parties emphasize

nationalism and the defense of Russian interests and Slavic culture. These parties also tend to favor a strong military and protection from foreign economic influence. On the other hand, reform parties strongly support the integration of Russia into the world economy and global trade.

Economic beliefs and attitudes toward the West also shape attitudes about whether or not the modern regime should integrate elements of the old Soviet government into its policymaking. Some citizens are nostalgic about the "good old days" when everyone had a guaranteed income, and they are most likely to support the Communist Party that still exists within the party system. Some observers see a generational split between those who remember better times under Soviet power, and those who have come of age during the early days of the Russian Federation.

### Political Participation

Russian citizens did actually vote during Soviet rule in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, their voting rate was close to 100% because they faced serious consequences if they stayed home. However, until Gorbachev brought about reforms in the late 1980s, the elections were not competitive, and citizens voted for candidates that were hand picked by the Communist leadership. Gorbachev created competitive elections in the Soviet Union, but because no alternate political parties existed yet, voter choice was limited to the designated party candidate vs. anyone from within party ranks who wanted to challenge the official candidate. In some cases, this choice made a real difference, because Boris Yeltsin himself was elected as an "alternate candidate" for president of the then Russian Republic.

### Protests

After the economic crisis of late 2008, a series of protests were organized around Russia to criticize the government's economic policies as the economy sank to its lowest point since 1997. The largest was in Vladivostok, in the far eastern part of the country, where about 1000 protesters marched through the streets in late January 2009. The Russian Communist Party organized a rally in Moscow and called for a return of the centralized economic policies of the Soviet Union. The au-



thorities approved the rally, and riot police officers watched the march but did not interfere. Other demonstrations against the government, as well as some in support, were held in several cities throughout the country, with none apparently turning violent.

Putin's decision to run for the presidency in 2012 sparked some of the largest protests in recent years. Protests broke out after the parliamentary elections in December 2011, with accusations that United Russia had rigged the elections. Then on the eve of the election in May, about 20,000 people protested in Moscow, according to a Reuters news report. Many were angry that Putin was extending his 12-year domination of Russia with another presidential term, as the crowd chanted "Russia without Putin" and "Putin - thief." Opposition leaders were arrested as violence broke out in several cities, including Vladivostok, the Urals city of Kurgan, and Kemerovo in western Siberia. Putin ignored the protests, and since then no major protests have been allowed.

Russia's involvement in the Ukrainian crisis caused much controversy, with many Russians supporting the government but others openly criticizing it. In early 2014, Boris Nemtsov, a leader of Russia's liberal opposition, was shot dead on a bridge by the walls of the Kremlin. A few days earlier, Mr. Nemtsov had been handing out leaflets for an anti-war rally to protest Russia's support of rebels in eastern Ukraine. The march turned into a memorial procession. Six days before Mr. Nemtsov's death, the Kremlin organized protest marchers bearing slogans denouncing Ukraine, the West, and Russian liberals. Alexei Navalny, another opposition leader, described the emergence of "pro-government extremists and terrorist groups" who openly fight the opposition.

#### Voter Turnout

Since 1991 voter turnout in the Russian Federation has been fairly high: higher than in the United States, but somewhat lower than turnout rates in Britain and France. Political alienation is reflected in the 50.3% rate in the 1993 Duma elections, but those elections followed a failed attempt by the Duma to take over the country. Voter turnout

in the Duma election in December 2003 was just under 56%; for the election in December 2007, the turnout was almost 64%; and for the 2011 election, the turnout was just over 60%. Meanwhile, voter turnout for presidential elections declined between 1991 and 2004, with almost 75% of eligible citizens voting in the first round election in 1991, and less than 65% voting in 2004. The turnout in the presidential election of 2008 was almost 70%, but the turnout for 2012 fell to just over 65%.

#### Civil Society

Despite the relatively high voter turnouts, participation in other forms of political activities is low. Part of this lack of participation is due to a relatively undeveloped **civil society**, private organizations and associations outside of politics. For example, most Russians don't attend church on a regular basis, nor do they belong to sports or recreational clubs, literary or other cultural groups, charitable organizations, or labor unions. Only about 1% report belonging to a political party. On the other hand, Russians are not necessarily disengaged from politics. Many report that they regularly read newspapers, watch news on television, and discuss politics with family and friends.

Civil society appears to be growing in Russia, although since Putin's reelection in 2012, the government appears to be imposing new restrictions. Before the 1917 Revolution, little civil society existed because of low economic development, authoritarianism, and feudalism. Soviet authorities argued that only the party could and should represent the people's interests, and so state-sponsored organizations appeared in a **state corporatist** arrangement with the government clearly in control of channeling the voice of the people. The Russian Orthodox Church was brought tightly under control of the Communist Party. With the advent of *glasnost* in the 1980s, however, civil society slowly began to emerge, and since that time many organizations have formed to express points of view on different issues, including the environment, ethnicity, gender, human rights, and health care.

Despite the proliferation of these groups, the government has placed severe restrictions on their activities, especially on groups that are openly critical of the government's policies. Rather than directly at-

tacking the groups, the government has used a number of tactics to weaken them, such as investigating sources of income, making registration with the authorities difficult, and police harassment. Since Putin's reelection in 2012, nonprofit groups have come under particular pressure with new laws that severely restrict foreign financing and require them to register as "foreign agents." In addition, the definition of high treason has been expanded to include assisting foreign organizations.

### Russian Youth Groups

As president, Vladimir Putin created a handful of youth movements to support the government. The largest is **Nashi**, and others are the Youth Guard and Locals. All are part of an effort to build a following of loyal, patriotic young people and to defuse any youthful resistance that could have emerged during the sensitive presidential election of 2008. Nashi organized mass marches in support of Mr. Putin and staged demonstrations over foreign policy issues that resulted in the physical harassment of the British and Estonian ambassadors. For example, after Estonia relocated a Soviet-era war memorial in April 2007, Nashi laid siege to the Estonian Embassy in Moscow, throwing rocks, disrupting traffic, and tearing down the Estonian flag. Members of the group attacked the Estonian ambassador, and her guards had to use pepper spray to defend her. In May 2011, some 50,000 members of Nashi gathered for a rally against corruption in downtown Moscow, where they concentrated on the corruption of government opponents, not on government officials. When anti-Putin protests broke out in late 2011, Nashi countered with rallies in support of Putin and United Russia.

Nashi's opponents deride the organization as a modern version of Komsomol, the youth wing of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Nashi receives grants from the government and large state-run businesses, so critics of the group see it as an arm of an increasingly authoritarian state.

### POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Russian history includes a variety of regime types, but the tradition is highly authoritarian. The reforms that began in the early 1990s are

truly experimental, and only time will tell whether democracy and a free market economy will take root. Even if they do, the nature of the regime must take into account Russian political culture and traditions. Current political parties, elections, and institutions of government are all new, and their functions within the political system are very fluid and likely to change within the next few years. However, the Russian Federation survived its first few rocky years, and many experts believe that at least some aspects of Russian government and politics are settling into a pattern.

Even though the Soviet Union was highly centralized, it still maintained a **federal government structure**. The Russian Federation has retained this model, and the current regime consists of eighty-nine regions, twenty-one of which are ethnically non-Russian by majority. Each region is bound by treaty to the Federation, but not all – including Chechnya – have signed on. Most of these regions are called "republics," and because the central government was not strong under Yeltsin, many ruled themselves almost independently. In the early 1990s, several republics went so far as to make claims of sovereignty that amounted to near or complete independence. Many saw the successful bid of the former Soviet states for independence as role models, and they believed that their own status would change as well. Chechnya's bid for independence and the war that followed are good examples of this sentiment. Some regions are much stronger than others, so power is devolved unequally across the country, a condition called **asymmetric federalism**.

As president, Vladimir Putin has cracked down on regional autonomy, ordering the army to shell even Chechnya into submission. Several measures that Putin imposed were:

- **Creation of super-districts** – In 2000 seven new federal districts were created to encompass all of Russia. Each district is headed by a presidential appointee, who supervises the local authorities as Putin sees fit.
- **Removal of governors** – A law allows the president to remove from office a governor who refuses to subject local law to the national constitution.

- **Appointment of governors** – Putin further centralized power in Moscow in late 2004 with a measure that ended direct election of the eighty-nine regional governors. Instead, the governors now are nominated by the president, and then confirmed by regional legislatures.
- **Changes in the Federation Council** – Originally the Federation Council (the upper legislative house) was comprised of the governors and Duma heads of each region. In 2002 a Putin-backed change prohibited these officials from serving themselves, although they were still allowed to appoint council members.
- **Elimination of single-member-district seats in the Duma** – Many minor political parties were able to capture Duma seats under the old rules that allowed half of the 450 seats to be elected by single-member districts and half by proportional representation. In 2005, Putin initiated a change to a pure proportional representation electoral system that eliminated candidates that were regionally popular. The new rules first applied to the election of 2007.

As a result of all these changes, the “federation” is highly centralized.

### Linkage Institutions

Groups that link citizens to government are still not strong in Russia, a situation that undermines recent attempts to establish a democracy. Political parties were highly unstable and fluid during the 1990s, and since Putin’s election in 2000, more power has concentrated in his party, so that after the parliamentary elections of late 2003 and presidential elections of early 2004, no strong opposing political parties were in existence. In the Duma elections of 2011, United Russia lost seats while opposition parties gained seats, but United Russia still managed to retain 238 of the 450 Duma seats. In the 2012 presidential race, Putin gained almost 64% of the vote, with his nearest opponent gathering only 17%. Interest groups have no solid footing in civil society since private organizations are weak, and the media has come more under government control.

### Parties

Most established democracies had many years to develop party and electoral systems. However, Russians put theirs together almost overnight after the Revolution of 1991. Many small, factional political parties ran candidates in the first Duma elections in 1993, and by 1995, 43 parties were on the ballot. Many of the parties revolved around a particular leader or leaders, such as the “Bloc of General Andrey Nikolaev and Academician Svyaloslav Fyodorov,” the “Yuri Boldyrev Movement,” or “Yabloko,” which is an acronym for its three founders. Others reflected a particular group, such as the “Party of Pensioners,” “Agrarian Party of Russia,” or “Women of Russia.” By 1999 the number of parties who ran Duma candidates had shrunk to 26, but many of the parties were new ones, including Vladimir Putin’s Unity Party. Needless to say, with these fluctuations, citizens have had no time to develop party loyalties, leadership in Russia continues to be personalistic, and political parties remain weak and fluid.

New election rules initiated by Vladimir Putin in 2005 solidified this trend toward fewer political parties. Before 2007, half of the Duma’s 450 seats were elected by proportional representation and half by single-member districts. The rules changed so that all seats – starting in the 2007 election – are elected by proportional representation, with all parties required to win a minimum of 7% of the national vote in order to win any seats. Smaller parties with regional support lost representation, and only four parties gained seats in the elections of 2007 and 2011: United Russia, the Communist Party, the Liberal Democrats, and A Just Russia.

### *United Russia*

The party was founded in April 2001 as a merger of Fatherland All-Russia Party, and the Unity Party of Russia. The Unity Party was put together by oligarch Boris Berezovsky and other entrepreneurs to support then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in the presidential election of 2000. The merger put even more political support behind Putin. United Russia won 221 of the 450 Duma seats in the election of 2003, although this figure underestimated the party’s strength since many minor parties were Putin supporters or clients. Putin, running as United Russia’s candidate, won the presidential election of 2004 with 71%

of the vote with no serious challengers from any other political parties. In the fall of 2007, Putin announced his willingness to head the party list at the general Duma election in 2007. Since Duma election rules had been changed at his initiative in 2005 to pure proportional representation, this move insured that he would be elected to the Duma, and so eligible to become prime minister. United Russia gained more than 64% of the vote in the election of 2007, which translated to 315 of the 450 seats in the Duma. Putin's hand-picked successor, Dmitri Medvedev, won the presidential election of 2008 with about 70% of the vote, and "chose" Putin as his prime minister.

Putin's decision to run for president in 2012 was controversial enough that United Russia lost seats (315 in 2007 compared to 238 in 2011) and Putin won the presidential election with 64% of the vote, as compared to Medvedev's 70% in 2008. Ideologically, United Russia is hard to define except that it is pro-Putin.

#### *The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)*

The Communist Party of the old Soviet Union survives today as the second strongest party in the Duma, even though it has not yet won a presidential election. After the election of 1995, it held 157 of the Duma's 450 members, and even though the party lost seats in the 1999 election, it remained an important force in Russian politics. However, the party's support dropped significantly in the parliamentary elections of 2003 and 2007, winning only 51 of the 450 Duma seats in 2003 and 57 in 2007. However, the party won 92 seats in 2011, benefitting from the discontent with Putin and United Russia. The party's leader, **Gennady Zyuganov**, came in second in the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections, but his percentage in the second round fell from 40.3% in 1996 to 29.21% in 2000. Zyuganov dropped out of the presidential election of 2004, and in July 2004, a breakaway faction led by Vladimir Tikhonov weakened the party further. In 2008, the party's candidate was again Zyuganov, who gained less than 18% of the vote, second to Medvedev's more than 70% of the vote. Zyuganov's share in 2012 was more than 17%, compared to Putin's almost 64%.

The CPRF is not like the old Communist Party, but it is far less reformist than other parties are. Zyuganov opposed many reforms during the Gorbachev era, and he continues to represent to supporters the stability of the old regime. The party emphasizes centralized planning and nationalism, and implies an intention to regain territories lost when the Soviet Union broke apart.

#### *Liberal Democrats*

This misnamed party is by far the most controversial. It is headed by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy who has made headlines around the world for his extreme nationalist positions. He regularly attacks reformist leaders, and particularly disliked Yeltsin. He has implied that Russia under his leadership would use nuclear weapons on Japan, and he makes frequent anti-Semitic remarks (despite his Jewish origins). He has also brought the wrath of Russian women by making blatantly sexist comments. His party was reformulated as "Zhirinovskiy's bloc" for the 2000 presidential election, when he received only 2.7% of the vote. The party did pick up seats in the 2003 Duma elections, receiving about 11% of the total vote, as well as 37 seats. The rule changes for the 2007 elections did not impact the party's representation significantly, although they won 40 seats, a gain of 3 over the 2003 election. In 2012, the party benefited from Putin's controversial power play, winning 56 seats.

#### *A Just Russia*

A Just Russia was formed in 2006 by the merger of Motherland People's Patriotic Union with the Party of Pensioners and the Party of Life. The party is led by the Speaker of the Federation Council Sergei Mironov. Motherland formed in 2003 with the merger of 30 organizations, but its leaders quarreled over whether or not to challenge Putin in the 2004 presidential race, and the party split in two, with one faction forming Fair Russia. The party passed the 7% threshold in the Duma election of 2007 with 7.74% of the vote, enough to gain them 38 seats. A Just Russia did much better in 2011, winning 64 Duma seats.

*Patriots of Russia*

During the regional elections of 2011, a party that few had heard of, Patriots of Russia, managed to win 8% of the vote, a surprising turn, even though United Russia won 70% of all seats. The Communist Party came in second with 13% of the seats, but the Patriots of Russia came in third. Analysts say the party was a Kremlin product, tested with a view to being deployed in the parliamentary election in December 2011. It describes itself as a party of “statists” and “patriots” that aims to build a “great and prosperous” Russia. Critics, however, say that its real purpose is to foil the Communist Party and A Just Russia, and that it is an integral part of the political system set up by the Kremlin. In the legislative election of December 2011, less than 1% of the electorate chose the Patriots of Russia, so the party did not win any Duma seats.

Overall, since 1993 ideological parties have faded in importance and have been replaced by **parties of power**, or parties strongly sponsored by economic and political power-holders. For example, United Russia is Putin’s party, created by powerful oligarchs to get him elected. As long as Putin is in power, United Russia will be, too, especially since he was able to orchestrate who his successor would be in 2008. At the time of the election, Putin was tremendously popular, as was reflected in United Russia’s landslide in the Duma elections of 2007. The two elections confirmed that the party of power remains the voters’ choice. Even though Putin and United Russia lost some support in the elections of 2011 and 2012, they remained firmly in control of the government, with 238 of 450 seats in the Duma.

## Elections

The Russian political system supports three types of national votes:

- **Referendum** – The Constitution of 1993 allowed the president to call for national referenda by popular vote on important issues. Even before the Constitution was written, Boris Yeltsin called for a referendum on his job performance. The people clearly supported his reforms, but his majorities were not overwhelming. The second referendum was held later in the year, and the people voted in favor of the new Constitution. A regional referendum was

held in Chechnya in 2003 to approve a constitution for the area. The constitution was approved, including the phrase that declared Chechnya to be an “inseparable part” of Russia.

- **Duma elections** – Russian citizens have gone to the polls six times to elect Duma representatives (1993, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011). The Duma has 450 seats, and until 2007, half were elected by proportional representation, and the other half by single-member districts. As of 2007, the 225 single-member districts were abolished, so that all Duma seats now are assigned exclusively by proportional representation. Also eliminated was the “against all” option that allowed voters to reject all candidates. Parties must get at least 7% (raised from 5% before 2007) of the total vote to get any seats according to proportional representation. The election changes were initiated by Putin, who argued that the new rules would reduce the number of parties in the Duma and thus make policymaking more efficient. Since 1993 parties have merged and disappeared, so that only a few have survived to the present.
- **Presidential elections** – Presidential elections follow the two-round model that requires the winning candidate to receive more than 50 percent of the vote. In 2000 Putin received 52.94% of the vote, so no run-off election was required, since he captured a majority on the first round. Communist Gennady Zyuganov received 29.21%, and no other candidates garnered more than 5.8%. Some observers have questioned the honesty of elections, particularly since the media obviously promoted Yeltsin in 1996 and Putin in 2000. A 2001 law seriously restricted the right of small, regional parties to run presidential candidates, so critics questioned how democratic future presidential elections might be. The presidential election of 2004 added credence to the criticism, since Vladimir Putin won with 71% of the vote, again requiring no run off. His closest competitor was Nikolay Kharitonov, who ran for the Communist Party and received less than 14% of the vote. In 2008 Putin was ineligible to run, but his chosen successor, Dmitri Medvedev, won the election with more than 70% of the vote. In 2012, Putin’s share of the vote slipped to 64%, but he still managed to avoid a run-off election.

DUMA ELECTIONS OF 2011			
PARTY	% OF VOTES	SEATS	% OF SEATS
United Russia	49.32%	238	52.88%
Communist Party	19.19%	92	20.46%
A Just Russia	13.24%	64	14.21%
Liberal Democrats	11.67%	56	12.45%
Yabloko	3.43%	0	-
Patriots of Russia	.97%	0	-
Right Cause	.60%	0	-

*Reference: Central Election Commission*

**Duma Election Results of 2011.** The new election rules changed the makeup of the Duma primarily by eliminating representation from minority parties. Before 2007, many parties had regional support that allowed them to capture a few Duma seats, but the new rules eliminated single-member-district seats, so smaller parties received no representation. For example, in the 2003 elections Yabloko earned 4 seats, the Union of Right Forces gained 3, and the Agrarian Party earned 2. None captured any seats in 2007 or 2011.

### Interest Groups

Of course, interest groups were only allowed in the Soviet Union under **state corporatism** and were controlled by the government. Decision-making took place within the Central Committee and the Politburo, and if any outside contacts influenced policy, they generally were confined to members of the Communist Party. When market capitalism suddenly replaced centralized economic control in 1991, the state-owned industries were up for grabs, and those that bought them for almost nothing were generally insiders (members of the *no-menklatura*) who have since become quite wealthy. This collection of **oligarchs** may be defined loosely as an interest group because they

have been a major influence on the policymaking process during the formative years of the Russian Federation.

### *The Oligarchy*

The power of the oligarchy became obvious during the last year of Boris Yeltsin's first term as President of the Russian Federation. The tycoons were tied closely to members of Yeltsin's family, particularly his daughter. Together they took advantage of Yeltsin's inattention to his presidential duties, and soon monopolized Russian industries and built huge fortunes. One of the best-known oligarchs was Boris Berezovsky, who admitted in 1997 that he and six other entrepreneurs controlled over half of the Russian GNP. Berezovsky's businesses had giant holdings in the oil industry and in media, including a TV network and many newspapers. He used the media to insure Yeltsin's reelection in 1996, and he and the family clearly controlled the presidency. When Yeltsin's ill health and alcoholism triggered events that led to his resignation in 2000, Berezovsky went to work with other oligarchs to put together and finance the Unity Party. When Unity's presidential candidate Vladimir Putin easily won the election with more than 50% of the vote in the first round, it looked as if the oligarchs had survived Yeltsin's demise.

Putin, however, has shown some resistance to oligarchic control. He has clashed with the entrepreneurs on several occasions, and when television magnate Vladimir Gusinsky harshly criticized Putin's reform plans, Gusinsky was arrested for corruption and his company was given to a state-owned monopoly. Both Berezovsky and Gusinsky are now in exile, but they still have close political and economic connections in Russia. In October 2003, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the richest man in Russia and chief executive officer of Yukos Oil Company, was arrested as a signal from Putin that the Russian government was consolidating power. The government slapped massive penalties and additional taxes on Yukos, forcing it into bankruptcy. In 2011, Khodorkovsky was sentenced to jail, this time for stealing oil, while during the first trial he was convicted for avoiding taxes on the sale of oil. In late 2013, Putin pardoned him, and he left the country.

The other oligarchs heeded the warning from Khodorkovsky's example and largely withdrew from political activities, leaving Putin in control but probably with a narrower base of support from economic leaders. However, as the Russian economy sank during the recession that began in late 2007, oligarchs have found themselves heavily in debt and have looked to the state for loans. Even though the government has been cash-strapped as well, the economic climate has the potential for weakening the power of the oligarchs and giving the government more control over them. Putin's choice for president, Dmitri Medvedev, was Chairman of Gazprom until he was elected president of the Russian Federation in May 2008, and he was replaced at Gazprom by Viktor Zubkov, the prime minister who was in turn replaced by Vladimir Putin.

### *State Corporatism*

Under Putin's leadership **state corporatism**, where the state determines which groups have input into policymaking, has become well established. The Russian government has established vast, state-owned holding companies in automobile and aircraft manufacturing, shipbuilding, nuclear power, diamonds, titanium, and other industries. If companies appear to be too independent or too rich the government has not forced owners to sell, but has cited legal infractions (such as with Yukos) to force sales. Either government-controlled companies, or companies run by men seen as loyal to Mr. Putin, are the beneficiaries. Another term for such an arrangement is **insider privatization**.

### *The Russian Mafia*

A larger and even more shadowy influence than the oligarchs is known as the "mafia",s but this interest group controls much more than underworld crime. Like the oligarchs, they gained power during the chaotic time after the Revolution of 1991, and they control local businesses, natural resources, and banks. They thrive on payoffs from businesses ("protection money"), money laundering, and deals that they make with Russian government officials, including members of the former KGB. They have murdered bankers, journalists, businessmen, and members of the Duma.

### STATE CORPORATISM IN RUSSIA

State Owned Company	Chairman	Benefits
<b>Gazprom</b> (natural gas)	Viktor A Zubkov (former prime minister)	Sibneft oil company Sakhalin II oil company (controlling stakes) Yukos Oil assets
<b>Vneshtorgbank</b> (VTB)	Andrei Kostin (close friend of Putin and on the board of Rosneft)	International investment opportunities; funding for power generation
<b>Rosneft (oil)</b>	Igor I. Sechin (presidential deputy chief of staff)	the Yuganskneftegaz oil fields (Yukos assets) Refineries, oil fields from Yukos
<b>Russian Technologies</b> (weapons, warfare systems)	Sergey Chemezov (former KGB colleague of Putin)	Avtovaz, Russia's largest car maker VSMPO, a titanium aircraft parts maker
<b>United Aircraft Corporation</b>	Sergei B. Ivanov (first deputy prime minister)	Company created in 2006 by presidential decree

**State Corporatism in Russia.** It is interesting to note that the former Chairman of Gazprom was Dmitri Medvedev, the president of Russia from 2008-2012. The chart also reflects Russia's **patron-client system**, where individuals in power give favors to subordinates, in return for political support.

The huge fortunes made by the oligarchs and mafia offend the sensibilities of most Russian citizens, who tend to value equality of result, not equality of opportunity. In Russia's past, lawlessness has been dealt with by repressive, authoritarian rule, and these groups represent a major threat to the survival of the new democracy.

## The Russian Media

For years the official newspaper of the Soviet Union's Communist Party, **Pravda**, only printed what government officials wanted it to, and so it became an important propaganda tool for the Communist Party. After the coup of 1991 and the dissolution of the country, Pravda continued as an independent newspaper with more freedom of the press than the country had ever allowed. Under Putin, the government again tightened its hold on the press, but Pravda has reinvented itself as a tabloid with a huge audience. Today it has little to fear from official censorship because its investigative journalism tends toward exposés of incompetent police work, corrupt low-level officials, and dirty train stations. Its biggest stories focus on celebrities, such as fashion models, radio hosts, and a hockey player hit with a cake. For serious journalists, however, who want to investigate the top layers of political power, it is a different story.

During a joint press conference with Vladimir Putin in early 2005, two Russian reporters challenged comments by U.S. President George Bush about the lack of a free press in Russia. Of course, the reporters were hand picked to accompany Putin on his trip to the United States, but they argued that the Russian media often criticizes the government. It is true that newspapers and television stations are now privately owned in Russia, although the state controls many of them. There are also many instances of reporters commenting on political actions and decisions, but how much real freedom they have is not clear. One example occurred when the Kremlin used a state-controlled company to take over the only independent television network, NTV. When the ousted NTV journalists took over a different channel, TV-6, the state shut it down. Russian media circles also were suspicious of the alleged poisoning of Anna Politkovskaya, one of the most outspoken critics of the government's policies in Chechnya. In March 2007 correspondent Ivan Safronov, who worked for the business daily *Kommersant*, died in a fall from the window of his Moscow apartment.

The status of freedom of the press in Russia is illustrated by media coverage of the school seizure at Beslan in 2004. As the tragedy unfolded on a Friday, two of Russia's main TV channels did not mention what was happening until an hour after explosions were first heard at

the school. When state-owned Russia TV and Channel One finally reported it, they returned to their regularly scheduled programs. However, NTV, which is owned by state-controlled Gazprom, did have rolling coverage for three hours, even though it started late.

State corporatism appears to impact the media business, just as it has oil, gas, aircraft building, and auto companies. For example, in May 2007 the Russian Union of Journalists was evicted from its headquarters in Moscow to make space for the Russia Today television channel. According to the general secretary of the RUJ, the eviction was based on an order from President Vladimir Putin to accommodate the expansion plans of the state-owned English-language channel, which aims to promote a positive image of Russia abroad. One newspaper, the *Novaya Gazeta*, has blatantly criticized the Russian government. Since 2000 five employees of *Novaya Gazeta* have died under violent or suspicious circumstances. The latest were in January 2009, when the newspaper's lawyer, Stanislav Markelov, and a young reporter, Anastasia Baburova were fatally shot by a masked gunman. The editor, Dmitri Muratov, put two of his reporters under armed protection and instituted a policy that any article with sensitive information was to be published immediately, reducing the benefit of killing the reporters. No one blames the government directly for the attacks, but the message is clear: don't criticize the government.

The social media played an important role in the protests that surrounded the legislative election of 2011. One of the leaders, Aleksei Navalny, trained as a real estate lawyer, became famous before the election with his online exposés of corruption within state-owned companies. His following on Twitter and LiveJournal grew into the tens of thousands, and he summoned supporters to gather in protest of the Putin-dominated Duma elections. In 2013, Navalny went on trial for embezzling \$500,000 from a timber company that led to a five-year prison sentence. Putin critics claimed that Navalny was being punished because of his criticisms and because he announced his candidacy for mayor of Moscow shortly before his arrest.

## Institutions of Government

The current structure of the government was put in place by the Constitution of 1993. It borrows from both presidential and parliamen-



tary systems, and the resulting hybrid **semi-presidential** government is meant to allow for a strong presidency, but at the same time place some democratic checks on executive power. Its early history was stormy, but it is hard to say whether the difficulties centered on Yeltsin's ineffective presidency, or if they reflected inherent flaws within the system. The relationships among the branches have stabilized, but in Putin's and Medvedev's administrations the executive has clearly dominated the other branches, and Putin has commanded the executive branch.

### The President and the Prime Minister

The executive branch separates the **head of state** (the president) from the **head of government** (the prime minister). Unlike the Queen's role in British politics, the president's position has been far from ceremonial. Although the Constitution provided for a strong presidency, under Putin the president clearly came to dominate the prime minister. However, once Putin stepped aside to allow Dmitri Medvedev to run for and win the presidency and Putin became prime minister, the relationship between the two positions clearly changed, with Putin continuing to assert his influence. Since Putin's reelection in 2012, the president once again dominates the prime minister.

Russian voters directly elect the president for a six-year (starting in 2012) term, with a limit of two terms. Since Russian political parties are in flux, anyone who gets a million signatures can run for president. In 1996, 2000, and 2004, many candidates ran on the first ballot, and in 2000, 2004, and 2012, Putin won without a second-round vote. In 2008, Medvedev also won without a second-round vote. The president has the power to:

- **Appoint the prime minister and cabinet** – The Duma must approve the prime minister's appointment, but if they reject the president's nominee three times, the president may dissolve the Duma. In 1998, Yeltsin replaced Prime Minister Kiriyenko with Viktor Chernomyrdin, and the Duma rejected him twice. On the third round – under threat of being dissolved – they finally agreed on a compromise candidate, Yevgeni Primakov. Putin was prime minister when he ran for president, and when he became president, he appointed Mikhail Kasyanov as prime

minister. Kasyanov served for four years, and was eventually replaced by Mikhail Fradkov, and then Viktor Zubkov. Putin became prime minister in 2008, and in 2012, Medvedev switched places with Putin to become prime minister.

- **Issue decrees that have the force of law** – The president runs a cabinet that has a great deal of concentrated, centralized power. For example, Putin created the state-owned United Aircraft Corporation by decree, a decision that the legislature had no control over. According to the **Constitution**, the Duma has no real power to censure the cabinet, except that it may reject the appointment of the prime minister.
- **Dissolve the Duma** – This power was tested even before the Constitution was put in place. In 1993, Yeltsin ordered the old Russian Parliament dissolved, but the conservative members staged a coup, and refused to leave the “White House” (the parliament building). He ordered the army to fire on the building until the members gave up, but the chaos of the new regime was revealed to the world through the images of a president firing on his own parliament. No such chaos has occurred under Putin or Medvedev.

There is no vice-president, so if a president dies or resigns before his term is up, the prime minister becomes acting president. This situation occurred in 1999 when Prime Minister Putin took over presidential duties when Yeltsin resigned. Prime ministers are not appointed because they are leaders of the majority party (as they are in Great Britain); instead most have been career bureaucrats chosen for their technical expertise or loyalty to the president. However, during the four years when Medvedev was president and Putin took the prime minister's position, there is little doubt that Putin was still in charge, and so even though Medvedev was the head of state, policies did not change from those of Putin's presidency.

### A Bicameral Legislature

So far, the Russian legislature has proved to be only a very weak check on executive power. The lower house, the **Duma**, has 450 deputies, who since 2007, are all selected by proportional representation.

THE RUSSIAN LEGISLATURE	
	
DUMA	FEDERATION COUNCIL
450 deputies all selected by proportional representation (since 2007); Passes bills, approves the budget, confirms president's political appointments; Has limited power since president's party dominates and president has the power of decree; Function is to provide popular representation	Two members from each of the 89 federal regions; One representative selected by the governor and another by the regional legislature; Function is to represent regions; Has almost no power because the Duma may override the Council if it rejects legislation passed by the Duma

The Duma passes bills, approves the budget, and confirms the president's political appointments. However, these powers are very limited, since the president may rule by decree, and the Duma's attempts to reject prime ministers have failed. In another confrontation with Yeltsin, the Duma tried to use its constitutional power to impeach him, but the process is so cumbersome that it failed. Although the Duma has been controlled by Putin because his party (United Russia) has most of the seats, it still wields some power in the drafting of legislation. Most legislation originates with the president or prime minister, just as it does in Great Britain and most other parliamentary systems, but the Duma debates bills that must pass the deputies' vote before they become laws.

The upper house, called the **Federation Council**, consists of two members from each of the 89 federal administrative units. Since 2002 one representative is selected by the governor of each region and another by the regional legislature. The Federation Council serves the purpose that most upper houses do in bicameral federalist systems: to represent regions, not the population as such. However, like most

other upper houses in European governments, it seems to mainly have the power to delay legislation. If the Federation Council rejects legislation, the Duma may override the Council with a two-thirds vote. On paper, it also may change boundaries among the republics, ratify the use of armed forces outside the country, and appoints and removes judges. However, these powers have not been used yet.

### The Judiciary and the Rule of Law

No independent judiciary existed under the old Soviet Union, with courts and judges serving as pawns of the Communist Party. The Constitution of 1993 attempted to build a judicial system that is not controlled by the executive by creating a **Constitutional Court**.

The Court's nineteen members are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Federation Council, and it is supposed to make sure that all laws and decrees are constitutional. Under Putin, the court has taken care to avoid crossing the president. However, even the possibility that it might have independent political influence led Putin to propose moving the seat of the court to St. Petersburg, away from the political center in Moscow. The Constitution also created a Supreme Court to serve as a final court of appeals in criminal and civil cases. The court, though, does not have the power to challenge the constitutionality of laws and other official actions of legislative and executive bodies; the Constitutional Court has that power. Both courts have been actively involved in policymaking, although their independence from the executive is questionable. One problem is that many prosecutors and attorneys were trained under the Soviet legal system, so the judiciary currently suffers from a lack of expertise in carrying out the responsibilities outlined in the Constitution.

Vladimir Putin came into office with a mission to revive the great period of law reform under the tsars, including jury trial, planned for all regions except Chechnya by 2007. Russia brought in procedural codes for criminal and civil rights, and spent a great deal of money on law reform. However, the system is still very much in transition, and corruption is a serious problem. The advent of juries is a real change, but the presumption of innocence is far from a reality. The independence of the judiciary is still not apparent, especially since no courts

have challenged Putin in his pursuit of the oligarchs and the dismantling of their empires.

The trials of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev, the former controlling shareholders of the Yukos Oil Company, indicate that the courts are still under the political control of Putin. Before the 2011 verdict was read that sentenced Khodorkovsky until 2019, Putin declared that the crime had been proven in court and that “a thief must stay in jail”. Hillary Clinton, the U.S. secretary of state, protested, “Attempts to exert pressure on the court are unacceptable,” causing Russia’s foreign ministry to challenge her statement.

The Russian legal system has often been used as an instrument of the state’s power, rather than as a tool for protecting citizens. In August 2013, three women from a feminist punk-rock group, Pussy Riot, were sentenced to two years each in prison for an anti-Putin stunt in a Moscow cathedral. In 2013, the Duma passed new laws that raised fines for unsanctioned demonstration and required foreign-funded non-governmental organizations to register as “foreign agents”. Another law created a blacklist of offensive websites.

### The Rule of Law and Corruption

Movement toward the rule of law continues to be blocked by corruption in state and society and by the political tradition of allowing the security police to continue to operate autonomously. In the Soviet period, domestic security was carried out by the **KGB** (State Security Committee), but since 1991 its functions have been split up among several agencies. The main domestic security agency is called the Federal Security Service, and no member or collaborator of the Soviet-era security services has been prosecuted for violating citizens’ rights. Although the security police are generally regarded as one of the least corrupted of the state agencies, society-wide corruption is a major problem in Russia. One large-scale survey by a Moscow research firm found that at least half the population of Russia is involved in corruption in daily life. For example, people often pay bribes for automobile permits, school enrollment, proper health care, and favorable court rulings. This corruption not only impedes the development of rule of law; it also puts a drag on economic development, since so much money is siphoned off for bribes.

Putin initiated some high-profile battles against corruption in 2012, beginning with the dismissal of Anatoly Serdyukov as defense minister. He was fired after investigators linked a company spun off from the ministry to fraud, and state-run television publicly revealed that other high-level bureaucrats had misappropriated funds. However, corruption is so embedded in the Russian political system that these efforts have not gotten to the root of the problem, and corruption remains a stubborn problem that is very difficult to eliminate.

### The Military

The army was a very important source of Soviet strength during the Cold War era from 1945 to 1991. The Soviet government prioritized financing the military ahead of almost everything else. The armed forces at one time stood at about 4 million men, considerably larger than the United States combined forces. However, the military usually did not take a lead in politics, and generals did not challenge the power of the Politburo. Even though some of the leaders of the attempted coup of 1991 were military men, the armed forces themselves responded to Yeltsin’s plea to remain loyal to the government.

Under the Russian Federation, the army shows no real signs of becoming a political force. It has suffered significant military humiliation, and many sources confirm that soldiers go unpaid for months and have to provide much of their own food. Even as early as 1988, under Gorbachev, Soviet forces had to be withdrawn in disgrace from Afghanistan, and in 1994-1996, Chechen guerillas beat the Soviet forces. More recently, the army partially restored its reputation by crushing Chechen resistance in 1999-2000.

One prominent former general, **Alexander Lebed**, gained a political following before the election of 1996, and Yeltsin had to court his favor in order to win reelection. However, most political leaders have been civilians, so a military coup appears to be unlikely in the near future. Even so, some observers were wary of a military takeover, especially considering the tentative nature of the “democracy” during the 1990s.

Recently, Russia’s army has reasserted its old vigor, with Putin’s 2007 announcement that, for the first time in 15 years, the Russian Air Force

would begin regular, long-range patrols by nuclear-capable bombers again. The move was seen by some observers as one of several signs that Russia is rising in strength and wishes to assert its influence internationally again. Military spending has increased significantly over the past few years, and the invasion of Georgia in 2008 was successful, with soldiers who appeared to be better trained than those who fought in earlier wars in Chechnya. However, the armed forces rely on factories with outdated technology and production methods, and recruitment of personnel remains low.

## PUBLIC POLICY AND CURRENT ISSUES

The first few years of the Russian Federation were very difficult ones, characterized by a great deal of uncertainty regarding the regime's future. Any regime change creates legitimacy issues, but Russia's case was extreme, with public policy directed at some very tough issues and seemingly intractable problems. The abrupt change in leadership goals and style between Yeltsin and Putin also has made it difficult to follow continuous patterns in policy over the years, although alternating between reform and authoritarianism is an old theme that goes back to the days of the tsars.

### The Economy

The Soviet Union faced many challenges in 1991, but almost certainly at the heart of its demise were insurmountable economic problems. Mikhail Gorbachev enacted his *perestroika* reforms, primarily consisting of market economy programs inserted into the traditional centralized state ownership design of the Soviet Union. These plans were never fully implemented, partly because dissent within the Politburo led to the attempted coup that destroyed the state.

Today leaders of the Russian Federation face the same issue: How much of the centralized planning economy should be eliminated, and how should the market economy be handled? Yeltsin's "shock therapy" created chaotic conditions that resulted in a small group of entrepreneurs running the economy. In 1997 the bottom fell out of the economy when the government defaulted on billions of dollars of debts. The stock market lost half of its value, and threatened to topple other markets around the globe. Meanwhile, the Russian people suf-

fered from the sudden introduction of the free market. Under the Soviet government, their jobs were secure, but now the unemployment rate soared. The ruble – once pegged by the government at \$1.60 – lost its value quickly, so that by early 2002, it took more than 30,000 rubles to equal a dollar. The oligarchs and mafia members prospered, but almost everyone else faced a new standard of living much worse than what they had before.

Between 1997 and 2007, the Russian economy steadily improved, particularly in the new areas of privatized industries, but it suffered a tremendous blow when oil prices plummeted in 2008. In 2004 the economy had shown strong indications of recovery, with a growth of about 7%, and the standard of living was rising even faster, although real incomes improved more rapidly in neighboring countries, such as Ukraine. For example, very few people, rich or poor, had running hot water for several weeks in the summer of 2007 in Moscow because the plants and network of pipelines shut down for maintenance every year. Although Russia ended 2008 with GDP growth of 6% – down only slightly from 10 years of growth averaging 7% annually – many economic problems presented themselves after the global economic crisis in September 2008. The Russian stock market dropped roughly 70%, as Russian companies were unable to pay loans called in as the market fell. The government responded with a rescue plan of over \$200 billion for the financial sector, and also proposed a \$20 billion tax cut plan for Russian citizens. Even so, the ruble fell in value, while unemployment grew and production dropped. Many people are still disillusioned with the new regime, and question the wisdom of current policymakers.

Russia's economy has been fueled by its huge oil and gas reserves, and the corporations (mostly state run) that own them. As long as oil prices remained high, Russia's GNP rose, and the economy was healthy. However, in 2014, the price of oil fell precipitously, and the Russian ruble lost about half its value, as confidence levels in the country's economic health plummeted. Investors pulled billions of dollars from Russia, and even though oil prices stabilized in 2015, they were still too low for an economic recovery. Inflation has jumped, wages have fallen, and foreign-exchange reserves of the Central Bank of Russia have fallen. Overall, the economy was shrinking, and without a sig-

nificant increase in oil prices, Russia's economic prospects remained grim.

A continuing economic issue is privatization vs. state control. In 2010, Medvedev announced plans to sell off up to \$100 billion of state assets. However, under Putin, the emphasis has shifted back to a state-capitalist model, with the government playing a strong role in the economy. State-owned companies, such as Rosneft (oil), Gazprom (natural gas), an Russian Technologies (weapons, warfare systems), all monopolize their industries, and many supporters of privatization claim that they block entrepreneurial efforts of smaller companies.

### Foreign Policy

The Soviet Union held hegemony over huge portions of the world for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and when it broke apart in 1991, that dominance was broken. The 1990s were a time of chaos and humiliation, as Yeltsin had to rely on loans from Russia's old nemesis, the United States, to help shake its economic doldrums. As the 21st century began, the new president, Vladimir Putin, set out to redefine Russia's place in the world, a two-dimensional task that required a new interpretation of the country's relationship with the west, as well as its role among the former Soviet States.

### The CIS

The weak **Commonwealth of Independent States** united the fifteen former republics of the Soviet Union, and Russia has been the clear leader of the group. However, the organization has little formal power over its members, and today only nine former republics remain tied to it. Russia's motives are almost always under strict scrutiny by the other countries. Still, trade agreements bind them together, although nationality differences keep the members from reaching common agreements. These nationality differences also threaten the Federation itself, with the threat of revolution from Chechnya spreading to other regions. In short, the CIS is a long way from being a regional power like the European Union, and many experts believe that the confederation will not survive.

A controversy erupted between Russia and Estonia in 2007 when the Estonian government removed a Soviet-era statue from a public place in its capital, Tallinn. The Estonian move met with a reaction from ethnic Russians living in Estonia, with hundreds of them attacking the main theater and the Academy of Arts in the capital. Events took a strange turn when computers went down all over Estonia the day after the protests. The Estonians accused Russia of orchestrating the computer attacks, and young protesters in Moscow reacted by attacking Estonia's embassy with eggs and harassing the Estonian ambassador. The old ethnicities of the culturally heterogeneous Soviet Union are still at odds, even though they are no longer united under one central government.



**The Troubled Caucasus Region.** The map above shows many points of conflict both within the Russian Federation and outside its borders. Chechnya has long been an area of conflict, where many still support Chechen independence from Russia. Georgia, now an independent country, has separatist problems of its own in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Russia has supported those regions in their attempts to break away from Georgia. A root of the conflict is the variety of small cultural groups that have long inhabited the area, and over the years hostilities have built up among them.

More recently, Russia's relationships with countries in the near abroad (former Soviet states) have been affected by its invasion of Georgia in 2008. Russian troops and armored vehicles rolled into South Ossetia, a "breakaway region" of Georgia that sought its independence. The move marked the growing aggressiveness of the Russian military, but it also reflected years of growing tensions between Georgia and Russia, especially between Georgia's president Mikheil Saakashvili and Putin. Georgia had long been viewed by Moscow as a wayward province, and after Georgia gained its independence when the Soviet Union fell apart, distrust grew, even though traditional bonds continued. However, Saakashvili allied Georgia with the United States, even naming a main road after George W. Bush. Russia responded by announcing its support for separatist regions of Georgia and then invaded South Ossetia and other areas of Georgia. A cease-fire agreement and a peace plan was brokered by Nicolas Sarkozy, the president of France and the European Union, but on August 26, 2008, Medvedev signed a decree recognizing South Ossetia and Abkhazia (another breakaway region) as independent states.

#### Crisis in the Ukraine

The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 into fifteen separate countries resulted in sovereignty issues, especially in regard to Russia's ongoing dominance of the region. The relationship between Russia and Ukraine has been particularly problematic, with conflicts erupting – often along ethnic lines – between Ukrainians who favor stronger ties to the West and those with allegiances to Russia. During the 2004 presidential election campaign in Ukraine, challenger Viktor Yushchenko accused Russian President Putin of providing financing and political advisors for Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich's campaign for the presidency. Putin himself went to Ukraine twice to campaign for Yanukovich. Popular protests broke out after Yanukovich won, with claims that the election was fraudulent. The elections were held again, and Yushchenko's victory in this round increased ethnic tensions within Ukraine.

Yanukovich eventually was elected president in 2010, but the Ukraine's internal and external tensions eventually led to his ouster

in 2014. In late 2013, Yanukovich rejected an agreement with the European Union that would bolster integration and trade between the EU and the Ukraine. Instead, he agreed to take a \$15 billion loan from Russia that would move the country toward a "Eurasian Union" with Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. The decision sparked protests in Kiev by EU supporters, and clashes grew so violent that Yanukovich fled to Russia, and a coalition government formed that supported EU agreements. This turn of events led to opposition in Crimea, a region of Ukraine with a large number of ethnic Russians. Armed men, presumably Russian soldiers, in unmarked uniforms and masks seized airports and regional government buildings, and a new government of pro-Russian leaders decided to hold a referendum on Crimea's future in March 2014. The Russian parliament authorized deploying troops in Ukraine, and 97% of the voters in the extremely controversial referendum supported joining Russia. Putin signed a treaty formally annexing Crimea, and the U.S. and the EU ordered sanctions imposed on Russia. Fighting between government forces and pro-Russian separatists continued despite domestic and international efforts to de-escalate the crisis. However, in 2015, many Russian troops withdrew from Ukraine, fighting diminished, and the area settled into an uneasy peace.

#### Relations with the West

The biggest adjustment for Russia since 1991 has been the loss of its superpower status from the Cold War era. The United States emerged as the lone superpower in 1991, and the two old enemies – Russia and the United States – had to readjust their attitudes toward one another. U.S. Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton both believed that it was important to maintain a good working relationship with Russia. They also knew that the economic collapse of Russia would have disastrous results for the world economy. Both presidents sponsored aid packages for Russia, and they also encouraged foreign investment in the country's fledgling market economy. The United States and the other G-7 political powerhouses of Europe welcomed Russia into the organization, now known as the G-8, acknowledging the political importance of Russia in global politics. Russia supported France in blocking the U.N. Security Council's approval of the U.S.-sponsored

war on Iraq in early 2003. Whether the move was a wise one is yet to be seen, but it does indicate Russia's willingness to assert its point of view, even if it opposes that of the United States.

For almost two decades, Russia negotiated for membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), a powerful body responsible for regulating international trade, settling trade disputes, and designing trade policy through meetings with its members. Russia's bid to join the WTO finally succeeded in 2012, an event that almost certainly was a milestone in the country's integration with the international economic community. Putin hopes that the move will win more favorable trade terms for Russian companies and harness the nation's potential by attracting capital and diversifying the economy.

Russia's relations with countries of the West and the near abroad are strongly defined by the clout of its oil and gas industries. In an ongoing dispute about gas lines that cross Ukraine, Belarus, and other nearby countries, Russia's state-run gas company, Gazprom, has instituted gas price hikes that have been met by stiff resistance. In 2006, Gazprom reduced pressure in the Ukrainian pipeline system so that Ukrainian gas customers had no gas to use, even for basics, such as heating their homes. Europeans were affected because the pipelines eventually provide gas to them, and their governments put pressure on Putin's government until the pressure was restored.

Russia's relations with the European Union are sometimes undermined by individual countries pursuing their own interests, opening the way for Russia to play divide-and-rule, especially over energy. Russian leaders have also shown signs that they are more interested in maintaining their relationships with other fast-growing BRIC economies than they are in cooperating with the aging European countries. Still, Russia depends on the EU for half its trade, even though its trade with China has increased substantially in recent years.

After the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, Putin's solidarity with the United States seemed to mark the beginning of a new era in Russian-American relations. However, the real breaking-point in Russia's relationship with America came after 2003. Putin saw America's invasion of Iraq as an intolerable encroachment on Russian national interests, and he condemned President Bush for telling other people how to live.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration insulted Russian pride by ignoring its relationship with the country, focusing instead on the war in Iraq. Tensions between the two countries escalated after Russia invaded South Ossetia in 2008. Putin had hoped that Bush would rein in Georgia's president as Saakashvili brushed off Russian prerogatives in the near abroad, and the attack affirmed Russia's strength.

In recent years, relationships between the United States and Russia have become more tense, especially after the crisis in Ukraine. In reaction to America's threat to sanction Russian officials directly involved in human rights abuses, the Kremlin banned American couples from adopting Russian orphans. The protests against the Duma election in December 2011 sparked anti-Americanism in Russia, with the Kremlin putting at least some of the blame on the United States. Under President Barack Obama, the United States has downplayed the importance of its relationship with Russia, almost certainly stoking even more anti-American feelings.

In recent years, Russia has encouraged international efforts to challenge America's global leadership. In the summer of 2015, Putin hosted the BRICS (Brazil, India, China, and South Africa) at a summit in the Russian city of Ufa. According to Russia's state media, the BRICS meeting was a new step in the construction of a counter-weight to the western financial system. Western countries are also concerned about Russia's naval expansion, especially its development of new types of conventional and nuclear-capable submarines. Some westerners fear that this new initiative might threaten NATO's control of western oceans.

### **Terrorism**

Just as has happened in the United States and Britain, Russia has had a number of acts of terror in recent years, with the Beslan school siege in southern Russia in 2004 being the most well known. Just prior to Beslan, a suicide bombing occurred near a subway station in Moscow, and bombs went off in two Russian airplanes almost simultaneously. As the government tried to break the Beslan siege by militants, 360 people died, many who were children. President Putin responded with a reform package to boost security. In an emergency gathering of

regional and national leaders in late 2004, Putin argued that only a tighter grip from the central government would foil terrorists whose aim it was to force the country's disintegration. He laid out not just security measures, but also a sweeping political reform – top officials (including regional governors) would no longer be directly elected, but would be selected by the president, and then approved by regional legislatures. The Duma approved the president's plan later in the year. Terrorist attacks in the Caucasus calmed for a few years, but reasserted themselves in the summer of 2009.

### **Population Issues**

In recent years, Russia has suffered a dramatic drop in its overall population. The population peaked in the early 1990s with about 148 million people, and the United Nations predicts that the country will fall to 116 million people by 2050, from the 141 million now, an 18% decline. The U.N. cites two reasons for the decline: a low birth rate and poor health habits. The low birth rate goes back to the Soviet era, when abortion was quite common and was used as a method of birth control. Economic hardship has not encouraged large families, and health issues have also created a very high death rate of 15 deaths per 1000 people per year, far higher than the world's average death rate of just under 9. Alcohol-related deaths in Russia are very high and alcohol-related emergencies represent the bulk of emergency room visits in the country. Life expectancy is particularly low for men at 59, as compared to women's life expectancy of 72. The difference is usually attributed to high rates of alcoholism among males.

A bit of good news came in late 2012, when new data showed that from January through October 2012 the Russian population naturally grew by about 800 people. Compared with the relevant period in 2011, births are up by 6.5% and deaths are down by 1.5%. Although the growth is very slight, it is the first time since 1992 that population hasn't actually declined.

To combat this overall decline the Russian government is encouraging Russians who live abroad to return to their homeland. Moscow has spent \$300 million since 2007 to get a repatriation program started, and official estimated that more than 25 million people were eligible.

Many are ethnic Russians who live in former Soviet republics, but the government is trying to attract people around the world. It is unclear how the financial crisis and Russia's recent economic woes have affected the program's appeal. However, economic issues have discouraged many Russians from expanding the size of their families.

### **Re-centralization of Power in the Kremlin**

Some critics believe that Putin's reforms for the Duma and the selection of regional governors are more than a response to terrorism, but are part of a re-centralization of power in the Kremlin. Putin's party now has 53% of the seats in the Duma, and his government has taken important steps toward controlling the power of the oligarchs. The Kremlin now controls major television stations, as well as the Russian gas giant Gazprom. It is not clear whether these moves mark the beginning of the end of democratic experimentation in Russia, or simply a reaction to terrorism similar to those of the U.S. and British governments after major attacks in those countries. Another possibility is that Russia is simply going through yet another of its age-old alternations between reform and conservatism.

The presidential election of 2008 also provided evidence that Russia's political power remains centralized, even though the presidential succession technically went according to the provisions of the Constitution of 1993. Dmitri Medvedev was hand-picked by Putin, and Putin's role as prime minister did not change the fact that he still was in charge of the Russian political system. Putin's reelection in 2012 insured that he would maintain control of policymaking until 2018.

### **Development of a Civil Society**

The notion of civil society starts with the acceptance of two areas of life: a public one that is defined by the government, and a private one, in which people are free to make their own individual choices. In a country with a strong civil society, people follow rules, operate with a degree of trust toward others, and generally have respectful dealings with others even if the government is not watching. Even though these ideals may not always be met, citizens are aware of both the rule of law in the public realm and their own privacy that exists outside it.



Democracy and capitalism both depend on civil society for their successful operation.

Russians do not necessarily share the assumptions that civil society rests on: the inherent value of life, liberty, and property. Instead, they have been much more influenced by traditions of **statism** – have a strong government or die. Their history began with this truth: survival amidst the invasions across the Russian plains and the rebellions of the many ethnicities depends on a strong, protective government. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Russia became a superpower in the same way – through a strong, centralized government. Is it possible for stability, power, and prosperity to return to Russia through a democratic state and a capitalist economy?

In many ways the answer to that question tests the future of democracy as a worldwide political model. Were John Locke and other Enlightenment philosophers correct in their assumptions that it is in “human nature” to value freedom above equality? That people “naturally” have the right to own property and to live private lives? If so, can these values thrive among a people who have traditionally valued government protection and equality? So far, the spread of democracy has taken many forms. If it takes hold in the Russian Federation, it is indeed a hardy, versatile, and potentially global philosophy.

### IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONCEPTS

asymmetric federalism  
 Berezovsky, Boris  
 Bolsheviks  
 boyars  
 Catherine the Great  
 Central Committee  
 civil society in Russia  
 collective farms, collectivization  
 Commonwealth of Independent States  
 conflict in Chechnya  
 Constitution of 1993  
 Constitutional Court  
 Crimean War

CPRF  
 cultural heterogeneity in Russia  
 Decembrist Revolt  
 decrees  
 democratic centralism  
 de-Stalinization  
 Duma  
 equality of result in Russia  
 federal government structure  
 Federation Council  
 Five Year Plans  
 general secretary  
 glasnost  
 Gorbachev, Mikhail  
 Gorbachev’s three-pronged reform plan  
 Gosplan  
 head of government, head of state  
 Khrushchev, Nikita  
 kulaks  
 Lebed, Alexander  
 Lenin, V.I.  
 Liberal Democrats  
 mafia  
 Marxism-Leninism  
 Medvedev, Dmitri  
 Mensheviks  
 nationality  
 near abroad  
 New Economic Policy  
*nomenklatura*  
 oligarchy  
 Patriots of Russia  
*perestroika*  
 Peter the Great  
 Politburo  
 presidential-parliamentary system  
 proportional representation in Russia  
 Putin, Vladimir

Red Army/White Army  
 Russian Orthodox Church  
 “secret speech”  
 “shock therapy”  
 Slavophile vs. Westernizer  
 Stalinism  
 state corporatism  
 statism in Russia  
 totalitarianism  
 tsars  
 United Russia Party  
 “Window on the West”  
 Yobloko  
 Yeltsin, Boris  
*zemstvas*  
 Zhirinovskiy, Vladimir  
 Zyuganov, Gennady

## Russia Questions

1. The tendency of Russian citizens to value the existence of a strong government to protect them is called
  - A) statism
  - B) perestroika
  - C) democratic centralism
  - D) corporatism
  - E) militarism
  
2. Which of the following appears to be a significant difference between the political views of Russian citizens and citizens of most established democracies?
  - A) Russians are more trusting of government officials.
  - B) Russians have less faith in competitive, regular elections.
  - C) Russians are less likely to be swayed by the charisma or popularity of their leaders.
  - D) Russians are more likely to believe in equality of result rather than equality of opportunity.
  - E) Russians have a narrower range of political ideologies; they tend to have attitudes to the “left” of center.
  
3. Which of the following is the BEST description of current Russian relationships with the near abroad?
  - A) Russia generally dominates trade agreements that bind the countries together.
  - B) Russia has almost no direct contact with countries in the near abroad.
  - C) The countries of the near abroad are still almost totally dependent on Russia both politically and economically.
  - D) Russia has much better relations with countries to the south than with those to the west.
  - E) Russian relationships between countries of the near abroad are virtually no different than those with countries in other areas.

4. Which of the following is the BEST description of the role of the military in the current Russian political system?

- A) The military dominates policymaking in its areas of expertise, but does not have much influence in other areas.
- B) The military shares decision-making power with the president.
- C) The military has much more political influence under Putin than it did under Yeltsin.
- D) The military has very little political power, and its leaders generally don't shape political power.
- E) The military defers to the president, but has much more political power than the Duma has.

5. Marx predicted that proletarian revolutions would occur first in

- A) weak imperialist countries such as Russia
- B) industrial capitalist countries such as Great Britain
- C) traditional peasant countries such as China
- D) developed agrarian countries such as Argentina
- E) racially divided countries such as South Africa

6. Russia's difficulties with the Chechen region are based primarily on

- A) disputes over the central government's rights to natural resources
- B) borderlines among the regions of the Caucasus
- C) trading rights with the Ukraine
- D) unpaid taxes
- E) nationality

7. All of the following population patterns have made cultural heterogeneity a special challenge for Russian rulers EXCEPT:

- A) Russians are concentrated in one place, and seldom live in the same regions as other ethnicities.
- B) Ethnic minorities have been scattered by invasion and expansion, so that borders are difficult to draw.
- C) The large variety of cultural groups makes communication with and control by the government more difficult.
- D) Ethnic minorities in the north and east are very different from minorities in southern Russia and the Caucasus.
- E) Frequent border changes have meant that particular groups have sometimes been under Russian control and sometimes not.

8. Today most Russians live in

- A) cities in the eastern part of the country
- B) cities in the western part of the country
- C) rural areas in the central and southern part of the country
- D) rural areas in the western part of the country
- E) small and middle-size cities in the central part of the country

9. The Constitution of 1993 gave the Russian Duma the power to

- A) censure the cabinet
- B) issue laws by decree
- C) vote for and schedule a national referendum
- D) appoint the Prime Minister
- E) veto the President's appointment of the Prime Minister

10. One of the most frequently heard current criticisms of Vladimir Putin's presidency is that he is
- A) displaying too much unpredictable and unstable behavior to be a good president
  - B) allowing the Russian mafia to exert too much power in making political decisions
  - C) centralizing so much power in the presidency that Russia's democratic reforms are in jeopardy
  - D) allowing the legitimacy of the government to diminish because he has never received a majority of the votes in a presidential election
  - E) paying too much attention to the actions and political power of the U.S. President
11. In comparison to the European Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States is
- A) much weaker
  - B) much stronger
  - C) stronger in terms of trade among its member states, but weaker in terms of trade outside the organization
  - D) much more dependent on directives from the United Nations
  - E) very similar in power and types of regulations over member states
12. In contrast to non-communist countries, communist countries usually place more value on
- A) equality rather than liberty
  - B) liberty rather than equality
  - C) acquisition of material wealth
  - D) decentralization of government responsibilities
  - E) religion
13. Which of the following is a change that societies influenced by Marxism generally encourage?
- A) more emphasis on ethnic identities of sub-groups
  - B) more equal roles in society for men and women
  - C) a smaller proportion of the population that depend on state welfare
  - D) less centralized control by the government
  - E) privatization of major industries
14. Which of the following is the best description of the type of political system put in place by the Russian Constitution of 1993?
- A) a presidential system
  - B) a parliamentary system
  - C) a socialist market system
  - D) a direct democracy
  - E) a hybrid presidential-parliamentary system
15. Which of the following is an accurate comparison of British and Russian judicial systems?
- A) Both systems have mechanisms for judicial review.
  - B) Both systems have strong judicial branches that overshadow their respective legislatures.
  - C) Britain's judiciary exercises judicial review, but Russia's does not.
  - D) In both countries, strong legislatures have kept strong judicial systems from developing.
  - E) Britain's judiciary does not exercise judicial review, but the Russian Constitution of 1993 created a structure to exercise judicial review.

16. Which of the following accurately compares the electoral systems for the British House of Commons and the Russian Duma since 2007?
- A) Britain uses a first-past-the-post system; Russia uses proportional representation.
  - B) Britain uses a first-past-the post system; Russia combines single-member districts with proportional representation.
  - C) Both Britain and Russia use single-member district plurality systems.
  - D) Britain combines first-past-the post and proportional representation; Russia uses first-past-the-post only.
  - E) Both Britain and Russia use proportional representation.
17. Which of the following accurately compares the British and Russian executive branches?
- A) Britain's executive is separated between a head of state and a head of government; Russia combines the two roles into one position.
  - B) Russia's executive is separated between a head of state and a head of government; Britain combines the two roles into one position.
  - C) Both Britain and Russia have an executive branch that is separated between a head of state and a head of government, but Russia's head of state has more real power.
  - D) Both Britain and Russia have an executive branch that is separated between a head of state and a head of government, but Britain's head of state has more real power.
  - E) Both Britain and Russia combine the roles of head of state and head of government into one position.
18. Which of the following is NOT a significant issue for either the British or Russian political systems?
- A) the price of oil
  - B) rapidly increasing populations
  - C) funding the military
  - D) terrorism
  - E) relationship with the United States
19. Which of the following is an accurate comparison of party systems in Britain and Russia?
- A) Britain has a multi-party system; Russia has a two-party system.
  - B) Britain has no regionally-based parties; Russia does.
  - C) Russia's political parties are more likely to be organized around a personality or a powerful individual.
  - D) More of Russia's political parties are based on liberal ideologies.
  - E) In Russia, political parties are more important in determining voter choices among candidates for public office.
20. The "Slavophile v. Westernizer" characteristic of Russia's political culture indicates that the political culture is
- A) ethnically homogeneous
  - B) consensual
  - C) subject to revolutions
  - D) conflictual
  - E) resistant to absolute rulers

21. Both Britain and Russia have seen significant demographic increases in their percentages of

- A) Catholics
- B) Sub-Saharan Africans
- C) Muslims
- D) Scandinavians
- E) Southeast Asians

22. Compared to Great Britain, Russia's civil society is

- A) growing less rapidly
- B) less regulated by the government
- C) more dominated by intellectual groups
- D) less well developed
- E) more likely to support popular elections

23. Which of the following is an accurate comparison of Russia's and Britain's government structures?

- A) Russia is a unitary state; Britain is a democratic state.
- B) Russia is a confederal state; Britain is a federalist state.
- C) Britain and Russia are both unitary states.
- D) Britain is a unitary state; Russia is a federalist state.
- E) Britain and Russia are both federalist states.

24. The main purpose of the Federation Council, according to the Russian Constitution, is to

- A) adjudicate disputes between the Duma and the president
- B) represent individual citizens in the national legislature
- C) represent regions in the national legislature
- D) advise the president on foreign policy
- E) check the powers of the regional governments

25. Which of the following do the British and Russian military have in common?

- A) Both are major sources of recruitment for political leaders.
- B) Neither actively participates in the policymaking process.
- C) Both are much stronger and better equipped than they were twenty years ago.
- D) Both consider the United States military its biggest foe.
- E) Neither has been well-funded by the central government in recent years.

26. All of the following political institutions are present in BOTH Britain and Russia EXCEPT:

- A) bicameral legislature
- B) Supreme Court
- C) prime minister
- D) bureaucracy
- E) president

27. Which of the following is a common characteristic of upper legislative houses in Britain and Russia?

- A) Some of their members hold hereditary seats.
- B) Both have significant powers to check the actions of their respective lower houses.
- C) Some of their members are appointed by the president.
- D) Both have very little policymaking power in the political system.
- E) Both have the power to request that new policies and laws be subject to judicial review.

28. The use of judicial review in Russia is limited because
- A) judicial review violates the principle of parliamentary sovereignty
  - B) the judiciary has been dominated by the chief executive
  - C) legal systems in Russia are based on common law
  - D) the Constitution does not provide for a constitutional court
  - E) the Federation Council refuses to pay attention to court rulings
29. Which description below most accurately describes BRIC countries?
- A) All of the countries are advanced democracies.
  - B) None of the countries have integrated capitalism into their economic systems.
  - C) All of the countries have fast-growing economies.
  - D) All of the countries are communist or post-communist societies.
  - E) All are less developed countries with little hope of economic improvement.
30. The societal cleavage that most influenced the organization of Russia into a “federation” in the early 1990s was
- A) social class
  - B) religion
  - C) nationality
  - D) rural/urban differences
  - E) racial groups

Free-Response Question:

Political systems consist of a head of government and a head of state.

- a) Identify and explain one difference between a head of government and a head of state.
- b) Describe the office that constitutes the head of state in Great Britain AND the office that constitutes the head of state in Russia.
- c) Explain one similarity in the roles that the head of state in Great Britain and in Russia play in policymaking.
- d) Explain two differences in the roles that the head of state in Great Britain and in Russia play in policymaking.



“Let China sleep. For when China wakes, it will shake the world.”  
Napoleon Bonaparte

Ancient China was arguably one of the strongest, richest empires in existence – so much so that often rulers saw little value in contacting anyone else in the world. Even though China’s power was much diminished by the era of Napoleon, his words describing China as a sleeping giant prophesied the China of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century – a great civilization on the rise again.

Since western countries first began exploring the world several centuries ago, they have tended to either ignore or exploit China in world politics. And yet the presence of China is deeply felt, sometimes promising riches and cooperation, and other times threatening competition and destruction. Today China stands as one of the few remaining communist nations, with no signs of renouncing communism. China is by some standards a less developed country, but on the other hand the country is now a major world power, partly because of recent dramatic improvements in GNP and standards of living. China no longer sleeps. Its leaders claim membership in the World Trade Organization, travel frequently to other countries, and take active part in the United Nations. The world now comes to China for its vast array of products, and more and more, China is going outside its borders for investments, labor supplies, and raw materials. Its steady move toward capitalism has led some to argue that democratization will follow, yet the government remains highly authoritarian, providing evidence that marketization and privatization do not always go hand in hand with democracy.

## SOVEREIGNTY, AUTHORITY, AND POWER

Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century China’s history was characterized by **dynastic cycles** – long periods of rule by a family punctuated by times of “chaos”, when the family lost its power and was challenged by a new, and ultimately successful, ruling dynasty. Power was determined by the **mandate of heaven**, or the right to rule as seen by the collective ancestral wisdom that guided the empire from the heavens above. For many centuries public authority rested in the hands of the emperor and an elaborate bureaucracy that exercised this highly centralized power. After a time of chaos in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Communist leader Mao Zedong took over China in 1949, bringing in a new regime with values that often disagreed with traditional concepts of power. How different is the new China from the old? Have the changes brought instability, or have they successfully transformed the country into a modern world power?

China’s political structures reflect many modern influences, but the weight of tradition has shaped them in unique ways. For example, China is technically governed by a constitution that grants formal authority to both party and state executive and legislative offices. However, the country is still governed by authoritarian elites who are not bound by rule of law. As long as the rulers are above the law, the constitution will not be a major source of legitimacy for the state.

### Legitimacy

Under dynastic rule, Chinese citizens were subjects of the emperor. Legitimacy was established through the mandate of heaven, and power passed from one emperor to the next through hereditary connections within the ruling family. As long as things went well, the emperor’s authority was generally accepted, but when problems occurred and the dynasty weakened, rival families challenged the throne, claiming that the emperor had lost the mandate. Legitimacy was not for peasants to determine, although popular rebellions and unrest in the countryside served as signs that the emperor was failing.

The Revolution of 1911 gave birth to the Chinese Republic, with western-educated **Sun Yat-sen** as its first president. The new regime was



supposed to be democratic, with legitimacy resting on popular government. However, regional warlords challenged the government, much as they always had done in times of political chaos. Emerging from the mayhem was **Mao Zedong**, with his own version of authority, an ideology known as **Maoism**. The **People's Republic of China** was established in 1949, and Mao led the Communist Party as the new wielder of power until his death in 1976.

Inspired by Marxism, Maoism was idealistic and egalitarian, and even though it endorsed centralized power exercised through the top leaders of the party, it stressed the importance of staying connected to the peasants through a process called mass line. Mass line required leaders to listen to and communicate with ordinary folks, and without it, the legitimacy of the rulers was questionable. Despite this important difference between Maoism and Leninism (which based its authority on the urban proletariat), the organizing principle for both ideologies was democratic centralism. Democratic centralism allowed leaders to make decisions that could not be questioned by the people, and gave both Lenin and Mao almost complete control over policymaking.

Since Mao's death, the Politburo of the Communist Party remains the legitimate source of power in China, but the leadership has come under a great deal of criticism in recent years. The Party is said to be corrupt and irrelevant, holding authoritarian power over an increasingly market-based economy. In truth, rebellions against the party have flared up throughout PRC history, but the rumblings have been louder and more frequent since the Tiananmen incident in 1989. How serious a threat these criticisms are to the current regime is a matter of some debate, and current Communist leaders show no signs of loosening the party's hold on the government and the economy.

One important source of power in the People's Republic of China has been the military. The military played an important role in the rise of the Communist Party, and it is represented in the government by the **Central Military Commission**. The head of this commission plays an important role in policymaking. For example, long-time leader Deng Xiaoping was never general secretary of the Communist Party, but he directed the Central Military Commission.

## Historical Traditions

Despite the fact that the last dynasty (the Qing) fell in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many traditions from the dynastic era influence the modern political system:

- **Authoritarian power** – China's borders have changed over time, but it has long been a huge, land-based empire ruled from a central place by either an emperor or a small group of people. Chinese citizens have traditionally been subjects of, not participants in, their political system. Despite the many dynasties in China's history, the ruling family was always subject to attack from regional warlords who challenged their right to the mandate of heaven. This tendency toward decentralization is apparent in the modern regime as a centralized Politburo attempts to control its vast population and numerous policies and problems.
- **Confucianism** – This philosophy has shaped the Chinese political system since the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. It emphasized the importance of order and harmony, encouraged Chinese citizens to submit to the emperor's power, and reinforced the emperor's responsibility to fulfill his duties conscientiously. This aspect of Confucianism may be tied to **democratic centralism**, or the communist belief in a small group of leaders who make decisions for the people. Confucianism is still a major influence on Chinese society today as it contradicts the egalitarian ideology of communism with its central belief in unequal relationships and mutual respect among people of different statuses, especially within families.
- **Bureaucratic hierarchy based on scholarship** – The emperors surrounded themselves with highly organized bureaucracies that formed an elite based on Confucian scholarship. Government jobs were highly coveted and extremely competitive, with only a small percentage of candidates mastering the examination system. The exams were knowledge-based, and bureaucrats had to be well-versed in Confucianism and many related philosophies. A major social divide in Ancient China

was between a large peasant population and the bureaucratic elite.

- **The “Middle Kingdom”** – Since ancient times, the Chinese have referred to their country as *zhongguo*, meaning “Middle Kingdom”, or the place that is the center of civilization. Foreigners were seen as “barbarians” whose civilizations were far inferior to China’s, not just in terms of power, but also in terms of ethics and quality of life. All countries are ethnocentric in their approaches to other countries, but China almost always assumed that no one else had much to offer. After the empire’s 19<sup>th</sup>-century weakness was exploited by imperialist powers, these traditional assumptions were challenged, but not destroyed.

CHINA: SOVEREIGNTY, AUTHORITY, AND POWER	
 <b>CONFUCIANISM</b>	 <b>MAOISM</b>
Mandate of heaven (responsibility of ruler to the people) Vision of an ideal society based on harmony and obedience Hierarchical social and political organization; rulers and subjects have unequal positions Emphasis on loyalty to family	Democratic centralism (responsibility of ruler to the people) Vision of ideal society based on self reliance and struggle Egalitarian social structure; mass line between rulers and subjects Emphasis on loyalty to the state, Mao

- **Communist ideologies** – The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought the new influence of Maoism that emphasized the “right thinking” and moralism of Confucianism, but contradicted the hierarchical nature of the old regime with its insistence on egalitarianism. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century brought **Deng Xiaoping Theory**, a practical mix of authoritarian political control and economic privatization.

### Political Culture

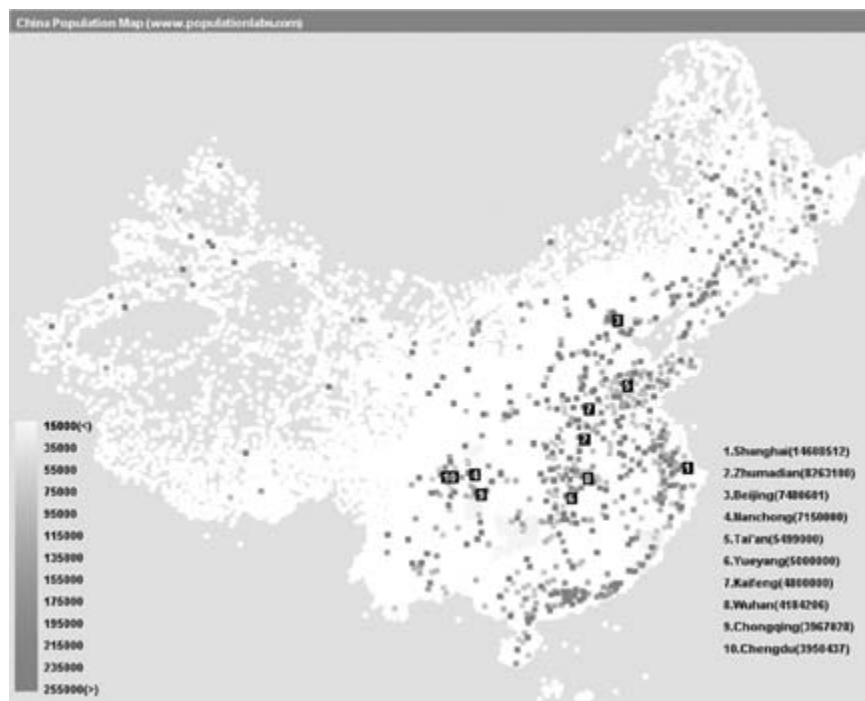
China’s political culture is multi-dimensional and deep, shaped by geographical features and by the many eras of its history: dynastic rule, control by imperialist nations and its aftermath, and communist rule.

### Geographic Influences

Today China has the largest population of any country on earth, and its land surface is the third largest, after Russia and Canada. Some of its important geographical features include:

- Access to oceans/ice free ports
- Many large navigable rivers
- Major geographical/climate splits between north and south
- Geographic isolation of the western part of the country
- Mountain ranges, deserts, and oceans that separate China from other countries

These geographic features have shaped Chinese political development for centuries. China’s location in the world and protective mountain ranges allowed the Chinese to ignore the rest of the world whenever they wanted to until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The rugged terrain of the western part of the country has limited population growth there. The large navigable rivers and good harbors of the east have attracted population, so that the overwhelming majority of people in China have lived in these areas for centuries. Differences in climate and terrain have also created a cultural split between the north and the south.



**Population concentrations in China.** The vast majority of people live in urban areas in the east, with many cities located along rivers and in coastal areas. Large stretches of mountains and deserts make the western and northern parts of the country less habitable.

## Historical Eras

**1. Dynastic rule** – The political culture inherited from centuries of dynastic rule centers on **Confucian values**, such as order, harmony, and a strong sense of hierarchy – “superior” and “subservient” positions. China has traditionally valued scholarship as a way to establish superiority, with mandarin scholars filling bureaucratic positions in the government. China’s early relative isolation from other countries contributes to a strong sense of cultural identity. Related to Chinese identity is a high degree of ethnocentrism – the sense that China is central to humanity (the “middle kingdom”) and superior to other cultures. Centuries of expansion and invasion have brought many other Asian people under Chinese control, resulting in long-standing tensions between “Han” Chinese and others groups. A modern example is Tibet, where a strong sense of Tibetan ethnicity has created resistance to Chinese control.

**2. Resistance to imperialism** – During the 19<sup>th</sup> century China’s strong sense of cultural identity blossomed into nationalism as it resisted persistent attempts by imperialist nations – such as England, France, Germany, and Japan – to exploit China’s natural resources and people. This nationalism was secured by the Revolution of 1911, and the hatred of “**foreign devils**” has led China to be cautious and suspicious in its dealings with capitalist countries ever since.

**3. Maoism** – Mao Zedong was strongly influenced by Karl Marx and V.I. Lenin, but his version of communism is distinctly suited to China. Whereas Lenin emphasized the importance of a party vanguard to lead the people to revolution and beyond, Mao resisted the inequality implied by Lenin’s beliefs. He believed in the strength of the peasant, and centered his philosophy on these values:

- **Collectivism** – Valuing the good of the community above that of the individual suited the peasant-based communities that have existed throughout Chinese history. It contrasts to the beliefs of scholars (valued by the old culture) who have often been drawn to individualism.
- **Struggle and activism** – Mao encouraged the people to actively pursue the values of socialism, something he understood would require struggle and devotion.
- **Mass line** – Mao conceptualized a line of communication between party leaders, members, and peasants that would allow all to struggle toward realization of the goals of a communist state. The mass line involved teaching and listening on everyone’s part. Leaders would communicate their will and direction to the people, but the people in turn would communicate their wisdoms to the leaders through the mass line.

- **Egalitarianism** – Hierarchy was the key organizing principle in Chinese society before 1949, and Mao’s emphasis on creating an egalitarian society was in complete opposition to it.
  - **Self-reliance** – Instead of relying on the elite to give directions, people under Maoist rule were encouraged to rely on their own talents to contribute to their communities.
4. **Deng Xiaoping Theory** – “It doesn’t matter whether a cat is white or black, as long as it catches mice.” This famous statement by Deng reflects his practical approach to solving China’s problems. In other words, he didn’t worry too much about whether a policy was capitalist or socialist as long as it improved the economy. The result of his leadership (1978-1997) was a dramatic turnaround of the Chinese economy through a combination of socialist planning and the capitalist free market. His political and social views, however, remained true to Communist tradition – the party should supervise all, and no allowances should be made for individual freedoms and/or democracy.

#### The Importance of Informal Relationships

Especially among the political elite, power and respect depend not so much on official positions as on who has what connections to whom. During the days of the early PRC, these ties were largely based on reputations established during the **Long March**, a 1934-1936 cross-country trek led by Mao Zedong as Chiang Kai-shek’s nationalist army pursued his communist followers. Today those leaders are dead, but **factions** of their followers still compete for power, and informal relationships define each change in leadership. This informal network – a version of **patron-clientelism** – is not apparent to the casual outside observer. As a result, whenever new leaders come to power, such as the 2003 and 2013 transitions, it isn’t easy to predict how policymaking will be affected. However, an important principle is to study their relationships with past leaders. For example, it is significant that Hu

Yaobang, a reformer whose death was mourned by the students that led the Tiananmen Square protest in 1989, mentored Hu Jintao, who later became general secretary of the CCP. Also important is the fact that, before he died, Deng Xiaoping designated Hu Jintao as his “4<sup>th</sup> generation” successor.

#### Chinese Nationalism

The identity of Han Chinese – the predominant ethnic group in China – goes back to ancient times. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Chinese nationalists fought hard against the western imperialists that dominated China, and they eventually won their country’s independence. This pride in Chinese culture and accomplishments is apparent in China today, especially in recent years, by sensitivity to Westerners who have often reacted to it as a third world country. Whereas Mao encouraged his people to ignore the outside world and concentrate on growing the country from within, China has become increasingly involved in world politics and trade since the early days of Deng Xiaoping’s rule.

The 2008 Olympics were intended to showcase China’s growing place in the world, and many Chinese people reacted strongly to the protests that erupted in some western cities as the Olympic torch passed through on its way to Beijing. Chinese nationalists used the internet to express their anger toward pro-Tibetan western press coverage of the unrest in Tibet. Tibetans and other minority groups are seen as inferior people by some strong nationalists, and their pride in being Han Chinese is often apparent. Another indication that Chinese nationalism is on the rise is the reaction that some have had to the global economic crisis of late 2008. As the West has suffered, many have predicted the demise of the United States, a situation which Chinese nationalists have seen as an opportunity to reassert the new global ascendancy of the Middle Kingdom. At the G-20 meeting of the 20 largest national economies in April 2009, Chinese nationalists saw significance in the fact that President Hu Jintao stood to the right of host Gordon Brown (Britain) in the front center of the official photograph of the leaders gathered for the summit. Others proclaimed that the G-20 meeting was irrelevant, and the only significant summit was the “G-2” meeting between Presidents Barack Obama and Hu Jintao. As China’s eco-

conomic star has risen in recent years, it has been supported by a large dose of traditional pride in the glory of one of the world's oldest civilizations as it reclaims what is believed to be its rightful position in the world.

### Attitudes Toward the West

The Chinese have long held conflicting attitudes toward westerners. When the British statesman Earl Macartney arrived in China in the late 1700s seeking trade, the Chinese emperor rejected his overtures, believing that China had little to gain from the less wealthy and cultured British. Once China was carved up by foreign powers during the 19th century, many educated Chinese wondered whether western culture might be superior. During the early 20th century, a major source of tension among Chinese leaders was between those who promoted Chinese self-reliance and those seeking modernization through contacts with the West. In the mid-20th century, Mao Zedong rejected western notions of human rights and electoral democracy and banished most foreign residents. Since the late 1970s, China has opened up to both western trade and culture, but the conflicting attitudes still remain.

These tensions are apparent in modern-day China, and they sometimes spill over into the media. In 2012, *Xinhua*, the state-run news agency, ran an editorial that accused other governments of using reporters from their countries to control China's image in the overseas news media. About the same time, *People's Daily*, the ruling Communist Party paper, described western efforts to export democracy and human rights to China as a new form of colonialism. However, western countries – with their rule of law and individual freedoms – still have an enduring appeal to many educated Chinese.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

Like Russia, China is an old civilization with a long, relatively stable history that experienced massive upheavals during the 20th century that resulted in regime changes. Unlike Russia, however, China rose to regional **hegemony** (control of surrounding countries) very early in its history and has ranked as one of the most influential political

systems in the world for many centuries. Russia's history as a great power is much shorter than China's.

Until the 19th century, dynastic cycles explained the patterns of political and economic change in China. A dynasty would seize power, grow stronger, and then decline. During its decline, other families would challenge the dynasty, and a new one would emerge as a sign that it had the mandate of heaven. This cycle was interrupted by the Mongols in the 13th century, when their leaders conquered China and ruled until the mandate was recaptured by the Ming who restored Han Chinese control. The Manchu were also a conquering people from the north, who established the Qing (or “pure”) dynasty in the 17th century. This last dynasty toppled under European pressure in the early 20th century.

Change during the first half of the 20th century was radical, violent, and chaotic, and the result was a very different type of regime: communism. Did European intrusions and revolutions of the 20th century break the Chinese dynastic cycles forever? Or is this just another era of chaos between dynasties? It is hard to imagine that dynastic families might reappear in the 21st century or beyond, but Chinese political traditions are strong, and they almost certainly will determine what happens next in Chinese political development.

### Change Before 1949

China's oldest cultural and political traditions have long provided stability and longevity for the empire/country. These traditions come from the dynastic rule that lasted for many centuries. However, in recent years two disruptive influences – control by imperialistic nations (19th century) and revolutionary upheavals (20th century) have threatened that stability and provide challenges to modern China.

#### Control by Imperialistic Countries

During the 19th century, the weakened Qing Dynasty fell prey to imperialist nations – such as England, Germany, France, and Japan – who carved China into “**spheres of influence**” for their own economic gain. This era left many Chinese resentful of the “**foreign devils**” who they eventually rebelled against.

## Revolutionary Upheavals

Major revolutions occurred in China in 1911 and 1949, with many chaotic times in between. Three themes dominated this revolutionary era:

- **Nationalism** – The Chinese wished to recapture strength and power from the imperialist nations that dominated them during the 19th century. The Revolution of 1911 – led by Sun Yat-sen – was a successful attempt to reestablish China as an independent country.
- **Establishing a new political community** – With the dynasties gone and the imperialists run out, what kind of government would modern China adopt? One answer came from **Chiang Kai-shek**, who founded the **Nationalist Party (Guomindang)** and the other from **Mao Zedong**, the founder of the Chinese Communist Party.
- **Socioeconomic development** – A major challenge of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been the reestablishment of a strong economic and social fabric after the years of imperialistic control. During the 1920s, the newly formed Soviet Union served as a model for policymaking, but the Nationalists broke with them in 1928. Chiang Kai-shek became the president of China, and Mao Zedong and his communists were left to form an outlaw party.

## The Legend of the Long March

Strength for Mao's Communist Party was gained by the Long March – the 1934-36 pursuit of Mao's army across China by Chiang and his supporters. Chiang tried to depose his rival, but his attempt to find and conquer Mao had the opposite effect. Mao eluded him until finally Chiang had to turn his attentions to the invading Japanese. Mao emerged as a hero of the people, and many of his loyal friends on the March lived to be prominent leaders of the People's Republic of China after its founding in 1949.



### MARKER EVENT: THE CHINESE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The important philosophical influence of Confucianism throughout China's long history encouraged a hierarchical society that assumed inequalities as basic to an orderly society with men and women playing very traditional, family-based roles. As the revolutionary spirit erupted in China during the early 20th century, women's rights became an important issue, resulting in a ban on foot binding and an increase in educational and career opportunities for women. When Mao Zedong instituted the egalitarian values of communism in China, one effect was to create more equal roles for men and women. Mao was committed to women's equality because, in his words, "women hold up half of the heavens." Even before Mao's Communist Party took over the country, women actively advanced the revolutionary cause by serving as teachers, nurses, spies, laborers, and occasionally as soldiers on the front line. Mao's commitment to women's rights extended to his personal life as well, with his wife, Jiang Qing, playing an increasingly prominent role as an adviser and eventually implementer of his policies. Despite these changes, after Mao's death traditional values remained, with foot binding still practiced among some elites. However, the expectation that women work outside the home continued, and opportunities for educational and professional careers have remained open to women.

## The Founding of the People's Republic of China – 1949-1966

The Japanese occupied China during World War II, but after the war ended, the forces of Chiang and Mao met in civil war, and Mao prevailed. In 1949 Chiang fled to Taiwan, and Mao established the People's Republic of China under communist rule.

The People's Republic of China was born from a civil war between the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists under Mao Zedong. After many years of competitive struggle, Mao's army forced Chiang Kai-shek and his supporters off the mainland to the island of Taiwan (Formosa). Mao named his new China the "People's Republic

of China,” and Chiang claimed that his headquarters in Taiwan formed the true government. The “**Two Chinas**”, then, were created, and the PRC was not to be recognized as a nation by the United Nations until 1972. The PRC, like the Soviet Union, was based on the organizing principle of democratic centralism.

The early political development of the PRC proceeded in two phases:

1) **The Soviet model** (1949-1957) – The Soviet Union had supported Mao’s efforts since the 1920s, and with his victory in 1949, it began pouring money and expertise into the PRC. With this help, Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) quickly turned their attention to some of the country’s most glaring social problems.

- **Land reform** – This campaign redistributed property from the rich to the poor and increased productivity in the countryside.
- **Civil reform** – They set about to free people from opium addiction, and they greatly enhanced women’s legal rights. For example, they allowed women to free themselves from unhappy arranged marriages. These measures helped to legitimize Mao’s government in the eyes of the people.
- **Five-Year Plans** – Between 1953 and 1957, the CCP launched the first of its Soviet-style Five-Year Plans to nationalize industry and collectivize agriculture, implementing steps toward socialism.

2) **The Great Leap Forward** (1958-1966) – Mao changed directions in 1958, partly in an effort to free China from Soviet domination. The spirit of nationalism was a force behind Mao’s policy, and he was still unhappy with the degree of inequality in Chinese society. The Great Leap Forward was a utopian effort to transform China into a radical egalitarian society. Its emphasis was mainly economic, and it was based on four principles:

- **All-around development** – not just heavy industry (as under Stalin in the U.S.S.R.), but almost equal emphasis on agriculture.

- **Mass mobilization** – an effort to turn sheer numbers of people into an asset – better motivation, harder work, less unemployment.
- **Political unanimity and zeal** – an emphasis on party workers running government, not bureaucrats. **Cadres** – party workers at the lowest levels – were expected to demonstrate their party devotion by spurring the people on to work as hard as they could.
- **Decentralization** – encouraged more government on the local level, less central control. The people can do it!

The Great Leap Forward did not live up to its name. Mao’s efforts ran counter to the traditional political culture (bureaucratic centralism), and many people lacked skills to contribute to industrialization. Some bad harvests conjured up fears that the mandate of heaven might be lost.

### **The Cultural Revolution – 1966-1976**

Between 1960 and 1966, Mao allowed two of his faithful – Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping – to implement market-oriented policies that revived the economy, but Mao was still unhappy with China’s progress toward true egalitarianism. And so he instituted the Cultural Revolution – a much more profound reform in that it encompassed political and social change, as well as economic. His main goal was to purify the party and the country through radical transformation. Important principles were:

- the ethic of struggle
- mass line
- collectivism
- egalitarianism
- unstinting service to society (see p. 277-278).

A primary goal of the Cultural Revolution was to remove all vestiges of the old China and its hierarchical bureaucracy and emphasis on inequality. Scholars were sent into the fields to work, and universities and libraries were destroyed. Emphasis was put on elementary educa-

tion – all people should be able to read and write – but any education that created inequality was targeted for destruction.

Mao died in 1976, leaving his followers divided into factions:

- **Radicals** – This group was led by Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, one of the “Gang of Four,” who supported the radical goals of the Cultural Revolution.
- **Military** – Always a powerful group because of the long-lasting 20<sup>th</sup> century struggles that required an army, the military was led by Lin Biao, who died in a mysterious airplane crash in 1971.
- **Moderates** – Led by Zhou Enlai, moderates emphasized economic modernization and limited contact with other countries, including the United States. Zhou influenced Mao to invite President Richard Nixon to China in 1972. He died only a few months before Mao.

Members of these factions were not only tied to one another through common purposes, but also through personal relationships, illustrating the importance of informal politics throughout Chinese history.

### Deng Xiaoping’s Modernizations (1977-1997)

The Gang of Four was arrested by the new CCP leader, Hua Guofeng, whose actions helped the moderates take control. Zhou’s death opened the path for leadership from the moderate faction. By 1978, the new leader emerged – Deng Xiaoping. His vision drastically altered China’s direction through **Four Modernizations** articulated by Zhou Enlai before his death – **industry, agriculture, science, and the military**. These modernizations have been at the heart of the country’s official policy ever since. Under Deng’s leadership, then, China experienced economic liberalization, and these policies have helped to implement the new direction:

- **“Open door” trade policy** – trade with everyone, including capitalist nations like the U.S., that would boost China’s economy

- **Reforms in education** – higher academic standards, expansion of higher education and research (a reversal of the policy during the Cultural Revolution)
- **Institutionalization of the Revolution** – restoring the legal system and bureaucracy of the Old China, decentralizing the government, modifying elections, and infusing capitalism

Despite the major reforms that Deng Xiaoping instituted, he did not support political liberalization, and China has followed this path ever since.

### CITIZENS, SOCIETY AND THE STATE

As leadership of the country has passed from Mao to Deng to Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao and then to Xi Jinping, the relationship of Chinese citizens to the state has changed profoundly. Under Maoism, virtually no civil society was allowed, and the government controlled almost every facet of citizens’ lives. Since a transition to a market-based economy began in 1978, important transformations have occurred in citizen-state relationships.

Party leaders realize that most citizens no longer see communist ideology as central to their lives. As a result, the Chinese Communist Party now appeals to patriotism and the traditional pride in being Chinese. The message is that China’s economic resurgence in recent years is a reemergence of the great ancient Chinese Empire, but now under communist leadership. For example, the party-state has done all it could to tout its leading role in China’s economic achievements, winning the 2008 Summer Olympics for Beijing, and returning Hong Kong to Chinese control.

### Ethnic Cleavages

China’s ethnic population is primarily **Han Chinese**, the people that historically formed the basis of China’s identity, first as an empire, and eventually as a country. China’s borders have long included other ethnicities, primarily through conquest and expansion of land claims in Asia. Minority groups now comprise only about 8% of the PRC’s population, but their “autonomous areas” (such as Tibet and Xinjiang)



make up more than 60% of China's territory and have a long history of resistance to the Chinese government. There are 55 officially recognized minority groups, and no one minority is very large. Even so, the Chinese government has put a great deal of time and effort into its policies regarding ethnic groups.

Most minorities live on or near China's borders with other countries, and most of their areas are sparsely populated. For example, Mongols live in both Mongolia and China, and Kazakhs live in both the Kazakh Republic and China. Because dissidents are a long way from areas of dense population, China is worried that they may encourage independence, or join with neighboring countries.

Even though the percentages are not high, China does have about 100 million citizens who are members of minorities groups, a huge number by anyone's calculations. By and large, the government's policy has been to encourage economic development and suppress expressions of dissent in ethnic minority areas. Most of China's minorities are in the five **autonomous regions** of Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet, and Xinjiang. The Chinese constitution grants autonomous areas the right of self-government in some matters, such as cultural affairs, but their autonomy is in fact very limited. Ethnic dissent continues to the present, although many groups appear to be content to be part of the Chinese empire.

#### Tibetans

Tibet – with its long history of separate ethnic identity – has been especially problematic since the Chinese army conquered it in the early days of the PRC. The former government of Tibet never recognized Chinese authority, and many Tibetans today campaign for independence, while others demand enhanced autonomy under Chinese sovereignty. The movement rallies around the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader who fled to India in 1959 after Tibet's failed uprising against China. There he set up a Tibetan government-in-exile that the Chinese Communist Party has never recognized. A series of riots and demonstrations took place in Tibet in March of 2008 on the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the failed uprising, a situation that increased tensions between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan cause was

highlighted in 2008 by protests that greeted the Olympic torch in some Western cities, as the runners made their way to Beijing, where the Olympics were held. In 2011, the government-in-exile elected a prime minister, signaling the withdrawal of the Dalai Lama from political leadership, although his spiritual roles remain intact.

In July 2013, the Chinese government announced its intention to intensify a crackdown against illegal publications, such as pamphlets, text messages and books in Tibetan regions in an attempt to control pro-Dalai Lama literature and publicity. Government figures show that more than 1.3 million illegal publications and promotional items were confiscated from 2011 to mid-2013 in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

#### Uyghurs

A second group of people that has shown increasing unrest are the Uyghurs, who are Muslims of Turkish descent living in Xinjiang, very close to the borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Central Asian states of the former Soviet Union. Some Uyghur militants want to create a separate Islamic state and have used violence to support their cause. In the post-September 11 world, the Chinese have become very concerned with these Muslim dissidents. Their fears were confirmed in July 2009 when riots broke out in Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang. The riots were sparked by Uyghur dissatisfaction with the Chinese central government's handling of the deaths of two Uyghur workers during previous disruptions, but the violence was part of the ongoing ethnic tensions between the Han and the Uyghurs.

Although no large-scale riots have broken out since 2009, Uyghur unrest remains an issue. Discrimination remains a barrier for any Uyghurs who leave Xinjiang, and many find it difficult to get and hold a job because employers do not want Uyghurs as employees. The Chinese government has sponsored education and affirmative action programs, but most Uyghurs remain in Xinjiang, where job opportunities are limited.

#### Linguistic Diversity

Even among the Han Chinese there is great linguistic diversity, although they have shared a written language for many centuries. Since

its inception the Communist regime has tried to make Mandarin the official language of government and education. For example, in early 2006 China stepped up its repression of Shanghainese, a language which, in its various forms, is native to close to 100 million people, especially around Shanghai, China's largest city. Rules required most people in the public sector, including teachers and members of the broadcast media, to use Mandarin when addressing the public. In 2008, the education minister of Hong Kong lifted restrictions that forced many secondary schools to teach in Cantonese, reversing a policy adopted shortly after Hong Kong's return to China in 1997. One motivation was probably the results of a study that showed that students from English-speaking schools did far better in getting into universities than did those from Cantonese-speaking schools. Despite restrictions such as this, dialects remain embedded in Chinese society, and demonstrate the difficulty that the centralized state has in imposing its will on its huge territorial space.

### Urban-Rural Cleavages

An increasingly important divide in Chinese society is between rural and urban areas. Most of China's tremendous economic growth over the past few decades has taken place in cities. As a result, the gap between urban and rural incomes has grown to the point that some observers have redefined the meaning of "two Chinas" – this time, a rural and an urban one. The proportion of urban to rural population has also changed dramatically, with about 80 percent of Chinese living in the countryside in the early 1980s compared to about 47% today. The divide is not just economic, but also includes social lifestyle differences that form the basis for growing resentments across the countryside.

One result has been an upsurge in protests in rural areas, where some believe that the government is not looking out for their interests. For example, a few years ago in Hunan Province, thousands of angry farmers marched on the township government headquarters to protest excessive taxes and corruption of local officials. Shortly afterward, nine people suspected of being leaders of the protests were arrested. In reaction to this discontent, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao announced in 2006 a new government emphasis on "**a new socialist countryside,**" a program to lift the lagging rural economy. He recognized the fol-

lowing year that the rural poor had an array of problems not shared by urban residents.

One recent issue has to do with rural-born urban workers who are reaching retirement age. Under the *hukou* system, their pensions are far less than those for city-born workers, requiring many to work past retirement age.

### Political Participation

According to Chinese tradition before 1949, citizens are subjects of government, not participants in a political system. The communist state redefined political participation by creating a relationship between the Communist Party and citizenship, and by shaping the economic relationship between citizens and the government. Nevertheless, old traditions that governed personal ties and relationships still mold China's political processes and influence the actions and beliefs of elites and citizens alike. In recent years popular social movements that support democracy, religious beliefs, and community ties over nationalism have influenced Chinese politics and helped to define China's relationships with other countries.

### Party and Participation

The **Chinese Communist Party (CCP)** is the largest political party in the world in terms of total formal membership, with about 858 million members in 2015. However, as was true in the U.S.S.R., its members make up only a small minority of the country's population. Only about 6% of the total population are members of the CCP. Only those that are judged to be fully committed to the ideals of communism and who are willing to devote a great deal of time and energy to party affairs may join. Party membership is growing, with new members recruited largely from the CCP's **Youth League**. Almost 89 million Chinese youths belonged to the Youth League by 2015.

The economic reforms begun by Deng Xiaoping paved the way for a milestone transition in the backgrounds of party members. During the

Maoist era (before 1976) revolutionary **cadres** whose careers depended on party loyalty and ideological purity led the CCP at all levels. Most cadres were peasants or factory workers, and few were intellectuals or professionals. Since Deng's reforms, "**technocrats**," people with technical training who climbed the ladder of the party bureaucracy, led the party increasingly. Over time, backgrounds of leaders have broadened, and many are the sons of earlier leaders. The Standing Committee members selected in 2012 have educations in economics, chemistry, engineering, and history, and all have long careers as party leaders. Today less than 40 percent of party members come from the peasantry, although peasants still make up the largest single group within the CCP. The fastest growing membership category consists of officials, intellectuals, technicians, and other professionals. At the 18th National Congress in 2012, 512 of the 2268 delegates were women, about 22.6%. However, women are far rarer in leadership positions, with only 205 members in the latest Central Committee. The number of women in the 25-member Politburo inducted in 2012 doubled, to two. No woman has ever been appointed to the highest tier of the Communist Party: the Politburo Standing Committee.

A significant change in party membership came in 2001 with the decision to allow capitalists to become members. In a repudiation of Maoist principles, President Jiang Zemin argued that the CCP ought to represent not just workers and peasants but business interests as well. According to some estimates, between a quarter and a third of all Chinese entrepreneurs are CCP members, a fact that significantly alters the traditional concept of "cadre."

### The Growth of Civil Society

In recent years the control mechanisms of the party have loosened as new forms of associations appear, like Western-style discos and coffeehouses. Communications through cell phones, fax machines, TV satellite dishes, and internet have made it more difficult for the party-state to monitor citizens. An important new development is the growth of civil society – the appearance of private organizations that do not directly challenge the authority of the state but focus on social problems, such as the en-

vironment, AIDS, and legal reform. For example, recently activist organizations have protested government-sponsored dam projects that would flood the farmland of millions of peasants. The government is trying to harness waterpower for further industrial development, and even though the protesters will probably not block the projects, the very existence of these groups represents a major change. Hu Jintao announced a policy of "harmonious development" that allows the state to solicit public opinion before expanding the country's infrastructure or sponsoring economic development. However, citizens still complain that the government lacks transparency because it reveals its plans too late and in very obscure places. Such attitudes sparked demonstrations in early 2008 in Shanghai when the government extended its train lines without notifying people whose property would be affected by the project. Many observers believe that the rising middle class in China is awakening to the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. Activists had virtually no say in the Chinese political system until the 1990s when Beijing allowed **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** to register with the government. Today China has thousands of NGOs, ranging from ping-pong clubs to environmentalist groups. A key test of China's tolerance is religion. Today Christianity and Buddhism are rebounding, after years of communist suppression of religion. Despite these changes, the government still keeps close control of these groups, with their 1999-2001 crackdown on the religious movement Falun Gong a good example of the party's limited tolerance of activities outside the political realm.

### Protests

The Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 showed the limits of protest in China. Massive repression was the government's message to its citizens that democratic movements that defy the party leadership will not be tolerated. In recent years, religious groups, such as Falun Gong, have staged major protests, but none have risen to the level of conflict apparent in 1989. Village protests have made their way into the news, and thousands of labor strikes have been reported. Some observers believe that protests will pose serious threats to the party in the near future.

### *Riots in Tibet and Protests to the Torch Relay*

In recent years the most serious protest movements have occurred in Tibet and Xinjiang, both autonomous regions in western China. In Tibet, a series of riots and demonstrations took place in Lhasa, Tibet's capital city, on March of 2008 on the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the failed uprisings against China in 1959. The protests became violent after 300 Buddhist monks demanded the release of other monks who had been detained for several months. More political demands followed, as Tibetans and non-Tibetan ethnic groups quarreled, and rioting, looting, burning, and killing began. China's Premier Wen Jiabao accused the Dalai Lama of orchestrating the uprisings, a charge that the Dalai Lama denied, and tensions mounted between the two men. Riots followed in other provinces with Tibetan populations, and became serious enough that they drew international attention.

One series of reactions to the Tibetan riots occurred along the route of the 2008 Summer Olympics torch relay, called by the organizers a "Journey of Harmony" that was supposed to showcase the Olympics as China's symbolic connections to the rest of the world. In many cities along the route, the torch relay was met by protesters inspired most directly by the Tibetan riots, but who also objected to China's human rights record, the political status of Taiwan, and trade policies with Darfur, Myanmar, and Zimbabwe. The protests were particularly strong in Paris, where Chinese security officials were forced to extinguish the flame. Large-scale counter-protests were held by overseas Chinese nationals, and in some places (San Francisco, Australia, Japan, and South Korea) the number of counter-protesters was higher than the number of protesters. Despite the chaos, the Olympics went on as planned without further major disruptions.

### *Riots in Xinjiang*

In July 2009 riots broke out in Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang, in northwest China. The riots were sparked by Uyghur dissatisfaction with the Chinese central government's handling of the deaths of two Uyghur workers during previous disruptions. Protesters clashed with police, and after three days of rioting, President Hu Jintao left the G-8 summit to return to China to give his full attention to the violence.



**Western Riots in 2008 and 2009.** Two serious riots broke out in the far western region of China in recent times. In 2008 rioting took place in Lhasa, the capital city of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, and in 2009 protests turned violent in Urumqi, the capital city of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. Both areas have heavy concentrations of ethnic minorities, and had a great deal of ethnic unrest that preceded the riots.

The police tried to stop the rioters with tear gas, water hoses, road-blocks, and armored vehicles, and the government strictly enforced curfews in most urban areas. Internet services were shut down and cell phone service was restricted. Although the number of casualties was xdisputed, **Xinhua**, China's official news media, reported that the death toll from the riots was 197, and hundreds more were hospitalized.

The Chinese government responded to riots in Tibet and Xinjiang with large numbers of arrests, followed by court hearings. The head of the Communist Party in Xinjiang promised that those who have "committed crimes with cruel means" would be executed.

Although the vast majority of protests each year take place in rural areas, urban unrest – such as recent riots by factory workers in the southern province of Guangdong, is now more common. Part of the unrest has to do with **hukou**, China's traditional household registration system that makes it difficult to move from one place to another.

In the early days of Deng Xiaoping's reforms, *hukou* restrictions were loosened, allowing migrations from rural to urban areas. However, the largest cities now find themselves overcrowded, and so they are shutting down shelters for workers who have recently migrated from rural areas and erecting other barriers to entry for unskilled workers. For example, in Beijing, the number of automobile license plates issued in 2011 was limited to just 1/3 the number in 2010 and new rules also forbid partitioning flats for rent.

With the government's announcement of its intentions to sponsor a massive program to move people from rural to urban areas, the *hukou* system almost certainly will change. One reaction to growing pressure to loosen restrictions comes from Shanghai, where migrant workers are divided into classes: Class A – the most educated and talented – get the Shanghai *hukou*, and the slightly less talented – Class B – might get a *hukou* after seven years to paying into the social security system. Everyone else has to wait longer.

## POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

China's political regime is best categorized as authoritarian, one in which decisions are made by **political elites** – those that hold political power – without much input from citizens. Leaders are recruited through their membership in the Communist Party, but personal relationships and informal ties to others are also important in deciding who controls the regime. However, this authoritarian regime has the same problem that emperors of past dynasties had – how to effectively govern the huge expanse of land and large population from one centralized place. As China has moved away from a command economy toward a market economy, this centralization has become even more problematic in recent years. As a result, a major feature of economic decision-making is now **decentralization**, or devolution of power to subnational governments. Local governments often defy or ignore the central government by setting their own tax rates or building projects without consulting the central government.

The political framework of the People's Republic of China is designed to penetrate as many corners of the country as possible through an elaborately organized Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As in the old

Soviet Union, party personnel control government structures. Unlike the Soviet Union, however, the CCP also integrates its military into the political hierarchy. Political elites are frequently recruited from the military, and the head of the Central Military Commission is often the most powerful leader in China.

## The Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

Despite the many changes that China has experienced in recent years, the Chinese Communist Party is still at the heart of the political system. The party bases its claim to legitimacy not on the expressed will of the people but on representation of the historical best interests of all the people. Society is best led by an elite vanguard party with a superior understanding of the Chinese people and their needs (democratic centralism).

## The Organization of the CCP

The **Chinese Communist Party (CCP)** is organized hierarchically by levels – village/township, county, province, and nation. At the top of the system is the supreme leader (Deng Xiaoping's phrase was "the core"), who until 1976 was Chairman Mao Zedong. The title "chairman" was abandoned after Mao's death, and the head of the party is now called the "general secretary." The party has a separate constitution from the government's Constitution of 1982, and its central bodies are:

- **National Party Congress** – This body consists of more than 2000 delegates chosen primarily from congresses on lower levels. It only meets every five years, so it is obviously not important in policymaking. It usually rubber-stamps decisions made by the party leaders, although in recent years it has acted somewhat more independently. Its main importance remains the power to elect members of the Central Committee.
- **Central Committee** – The Committee has about 340 members (some of whom are alternates) that meet together annually for about a week. They carry on the business of the National Party Congress between sessions, although their size and infrequent

meetings limit their policymaking powers. Their meetings are called **plenums**, and they are important in that they are gatherings of the political elites, and from their midst are chosen the Politburo and the Standing Committee.

- **Politburo/Standing Committee** – These most powerful political organizations are at the very top of the CCP structure. They are chosen by the Central Committee, and their decisions dictate government policies. The Politburo has 25 members and the Standing Committee – chosen from the Politburo membership – has only 7. They meet in secret, and their membership reflects the balance of power among factions and the relative influence of different groups in policymaking.

### Non-Communist Parties

Even though China effectively has a one-party system, the CCP does allow the existence of eight “democratic” parties. Each party has a special group that it draws from, such as intellectuals or businessmen. Their total membership is about a half million, and they are tightly controlled by the CCP. They do not contest the CCP for control of the government, but they do serve an important advisory role to the party leaders. Some members even attain high government positions, but organizationally these parties serve only as a loyal non-opposition. Attempts to establish independent democratic parties outside CCP control have been squashed, with the party doling out severe prison sentences to independent-minded leaders.

### Elections

The PRC holds elections in order to legitimize the government and the CCP. The party controls the commissions that run elections, and it reviews draft lists of proposed candidates to weed out those it finds politically objectionable. The only direct elections are held at the local level, with voters choosing deputies to serve on the county people’s congresses. The people’s congresses at higher levels are selected from and by the lower levels, not directly by the people. Since the 1980s the party has allowed more than one candidate to run for county positions, and most candidates are nominated by the people. One move toward democracy has occurred at the village level, where local of-

ficials are no longer appointed from above, but are chosen in direct, secret ballot elections.

### The Political Elite

Mao Zedong’s place in Chinese history was sealed by the Long March of 1934-36. He emerged from the ordeal as a charismatic leader who brought about great change. His compatriots that made the journey with him became known as the “Old Guard,” a group of friends that networked with one another for many years through *guanxi*, or personal connections. These personal connections are still the glue that holds Chinese politics together today.

China, like the U.S.S.R., recruits its leaders through *nomenklatura*, a system of choosing cadres from lower levels of the party hierarchy for advancement based on their loyalty and contributions to the well-being of the party. However, Chinese leaders communicate with one another through a **patron-client network** called *guanxi*. These linkages are similar to “good old boys networks” in the West, and they underscore the importance of personal career ties among individuals as they rise in bureaucratic or political structures. Besides bureaucratic and personal ties, *guanxi* is based on ideological differences and similarities, and as a result, has been the source of factions within the party. *Guanxi* is also pervasive at the local level, where ordinary people link up with village leaders and lower party officials.

### Factionalism

Factionalism in the years before Mao’s death in 1976 is demonstrated in the splits among the radicals (led by Jiang Qing and the Gang of Four), the military under Lin Biao, and the reformers under Zhou Enlai. All three men (Mao, Lin, and Zhou) were part of the “Old Guard” that went on the Long March in the 1930s, but by 1976, all were dead. Deng Xiaoping emerged as the new leader of China, partly because he was able to unite the factions in a course toward economic reform.

Even before Deng’s death in 1997, however, factional strife was apparent within the leadership, most notably during the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident. In general, the factions split in two ways:

- **Conservatives** – Although all factions supported economic reform, conservatives worried that perhaps the power of the party and the central government has eroded too much. They were particularly concerned about any movement toward democracy and generally support crackdowns on organizations and individuals who act too independently. Their most prominent leader has been **Li Peng**, the former premier and chair of the National People’s Congress. His retirement in 2003 left this faction with less influence than they had before.
- **Liberals** – This faction went out of power after the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, but they were generally more accepting of political liberties and democratic movements than are the other factions. They supported economic and political reform. The two most famous leaders of this faction were **Hu Yuobang** – whose death started the protests in 1989 – and **Zhao Ziyang** – the Premier and General Secretary who was ousted for being too sympathetic with the Tiananmen protesters. Hu Yuobang was the mentor of China’s current president, Hu Jintao, but during his presidency he showed little support for democratic movements.

The fact that factions in Chinese politics have little connection with ideology became apparent during the presidency of Jiang Zemin, who stepped down in 2003. Although he supported major capitalist infusion into the PRC’s economy and generally promoted an open door trade policy, his faction was – and still is – based on a patron-client system with Jiang at the top. His so-called “**Shanghai Gang**” is made up of associates from his time as mayor of Shanghai. These leaders pushed for membership in the World Trade Organization and courted the U.S. to grant “most-favored trading” status to China.

Other factions that have emerged in recent years include:

- “**Princelings**” – Many of China’s recent leaders come from the “princeling” class, an aristocracy of families with revolutionary credentials from the days of Mao Zedong. Their policy preferences are not always clear: some have been big benefi-

ciaries of China’s economic reforms, using their political connections and Western education to build lucrative business careers. Other princelings are critical of China’s stark inequality and call for a return to socialist principles. Former President Hu Jintao’s son, Hu Haifeng, who headed a big provider of airport scanners, is a prominent princeling, as is Xi Jinping, who took over as party chief in 2012 and as president in 2013. Another princeling is Wen Yunsong, a financier who is the son of Wen Jiabao, the former prime minister.

- **Chinese Communist Youth League (“tuanpai”)** – This faction is led by former President Hu Jintao, whose allies come from the CCYL, the party’s nation-wide organization for youth aged 14-28. Some analysts characterize the tuanpai faction as promoters of the concerns of the urban and rural poor, but others see few ideological commonalities among its leaders.

The leadership team selected in 2012 has strong representation from the “Shanghai Gang” and the princelings, with five of the seven members of the Standing Committee aligning with Jiang Zemin and the remaining two (including Xi Jinping) aligning with the princelings. However, leaders from both groups are rapidly aging, and so it is difficult to predict how long they will be influential. It is important to note that factional lines are often unclear and constantly shifting and overlapping. They are determined by a complex array of old alliances, family connections, and pragmatic considerations. Despite President Xi Jinping’s associations with the princelings, he almost certainly will establish his own network of patronage that will not erase his old ties but will build new ones. As leadership changes, so do factional lines, and the government’s lack of transparency makes it difficult to know exactly what those changes are.

The factions follow the process of *fang-shou* – a tightening up, loosening up cycle – a waxing and waning of the power of each. In some ways, the cycle is similar to the old dynastic cycle, when ruling families were challenged as they lost the mandate of heaven. Part of the dominance of economic reformers has to do with the lingering influence of Deng Xiaoping, who designated before his death in 1997 that Jiang Zemin would be the “3<sup>rd</sup> generation” (after Mao and Deng) lead-

er, and Hu Jintao would be the “4<sup>th</sup> generation” leader. As the party and government changed hands in 2012 and 2013, factional alliances were clearly continuing to shift.

### Corruption

The combination of *guanxi* and the economic boom of the past few decades have brought about rampant corruption within the Chinese economic and political system. Bribes are common, and corruption is widely regarded as a major problem. President Jiang Zemin acknowledged in 1997, “The fight against corruption is a grave political struggle vital to the very existence of the party and the state...If corruption cannot be punished effectively, our Party will lose the support and confidence of the people.” In 2004 the Communist Party’s Central Committee published a policy paper that warned its members that corruption and incompetence could threaten its hold on power. The anti-corruption statement bore the mark of then President Hu Jintao, who responded to popular perception of widespread corruption among party members. Under his watch, thousands of officials were punished for corruption, although the problem continues to plague the regime.

In 2007 the Chinese government was embarrassed by international publicity about tainted food, health products, and drugs that were making their way through the world market. In reaction, the head of Beijing’s most powerful food and drug regulating agency was arrested, imprisoned, and eventually executed. In his confession he acknowledged that he had accepted gifts and bribes valued at more than \$850,000 from eight drug companies that sought special favors. Because the Chinese media hardly every report corruption cases without official approval, many speculated that this arrest was meant to be a warning from the government. In 2011, the minister responsible for building the high-speed rail network was dismissed for skimming huge amounts of money in bribes, and another top official in the railways ministry also stepped down amid accusations of corruption. Despite government attempts to curtail corruption, the practice of bribing government officials – by both other government officials and private businessmen – is so widespread that luxury goods producers have come to count on it as an increasingly important revenue source. Still,

the government’s response is to condemn corruption, and when asked whether such gift-giving takes place, Chinese officials offer strong denials.

In early 2012, shortly before the leadership transition, a major scandal emerged that surrounded Bo Xilai, one of the top party officials in China. Mr. Bo’s wife, Gu Kailai, was arrested for the murder of a business partner, Neil Heywood, because of differences over a business deal. Mr. Bo was jailed for his role in covering up events, with charges that included bribery, corruption, and abuse of power. Ms. Gu was convicted of the murder, and Mr. Bo was found guilty of corruption, stripped of his assets, and sentenced to life imprisonment. His downfall is seen as one of the biggest political shake-ups of China’s ruling elite in decades.

In 2012, Xi Jinping announced a new anti-corruption program, and he acknowledges the seriousness of the problem. Xi’s campaign has continued, and in 2014, officials stepped up efforts to pursue those who have fled the country with illegally-obtained money. In early 2015, the Chinese government released a wanted list of 100 people, many of whom were senior officials in their work place. Chinese officials report that hundreds of fugitives have been returned to China to face charges. However, corruption continues to be pervasive in many areas of Chinese corporate life, including both multinational and domestic companies.

### Interest Groups

Organized interest groups and social movements are not permitted to influence the political process unless they are under the party-state authority. The party-state tries to preempt the formation of independent groups by forming mass organizations in which people may express their points of view within strict limits. These mass organizations often form around occupations or social categories. For example, most factory workers belong to the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, and women’s interests are represented in the All-China Women’s Federation. In urban areas, the party maintains social control through *danwei* – social units usually based on a person’s place of work. People have depended on the units for their jobs, income, and promotion,



but also for medical care, housing, daycare centers, and recreational facilities. The *danwei* system was crucial to implementing the one child policy, since workers not complying with the policy could have their pay docked or incentives withheld. With the increasing liberalization of China's economy, the role of the work unit has changed, so that by the early 21st century, the power of the work unit has diminished as more private enterprises developed, including multinational corporations. For, example, it now is possible for a worker to marry or divorce without first getting permission from the work unit.

Despite the ever-present control of the state, in the last 25 years China has gone from having virtually no independent groups of any kind to more than 300,000 nongovernmental organizations, by official count. But that understates the true number. Counting unregistered groups, some estimates place the number as high as two million. Still, their impact on the policymaking process is not clearly felt. For example, in 2007 China's legislature passed a new labor law to protect workers, requiring employers to provide written contracts and restricting the use of temporary laborers to help give more employees long-term job security. However, the law also enhanced the power of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, a monopoly union for the Communist Party. It is an official state organization charged with overseeing workers, and it alone was given the power to collectively bargain for wages and benefits. Workers are not allowed to form independent unions. It is important to note that no legitimate organizational channel exists for farmers. As a result Chinese farmers are more likely than are most other citizens to express their concerns to the government through petitions and protests.

These organizations and the state's relationship with them reflect **state corporatism** (p. 73), as well as the logic of Lenin's democratic centralism. Most organizations are created, or at least approved, by the state, and many have government officials as their leaders. In yet another demonstration of corporatism, the state only allows one organization for any given profession or activity. In cases where two groups with similar interests exist in a community, local officials will force them to merge or will disband one in favor of the other. This practice prevents competition between the associations and limits how

many associations are allowed to exist, making it easier for the state to monitor and control them.

### Media

From 1949 until the 1980s, almost all media – television, newspapers, radio, and magazines – were state-run. Since then some independent media has emerged, but state-run media outlets still hold the largest share of the market. The official press agency of the government, **Xinhua**, is huge, employing more than 10,000 people, who are stationed not only in China but abroad as well. Independent newspapers depend on Xinhua for many of their stories. The **People's Daily**, the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the CCP, also depends on Xinhua for much of its information. Chinese Central Television, or **CCTV**, is the major state television broadcaster, and it broadcasts a variety of programs to more than one billion people. The internet is also used by many people, with internet cafes popular in most urban areas. However, all media outlets are subject to heavy censorship by the government, which has several regulatory agencies that constantly monitor for subjects that are considered taboo by the government. Despite this censorship, Chinese media has become increasingly commercialized as economic liberalization has taken place, resulting in growing competition, a wider diversity of content, and an increase in investigative reporting.

### INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

The political structure of the People's Republic of China can best be seen as three **parallel hierarchies** that are separate yet interact:

- The **Communist Party**
- The **state or government**
- The **People's Liberation Army**

The party dominates the three yet the organizations are separate. The relationship between the party and the government is controlled by the principle of **dual role** – *vertical* supervision of the next higher level of government and *horizontal* supervision of the Communist Party at the same level.

The organization of party and state are similar on paper to those of the former U.S.S.R., largely because the PRC's structure was designed by the Soviets during the period between 1949 and 1958. In reality, China's policymaking is governed more directly by factions and personal relationships. Although the Chinese state remains highly centralized, rapid economic development (including infusion of capitalism) has encouraged some devolution of power to sub-governments.

### The Structure of the Government

The government structure of the People's Republic of China has three branches – a legislature, an executive, and a judiciary. But all branches are controlled by the party, so they are not independent, nor does a system of checks and balances exist. All top government positions are held by party members, as are many on the lower levels.

#### The People's Congresses

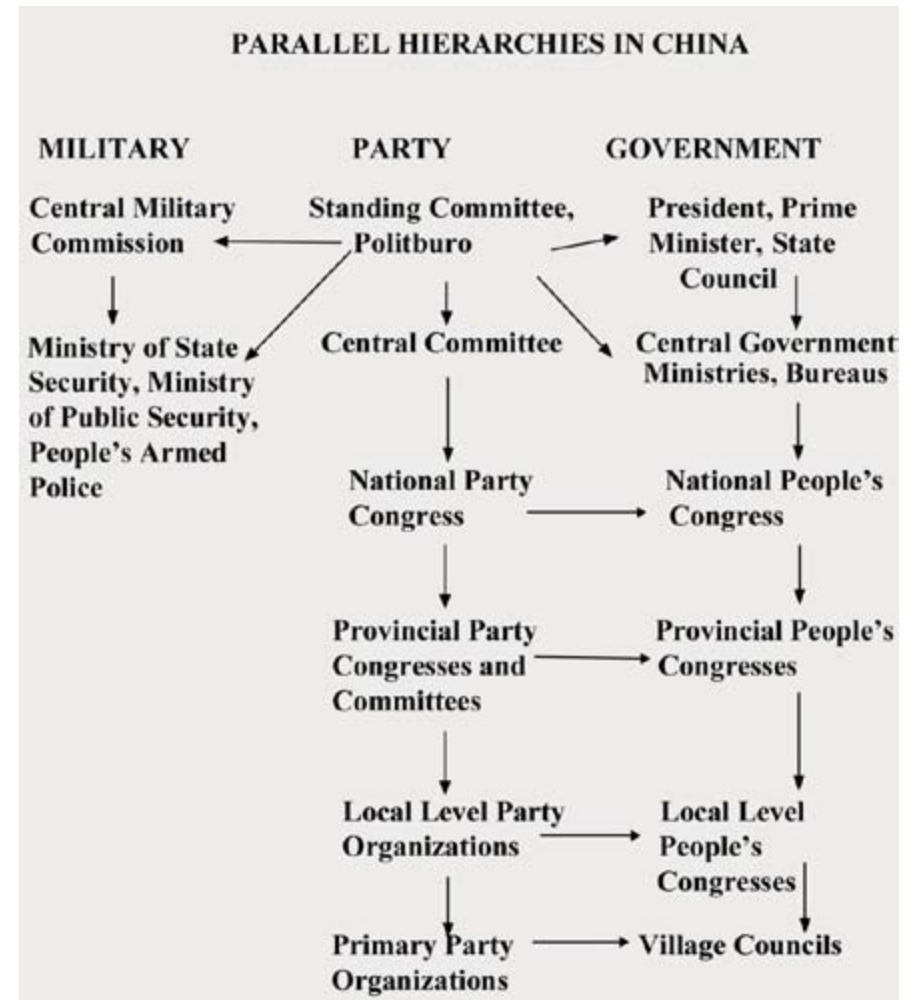
Government authority is formally vested in a system of people's congresses, which begins with a **National People's Congress** at the top and continues in hierarchical levels down through the provincial, city, and local congresses. Theoretically they are the people's legislatures, but in reality they are subject to party authority. The National People's Congress chooses the president and vice president of China, but there is only one party-sponsored candidate for each position. Although the Congress itself has little power, its meetings are important because the Politburo's decisions are formally announced then. For example, during the 12<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress in 2013, China's new president (**Xi Jinping**) was announced, although his appointment was widely known before the meeting began (partly because his position as general secretary had been announced at the 2012 CCP meeting), the National People's Congress meeting was the chosen format for formally introducing the new leader to the world.

#### Executive/Bureaucracy

The **president** and **vice president** serve five-year terms, are limited to two terms, and must be at least 45 years old. The positions are largely ceremonial, though senior party leaders have always held them. In 2013, President Hu Jintao complied with the Constitution, and stepped

down after two terms as president. Currently, Xi Jinping is both the president and the general secretary of the CCP, and he is expected to serve two five-year terms that will end in 2023.

The **premier** is the head of government, formally appointed by the president, but again, the position is always held by a member of the Standing Committee. The current premier is **Li Keqiang**, who officially took over in March 2013. He directs the State Council, which is composed of ministers who direct the many ministries and



**Parallel Hierarchies.** The chart illustrates some important relationships between military, party and government structures in China. Parallel hierarchy involves both vertical supervision and horizontal supervision.

commissions of the bureaucracy. These are controlled by the principle of **dual role** – supervision from higher bodies in the government and by comparable bodies in the CCP.

The bureaucracy exists on all levels – national, provincial, county, and local. The lower level positions are held by **cadres**, people in positions of authority who are paid by the government or party. Many are both government officials and party members, but not all. In all, about 30 million cadres around China see that the leaders' policies are carried out everywhere.

#### The Judiciary

China has a four-tiered “**people's court**” system, organized hierarchically just as the people's congresses are. A nationwide organization called the “**people's procuratorate**” provides public prosecutors and defenders to the courts.

Except for a brief period during the 1950s, **rule of law** had little place under Mao, but after 1978 Chinese leaders began to develop new legal ideas and institutions that included this important concept. The Chinese political system now acknowledges rule of law, and interprets it to mean that laws bind behavior and all are equally subject to them. Even though the judicial system does not always apply these principles, it is important that rule of law has been established in the People's Republic of China. Still, arrests of dissidents are common, including that of a prominent artist and political dissident, Ai Wei-wei in 2011. Ai was arrested after making some comments about uprisings in the Middle East, and was kept in prison for almost three months on charges of tax evasion. Ai's supporters widely viewed his detention as retaliation for his vocal criticism of the government.

The criminal justice system works swiftly and harshly, with a conviction rate of more than 99% of all cases that come to trial. Prison terms are long and subject to only cursory appeal. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of people have been executed during periods of government-sponsored anti-crimes campaigns. Human rights organizations criticize China for its extensive use of the death penalty.

### The People's Liberation Army (PLA)

“Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”

Mao Zedong

The military grew hand in hand with communism, as Mao's famous statement reflects. The People's Liberation Army encompasses all of the country's ground, air, and naval armed services. The army is huge, with about 2.3 million active personnel and about 12 million reserves. Yet in proportion to its population, the Chinese military presence is smaller than that of the United States. The United States spends about four and a half times as much on defense, but China's military budget has been growing at double-digit rates for years. According to SIPRI, a research institute, annual defense spending rose from over \$30 billion in 2000 to almost \$120 billion in 2010. Exactly how China might use its growing military power isn't clear, but the long-held aim of once again controlling Taiwan is at least part of the incentive. The PLA is skeptical about military connections to the United States, and China cut off all top-level military exchanges in January 2010 in response to Barack Obama's approval of \$6.4 billion of arms sales to Taiwan.

The military has never held formal political power in the People's Republic of China, but it has been an important influence on politics and policy. All of the early political leaders were also military leaders. For example, Mao and the other members of the “Old Guard”, led the Long March of the 1930s primarily by military moves.

The second half of Mao's famous quote above is less often quoted:

“Our principle is that the party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the party.”

Clearly, the military has never threatened to dominate the party. It is represented in the government by the Central Military Commission, which has been led by many prominent party leaders, including Deng Xiaoping.

The Tiananmen crisis in 1989 greatly harmed the image of the PLA, since the military was ordered to recapture the square and do so with

brutal force. But the PLA continues to play an important role in Chinese politics. Two of the 24 members of the Politburo are military officers, and PLA representatives make up over 20 percent of the Central Committee membership. In 2003, **Jiang Zemin**'s retention of his position as head of the Central Military Commission despite his stepping down as president, indicated that he still had significant policymaking power. When Hu Jintao replaced Jiang in 2004, the shift signaled that the transition of power was complete, and that Hu then had full control of the parallel hierarchies. Likewise, in 2012, Xi Jinping replaced Hu Jintao as CMC chairman, again reflecting the shift of power.

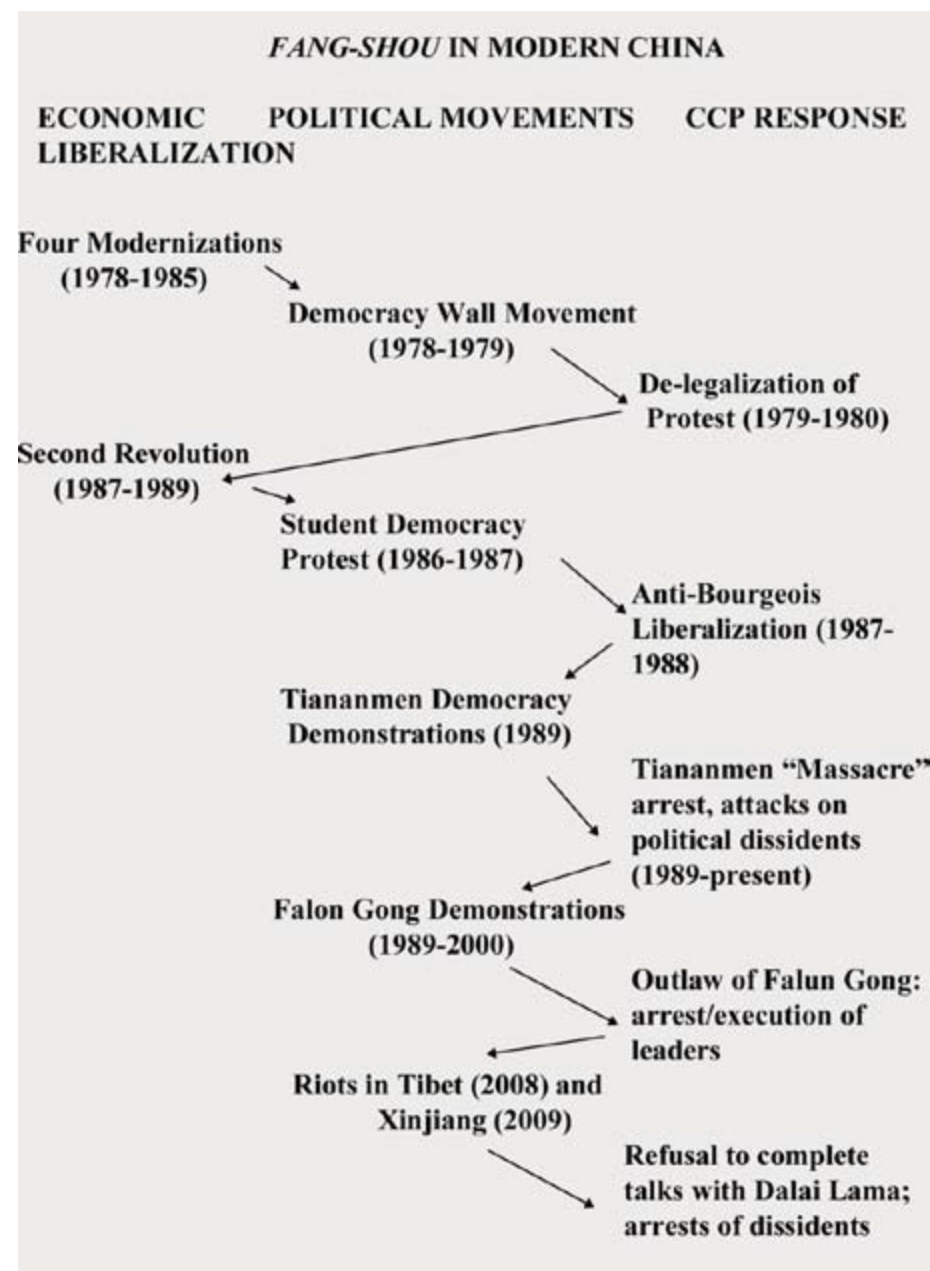
### POLICYMAKING AND POLITICAL ISSUES

Since the beginning of Deng Xiaoping's rule in 1979, policymaking in China has centered on reconciling centralized political authority with marketization and privatization of the economy. Many political scientists who have assumed that democracy and capitalism always accompany one another have waited for China to democratize, an event that has yet to occur. After all, that pattern occurred in the countries that industrialized first, and the fall of the Soviet Union confirmed the notion that authoritarian states cannot be capitalistic. China has defied these theorists, and has found its own path to economic prosperity.

One important trend since 2012 has been the growing concentration of power in the hands of the president, Xi Jinping. He has removed key power figures, including Zhou Yongkang, a member of the Standing Committee who was in charge of the entire law-enforcement apparatus, including the police and the judiciary. As a result, China's leadership has recently evolved from collective decision making by the Standing Committee to more control by one man – Xi Jinping.

#### Policymaking Process: Fang-shou

Deng Xiaoping's carefully balanced blend of socialist central planning with a capitalist market economy has not been without its critics. The tensions within the system – both economic and political – are evidenced in *fang-shou*, a letting go, tightening-up cycle evidenced even under Mao in his reaction to the Hundred Flowers Movement. The cycle consists of three types of actions/policies – economic



**Tensions in China's political economy.** The process of *fang-shou* gives some insight into how the Chinese government has managed the tensions between capitalism and democracy. The two rounds of economic reform shown (The Four Modernizations and the Second Revolution) were each followed by political movements that were repressed by the government. Since 1989, the economic reforms have been incremental yet significant, but the government's response to political movements has remained constant.

reform, political movements (letting go), and a tightening-up by the CCP. With each new reform that reflects economic liberalization, liberal factions react with a demand for political liberalization, which the Party responds to with force. The cycle is characterized by a lack of transparency, with policymakers meeting behind closed doors and only revealing their plans when the government takes action.

## POLICY ISSUES

Policy issues are numerous, but they may be put into four categories: democracy and human rights issues, population issues, economic issues, and foreign policy and international trade issues.

### Democracy and Human Rights

The Chinese leaders that came to power after Deng's death in 1997 have not strayed significantly from Deng's path of economic reform and resistance to political reform. Jiang Zemin was the General Secretary of the CCP from 1989-2003 and the President from 1993 to 2003, but he did not consolidate his power until after Deng's death in 1997. Zhu Rongji – Premier from 1998 to 2003 and former governor of the central bank – also emerged as an influential leader. Jiang was often criticized for being a weak leader and did not have the same stature as Deng or Mao – the two men who dominated China during the second half of the 20th century. Hu Jintao, leader from 2003 to 2012, for the most part also held to the path defined by Deng, as has Xi Jinping, leader since 2012.

Despite the continuing tensions between economic and political policy, some democratic reforms can be seen in these ways:

- Some input from the National People's Congress is accepted by the Politburo.
- More emphasis is placed on laws and legal procedures.
- Village elections are now semi-competitive, with choices of candidates and some freedom from the party's control.

The Tiananmen Crisis began as a grief demonstration for the death of Hu Yaobang – a liberal who had earlier resigned from the Politburo under pressure from the conservatives. Most of the original demonstrators were students and intellectuals, but other groups joined them, and the wake turned into democratic protests. They criticized corruption and demanded democratic reforms, and hundreds of thousands joined in. Protests erupted all over China, and Tiananmen became the center of international attention for almost two months. How would the Politburo react?

The answer came with guns, as Deng sent the People's Liberation Army to shut down the protests, using whatever means necessary. The army shot its way to the square, killing hundreds of protesting citizens. They recaptured control, but the fatalities and arrests began a broad new wave of international protests from human rights advocates. Unofficial estimates of fatalities range from 700 to several thousand.

Since then, China has been under a great deal of pressure from international human rights organizations to democratize their political process and to abide by human rights standards advocated by the groups. Deng Xiaoping showed little impulse to liberalize the political process, as did the government that followed under Jiang Zemin, at least publicly. Factional disagreements are kept from the public eye, yet Hu Jintao followed the same path. China's human rights record came under international spotlight in 2010 when the Nobel Peace Prize Committee bestowed its award on Liu Xiaobo, a jailed Chinese activist who has been a vocal critic of the government, and was imprisoned after calling for an end to Communist one-party rule. News of the award was immediately censored in China, the Chinese government called Liu a criminal who didn't deserve the prize, and Liu's wife was put under house arrest. China asked that other countries boycott the Nobel ceremonies, and as a result, 15 countries declined to attend.

### The Rule of Law

The principle of **rule of law**, almost always associated with liberal democracies, is based on the belief that rulers should not have absolute power over their subjects, and that their actions should be constrained

by the same principles that control ordinary citizens. From the communist point of view, law is part of politics that the bourgeoisie uses to suppress the proletariat. Early Communist leaders, then, never acknowledged rule of law as a legitimate principle. For example, during the Cultural Revolution, in an effort to bring about his dream of a new egalitarian society, Mao Zedong set about to destroy the old legal codes of dynastic China. However, since 1978 legal codes have begun to revive, partly because the new economic growth and investments have required that consistent regulations be in place that allow China to trade internationally and attract foreign companies.

Criminal law, almost nonexistent in 1978, has also developed because of the new opportunities for bribery, theft, and inside stock market trading created by the economic boom. As a result, **procuratorates**, officials who investigate and prosecute official crimes, were recreated from earlier days, and they have played a role in Hu Jintao's crack-down on corruption within the Communist Party. The 1982 Constitution, theoretically at least, commits the party to the authority of law. Today the Chinese state is more constrained by law and Chinese citizens freer by law from political whim than ever before. However, this trend does not change the fact that Chinese justice is harsh by the standards of most other nations, and the death penalty is often enforced for smuggling, rape, theft, bribery, trafficking in women and children, and official corruption. It is also true that no independent judiciary has ever existed in the People's Republic of China, but remains under the tight control of the CCP.

In very recent years, a new trend has emerged, according to the Dua Hua Foundation, an American NGO that tracks trends in China. Over the past decade, the number of people China executes has fallen sharply – from 12,000 executions in 2002 to 3,000 people in 2012. However, the 2012 rate is roughly four times more than the rest of the world put together (excluding Egypt and Syria, where numbers are hard to assess). These figures have not been officially disclosed by the Chinese government, but in 2012 a deputy minister of health cited the decline in executed prisoners as a reason for a shortage in organs available for transplant in China.

As part of a strong anti-corruption campaign, the 2014 Central Committee plenum focused on the rule of law. While the committee made clear that China would not copy foreign rule-of-law concepts, a resolution emphasized the importance of the Chinese Constitution. It declared December 4 as National Constitution Day and proclaimed that officials have to swear an oath of allegiance to the Constitution. The plenum also ruled that all regulations which violate the Constitution must be revised. Despite this new emphasis, the party continues to punish those who challenge it directly.

### **Civil Rights and Liberties**

Since the protests at Tiananmen Square in 1989, the status of civil rights and liberties in China has been widely debated. Many people believed that because Hu Jintao was mentored by Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang (leaders of the liberal faction), that he would promote more individual freedoms in China. For example, Hu and former Premier Wen Jiabao took the lead in reversing the party's cover-up of the deadly SARS outbreak, pledging greater accountability and transparency in government. However, Hu showed few signs of changing the government's basic political policies toward individual civil liberties and rights. For example, he adopted new measures to regulate discussions on university internet sites. Several dissident writers who criticized the government were arrested, and a professor who posted highly critical comments of the government on the internet was dismissed from Beijing University. Hu also called for "ideological education" in universities, a phrase that is reminiscent of the Maoist era. Xi Jinping has continued the crack-down on promoters of western ideas. In March 2015, two members of a group promoting the rule of law were arrested, and during 2015 several hundred civil rights lawyers were detained.

### **Population Policy**

In 1965 Chinese leader Mao Zedong announced that an ever-expanding population is a "good thing," and in 1974 he denounced population policies as "imperialist tools" designed to weaken developing countries. At the time of Mao's death in 1976, China had about 850 million people with a birth rate of 25. His successors recognized that popula-

tion growth was consuming more than half of the annual increase in the country's gross domestic product, so China introduced a campaign advocating the "two-child family." The government provided services – including abortions – that supported the program, resulting in a drop in China's birth rate to 19.5 by the late 1970s.

### The One Child Policy

In 1979, China's new leader, Deng Xiaoping, went even further by instituting the "**one child policy**." This program included both incentives and penalties to assure that couples produced only one child. Late marriages were encouraged, and free contraceptives, abortions, and sterilizations were provided to families that followed the policy. Penalties, including steep fines, were imposed on couples that had a second child. In 1984 the policy was relaxed in rural areas, where children's labor was still important, but it was reinstated in 2002 in reaction to reports that many rural births were not being reported to the government. In contrast, Chinese people in cities were generally more accepting of the one-child policy since it better suited urban life styles and needs. By 1986 the birth rate had fallen to 18, a figure far below those in other less developed countries.

However, the policy has had other consequences. One was a rise in female infanticide, or the killing of baby girls. Because traditional Chinese society has always valued males above females, many couples have wanted their one child to be a boy. If a girl is born instead, some choose to end the child's life so that they can try again to have a boy. The incidence of female infanticide is almost impossible to tally, but the practice has led to a disproportionate number of male to female children. In more recent years, as technology has allowed parents to know the gender of the child before birth, female infanticide has been replaced – at least in urban areas – with selective abortions. Over the years China's population pyramid has developed a lopsided number of young adult males to young adult females. The problem is so serious that many young men are unable to find women to marry. Some projections suggest that by the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century China's population numbers will start falling. If that occurs, it almost certainly will change the cultural tradition of sons taking care of their aging parents. There could be too few sons to carry out the responsibility, leaving

China with a problem of what to do about a growing number of elderly people with no one to take care of them.

Census figures from 2010 indicate that demographics in China have changed rapidly in recent years. Not only is the ratio of baby boys to baby girls out of proportion, but China's population is dramatically aging. People above the age of 60 now represent 13.3% of the total, up from 10.3% in 2000, and those under the age of 14 declined from 23% to 17%. An increasingly vocal group of academic demographers has called for a relaxation of the one-child policy, and in 2011, one Chinese official in Guangdong – China's most populous province – joined in the criticism by advocating a "two-child" policy. By 2015, many exceptions existed, such as the allowance of two children for couples in which both partners are single children. Minorities – such as Tibetans and Uyghurs – were permitted a second child, whatever the sex of the first born, and the regulations are most relaxed in rural areas, where population pressures are minimal. Finally, in late 2015, the Party announced the end of the one-child policy, replacing it with a two-child policy starting in 2016.

### Population Movement

The broad trend of population movement from rural to urban areas began decades ago. In the early 1980s, about 80 percent of Chinese lived in the countryside versus 47 percent today. The government has long had plans to speed up this process of urbanization much faster than would occur naturally. The primary motivation is to change China's economic structure, with growth based on domestic demand for products instead of relying as much on export.

The government that took power in 2012 has identified urbanization as one of its top priorities by sponsoring a plan that moves people from rural to urban areas. One motivation for the plan is to find a new source of growth for an economy that depends on increasing consumption of productions by city dwellers. The plan involves moving millions of rural residents into newly constructed towns and cities over the next few years and tearing down and paving over vast swaths of farmland. This program at least alters the old *hukou* tradition (pp. 295-296) that requires that most peasants remain tied to their original plots of land.

According to the *New York Times* in an article published in June 2013, the ultimate goal of the government's modernization plan is to integrate about 900 million rural residents into city living by 2025. The transplanting of such a large number of people requires spending on new roads, hospitals, schools, and community centers that will cost the government a great deal of money.

### Economic Policy

From 1949 to 1978, China followed a communist political economic model: a command economy directed by a central government based on **democratic centralism**. Mao Zedong called this policy the “**iron rice bowl**,” or cradle-to-grave health care, work, and retirement security. The state set production quotas and distributed basic goods to consumers. When this model failed, Deng Xiaoping began a series of economic reforms that make up the **socialist market economy** – gradual infusion of capitalism while still retaining state control.

#### Agricultural policy

- **The people's communes** – During the early days of the PRC – in an effort to realize important socialist goals – virtually all peasants were organized into collective farms of approximately 250 families each. During the Great Leap Forward, farms merged into gigantic **people's communes** with several thousand families. These communes were one of the weakest links in Mao's China, with production and rural living standards showing little improvement between 1957 and 1977. Many communes were poorly managed, and peasants often didn't see the need to work hard, contrary to Mao's hopes of developing devotion through the mass line.
- **Household responsibility system** – In the early 1980s, Deng dismantled the communes and replaced them with a **household responsibility system**, which is still in effect today. In this system individual families take full charge of the production and marketing of crops. After paying government taxes and contract fees to the villages, families may consume or sell what they produce. Food production improved dramatically,

and villages developed both private farming and industry.

#### “Private Business”

In 1988, the National People's Congress officially created a new category of “**private business**” under the control of the party. It included urban co-ops, service organizations, and rural industries that largely operate as capitalist enterprises. Today this system of state-controlled private businesses is sometimes called “bamboo capitalism.” The importance of China's state sector has gradually diminished, although private industry remains heavily regulated by the government. Price controls have been lifted, and private businesses have grown by leaps and bounds since the 1980s, and are far more profitable and dynamic than are the state-owned ones.

During the first years of Deng Xiaoping's rule, the fastest growing sector of the Chinese economy was rooted in **township and village enterprises** (TVEs), rural factories and businesses that vary greatly in size, and are run by local government and private entrepreneurs. Although they are called collective enterprises, they make their own decisions and are responsible for their profits and losses. The growth of the TVE system slowed the migration of peasants to the cities, and became the backbone of economic strength in the countryside. However, under Jiang Zemin, a large number of TVEs were dismantled as restrictions of private businesses lessened. Many were privatized or restructured because of increased foreign ownership of enterprises within China. TVEs remain strongly tied to local governments and the loans they can afford, so they appear to be increasingly less important to the overall economy.

#### Economic Problems

The reforms have brought several important economic problems:

- **Unemployment and inequality** – Under Maoism, everyone was guaranteed a job, but marketization has brought very high rates of unemployment to China today. The Chinese leadership hopes that the booming economy will eventually take care of the unemployed, once the economy has had time to adjust to the reforms. Economic growth has also made some people



very rich, and has barely affected others. As a result, economic inequality has increased significantly. The growing inequality has created a **floating population** of rural migrants seeking job opportunities in cities. As cities grow larger, crime rates have increased and infrastructures are strained, leaving urban residents with the tendency to blame the new migrants for their problems. Many critics believe that China will not be able to sustain its growth unless its poor begin to share the prosperity, earning enough money to buy goods and services that will broaden the economy.

- **Inefficiency of the state sector** – Over the years the state-owned sector of the economy has gradually declined so that today almost three-fourths of industrial production is privately owned. The state sector is still large, however, and it is plagued by corruption, inefficiency, and too many workers. Without state subsidies these industries would almost surely fail, bringing about even higher unemployment rates, so the government has continued to support them.
- **Pollution** – As China has industrialized, air and water pollution have become increasingly serious problems. Beijing and Shanghai have some of the most polluted air in the world, and sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides emitted by China's coal-fired power plants fall as acid rain on the neighboring countries of South Korea and Japan. Experts once thought China would overtake the United States as the world's leading producer of greenhouse gases by 2010, but now the International Energy Agency believes that happened by 2008. The issue is a real dilemma for the government because China is still a poor country in many ways, and to reduce industrial output could ruin the economic progress of the past few decades. However, evidence that China's air and water are unhealthy for the population is mounting. The government has set targets for energy efficiency and improved air and water quality, but so far they have gone unmet. However, at a summit meeting in late 2014, China and the United States announced an agreement on greenhouse gases. President Obama agreed that the

United States will cut emissions by 26-28% by 2025, compared to 2005 levels, and Xi promised China's emissions will peak around 2030. Setting such a date is a first for China.

- **Product Safety** – In 2007 Chinese factories were caught exporting poisonous pharmaceutical ingredients, bogus pet food, faulty tires, and unhealthy shellfish. An international outcry followed, and the government has been pressured to do something about it. A big part of the problem lies with the tension between central government authority and capitalism. In order to allow the market economy to grow, authority has been decentralized, so that local officials have gained a great deal of decision-making power. As a result, the central government has lost direct control over production, and some faulty products have made their way into the international market.

When the global economic crisis occurred in September 2008, many observers believed that China's economy would suffer more than most, especially since its prosperity was solidly based on exports to western nations, especially the United States. Since many Chinese products were sold to Americans, the decline in American consumption struck at the heart of the Chinese economy, with the country's GDP dropping sharply during the last months of 2008. However, China and many other Asian nations rebounded impressively in 2009, and its economy expanded by more than 10% in 2010. By 2014, China's GDP growth had eased to 7.4%, smaller than increases in previous years, but still far better than the figures for most western nations. This economic recovery led many to believe that China's economy was less dependent on American consumers than they had previously thought.

At the annual meeting of the National People's Congress in March 2015, Prime Minister Li Keqiang called for growth of "about 7%" in 2015. He called slower growth "the new normal." One criticism is that China has yet to develop a consumer economy in which personal spending fuels development, since citizens are still reluctant to let go of their savings. Other critics claim that China has yet to develop an innovation economy, in which goods aren't just cheaper than the competition, but better. Still the Chinese economy recently passed Ja-

pan's as the second-biggest in the world, leaving economists to debate whether China was on pace to overtake the United States by 2025 or 2030.

### Foreign Policy and International Trade

Since 1998 Chinese foreign policy has undergone profound changes that have brought the country closer into the mainstream of international politics. China still resists pressure from other countries to improve its human rights record, and Chinese leaders continue to threaten to invade Taiwan now and again. However, especially in the areas of trade, China has integrated into the world community in almost unprecedented ways. It is quickly replacing Japan as the most powerful economy in Asia, and is now Asia's central economy that affects all others. Chinese-Japanese relations have been problematic since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when Japan began to rise as a world power, generally at China's expense. Both countries are particularly sensitive about Japan's invasion of China during World War II, and formal relations were called off for several months in 2006 because the Japanese prime minister visited a controversial war memorial. Now the two countries are on speaking terms again, but tensions still remain. China also has trading partners all over the world, and that trade is an integral part of the growing economy.

#### Foreign Policy under Mao

Until Mao's death in 1976, the PRC based its foreign policy on providing support for third world revolutionary movements. It provided substantial development assistance to a handful of the most radical states. Examples are Korea and Vietnam. Under Mao, China's relationship with the U.S.S.R. changed dramatically in the late 1950s from one of dependence to independence.

During the 1920s and 1950s, the U.S.S.R. gave large amounts of money, as well as technical and political advice to China. The countries broke into rivalry during the late 1950s when Mao decided that the Soviets had turned their backs on Marx and revolution. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution affirmed China's independent path from Moscow's control.

#### US/Chinese Relations

The chill in China/Soviet relationships encouraged the U.S. to eye the advantages of opening positive interactions with China. As long as Mao was in control, his anti-capitalist attitudes – as well as U.S. containment policy – meant that the countries had no contacts until the early 1970s. Then, with Mao sick and weak, reformist Zhou Enlai opened the door to western contact. President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger engineered negotiations, and Nixon's famous 1972 visit to China signaled a new era. Relations opened with a ping-pong match between the two countries, but after Deng Xiaoping's leadership began in 1978, his open door policy helped lead the way to more substantial contact. Today the U.S. imports many more products from China than it exports, and is concerned about the imbalance between exports and imports. The U.S. has pressured China to devalue their currency and to crack down on illegal exports, but so far, China has not cracked down on illegal exports. However, it did devalue the renminbi in August 2015, making its exports cheaper and imports more expensive.

Another issue between China and western nations has been internet hacking, with western governments and companies long suspecting that Chinese hackers besieging their networks have links to the country's armed forces. In early 2013, an American security company, Mandiant, offered evidence to substantiate the suspicions, with a report that tracked individual members of one Chinese hacker group for six years. This group, with aliases such as Ugly Gorilla and SuperHard, was linked to a district in residential Shanghai that is home to Unit 61398 of the People's Liberation Army. The Chinese government condemned the Mandiant report.

One change in recent years is that China's prime minister until 2013, Wen Jiabao, did not refer to China as one of many countries involved in world trade, but often referred to China as a great power. The official line is no longer that China is a country that focuses primarily on internal development, and the country's international ambitions are more openly revealed. After the United States took a tremendous hit in the global financial crisis of September 2008, Mr. Wen announced that he was concerned about China's holdings of U.S. Treasury bonds

and other debt, and that China was watching economic developments in the United States closely. The message was sent as one equal country to another, a far cry from previous exchanges in which U.S. officials lectured Chinese officials about undervaluing Chinese currency. In the G-20 summit meeting in Britain in April 2009, China took a central participating role and suggested that the economic crisis could best be addressed by a “G-2” meeting between the United States and China.

### International Trade and Business

Another integral part of the economic reform of the past quarter century has been the opening of the Chinese economy to international forces. Four **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** were established in 1979. In these regions, foreign investors were given preferential tax rates and other incentives. Five years later fourteen more areas became SEZs, and today foreign investments and free market mechanisms have spread to most of the rest of urban China.

Since 1978 China’s trade and industry have expanded widely. With this expansion has come a rapidly growing GDP, entrepreneurship, and trade with many nations. A wealthy class of businessmen has emerged, and Chinese products have made their way around the world. China is now a member of the World Trade Organization, and it also has “most favored nation status” for trading with the U.S. A monumental recognition of China’s new economic power came in 1997, when the British officially “gave” the major trading city of Hong Kong back to Chinese control.

Deng Xiaoping emphasized economic reform, but he continued to believe that the Party should be firmly in command of the country. In general, he did not support political reforms that included democracy and/or more civil liberties for citizens. Freedoms and incentives were granted to entrepreneurs, but they have operated largely under the patron-client system (*guanxi*).

### Hong Kong

In 1997 the British ceded control of Hong Kong to mainland China under a “**one country, two systems**” agreement signed by Britain and

China in 1984. Under this policy, Hong Kong is subject to Chinese rule, but continues to enjoy “a high degree of autonomy,” meaning that it maintains its capitalist system, legal system, and ways of life. Since the handover, Beijing authorities have been less heavy-handed than feared, and Hong Kong today enjoys the same civil liberties as under British rule. Even though many Hong Kongers fear that the situation might change, their city is still one where people can openly talk politics, speak against the government, and choose a legislature in multi-party elections. In Hong Kong’s case, the central Chinese government has devolved considerable powers to local officials. Despite these change, pro-democracy groups in Hong Kong still push for more significant reforms.

In September 2014, a campaign known as the “**Umbrella Revolution**” began, with protesters demanding greater citizen input in elections than Beijing would allow. For weeks, protesters occupied important intersections of Hong Kong’s roads, and the occupation lasted till December. Beijing responded with a plan for the election of the next chief executive in 2017 that permitted direct election, but left nominations in the hands of a 1200-member pro-establishment committee. Pro-democracy lawmakers defeated the election packet in June 2015, agreeing that it was meaningless. As a result, nothing changed, with the selection of Hong Kong’s chief executive still under Beijing’s control.

Hong Kong’s international trade was seriously impacted by the global economic crisis of late 2008, and its GDP shrank by 7.8% in the first quarter of 2009. To add to the city’s economic woes in 2009, the Chinese government approved a plan to turn Shanghai into a global financial and shipping center by 2020, presenting competition to Hong Kong as the international star of the region. However, Hong Kong’s elite remains staunchly pro-business, and the Chinese government has supported the city’s economic development, and so its future as a leading international trading center is most likely secure.

### Taiwan

The island of Taiwan was the destination of Chiang Kai-shek after being driven from mainland China by Mao Zedong in 1949. Since

post-World War II, Taiwan has claimed to be the Republic of China, separate from the People's Republic of China ruled by the Communist Party. Taiwan's autonomy was protected by the United States in a Cold War tactic against Communist China, and until the 1970s, Taiwan was recognized by western nations as the sole legitimate representative of China. However, in 1971, Taiwan lost its membership in the United Nations and its seat on the Security Council to the People's Republic of China, and in 1979, the United States recognized mainland China diplomatically. Today only a few countries recognize Taiwan's sovereignty.

In recent years, the Chinese government has made its claim to Taiwan clear. Chinese leaders assert the belief that Taiwan is historically and legitimately a part of China and should be returned to its control. The Taiwanese government does not agree, but political parties in Taiwan are split in their attitudes about how to respond to China's claims. One point of view is that Taiwan should stand up to, or even defy China, but an opposite sentiment is that Taiwan should try to reconcile its differences with its giant neighbor. The fact that China is Taiwan's biggest trade partner has encouraged the Taiwanese leadership to explore the possibility of bringing the island closer to the mainland.

Starting in 2008, negotiations began to restore the "three links" (transportation, commerce, and communications) between the two sides, cut off since 1949. Party-to-party talks between the CPC and Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT), have resumed and semi-official negotiations through third party organizations have taken place. An important change came when regular crossings across the Taiwan Strait began for aircraft and mail. Weekend charter flights began in July 2008, and weekday services were added by the end of the year. These changes now allow for more regular communication between the island and the mainland and almost certainly will ease trade and business exchanges as well. Still, relations are prickly, as evidenced by China's cutting off top-level military exchanges with America in 2010 in response to U.S. approval of \$6.4 billion of arms sales to Taiwan. In 2013, China offered 31 new measures to better integrate Taiwan economically.

Will China continue to expand its international contacts and its free market economy? If so, will tensions increase between economic and

political sectors of the country? During the 20<sup>th</sup> century many countries have struggled to define the relationship between free market economies and political leadership styles. Most obviously, the Soviet Union collapsed rather than reconcile market liberalization with centralized political power. Will the same thing happen to China, or will its policy of introducing market principles gradually work out in the end? This challenge and many more await answers from Xi Jinping and his leadership team.

### IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONCEPTS

“3<sup>rd</sup> generation leader”, “4<sup>th</sup> generation leader”  
 autonomous regions  
 cadres  
 Central Committee  
 Central Military Commission  
 Chiang Kai-shek  
 collectivism  
 Chinese Communist Party (CCP)  
 Confucianism  
 Cultural Revolution  
*danwei*  
 decentralization  
 democratic centralism  
 Deng Xiaoping Theory  
 dual role  
 dynastic cycles  
 egalitarianism  
 ethic of struggle  
 factions, factionalism  
*fang-shou*  
 floating population  
 “foreign devils”  
 Four Modernization  
 free market socialism  
 “Gang of Four”  
*guanxi*

Great Leap Forward  
 Han Chinese  
 hegemony  
 household responsibility system  
 Hu Jintao  
*hukou*  
 Hu Yaobang  
 iron rice bowl  
 Jiang Zemin  
 Li Peng  
 The Long March  
 mandate of heaven  
 Mao Zedong  
 Maoism  
 mass line  
 mass mobilization  
 “Middle Kingdom” (*zhongguo*)  
 Nationalist Party (Gomindang)  
 National Party Congress  
 “a new socialist countryside”  
*nomenklatura*  
 Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)  
 “one country, two systems”  
 parallel hierarchies  
 patron client system in China  
 People’s Courts, procuratorate  
 People’s Liberation Army  
 People’s National Congress  
 plenums  
 Politburo/Standing Committee  
 political elites  
 “private business”  
 rule of law and China  
 self-reliance  
 socialist market economy  
 Special Economic Zones (SEZs)  
 state corporatism  
 Sun Yat-sen

technocrats  
 township and village enterprises (TVEs)  
 “Two Chinas”  
 “Umbrella Revolution”  
 unstinting service  
 Wen Jiabao  
 Youth League  
 Zhao Ziyang