

Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Totalitarianism

POSC 145-1001; Spring 2002, MWF 1:00, WW 212

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Office Hrs: Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs., Fri. 11:00-12:00; Mon. 2:00-3:00

Overview: With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, many politicians, and even some scholars, proclaimed that Western-style democracy (and its economic half-brother, capitalism) had “won.” It was, in the words of Fukuyama, the “end of history.” Yet, looking at countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, and China—as well as a particular country only a few miles south of Florida—it

Lecture/Discussion and Reading Schedule

Question: Is the new trend toward “democracy support” in foreign aid decisions a good idea?

Question: Who is most responsible for the collapse of Communism: Reagan, Gorbachev, or Pope John Paul II?

Recommended readings:

Pope John Paul II, “Democracy and Christianity,” _____, vol. 62, no. 2 (Nov. 1995): 35-39.

Mar. 11-15: No class (Spring holiday).

WEEKS 9-10 (MAR. 18-29): CAUSAL FACTORS II: “INTERNAL STRUCTURE.”

March 22: Due, in class: Your short writing assignment (see description at the end of the syllabus).

March 27-29: No class (Easter holiday).

Readings:

*R. Dahl, _____, chapter 12, pp. 149-163 only.

*G. Gill, _____, chapters 1 and 4.

T. Karl, “Petroleum and Political Pacts: The Transition to Democracy in Venezuela,” _____, vol. 22, no. 1 (1987): 63-94.

B. Lewis, “Islam and Liberal Democracy: A Historical Overview,” _____, vol. 7, no. 2 (1996): 52-63.

*G. Gill, _____, chapter 5.

W. Galston, “Civil Society and the ‘Art of Association’,” _____, vol. 11, no. 1 (2000): 64-70.

Question: Can democracy develop without a middle class? Can it survive severe economic inequality?

Question: Does democracy help solve, or does it instead reinforce, sharp divisions in society?

Question: Is “civil society” a crucial component of consolidated democracy, or a useless pile of conceptual mush?

Recommended readings:

B. Moore, “The Democratic Route to Modern Society,” in _____

WEEK 11 (APR. 1-5): CAUSAL FACTORS III: “INTERNAL AGENCY.”

April 1: No class (Easter holiday, cont.).

Readings:

*G. Gill, _____, chapter 3.

A. Suarez, “The Transition to Democracy in Spain,” speech given at Harvard-MIT Seminar, May 25, 1983.

D. Levine, “Venezuela Since 1958: The Consolidation of Democratic Politics,” in J. Linz and A. Stepan, eds., _____

Question: If democracy is really the result of specific actions of individuals, how can we ever develop models and theories that can predict its occurrence and prospects for survival?

Question: Revisit Karl’s article on Venezuela from Week 9. How does her argument differ from that in Levine’s article for this week on the same transition? Which is more persuasive and why?

Recommended readings:

M. Burton, R. Gunther, and J. Higley, “Introduction: Elite Transformations and Democratic Regimes,” in Higley and Gunther, eds., _____

Additional Recommended Readings, **TBA.**

WEEK 12 (APRIL 8-12): WHEN AGENTS CREATE STRUCTURES: CHOOSING A DEMOCRACY’S INSTITUTIONS.

April 12: Due, in class: Two-page (double-spaced) summary of your research project to date (see end of syllabus).

Readings

*R. Dahl, _____, chapters 8-9 (and review chapters 10-11).

J. Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” in Diamond and Plattner, eds., _____

D. Horowitz, “Comparing Democratic Systems,” in Diamond and Plattner, eds., _____

S. M. Lipset, “The Indispensability of Political Parties,” _____, vol. 11, no. 1 (2000): 48-55.

Question: In what situations is a parliamentary system better, and worse, for stability than a presidential one?

Question: In a democratic country with a highly educated population, are political parties really necessary?

May 10: 1:00-3:00 p.m.: Exam #2 (on weeks 9-15).

POSC 145 Writing Assignments

Short Writing Assignment

March 22: Due, in class: Write a letter to your (Wisconsin or home-state) US Congressional Representative **or** write to _____ of your US senators. The letter must criticize US efforts (or lack of such efforts) at facilitating democracy in a particular country. What, specifically, do you think the US government should be doing differently, and why? The letter must be **single-spaced** and no more than two pages. The letter must also be in an acceptable business-letter format and include the date, the address of the person to whom you are writing, and your contact information.

Research Paper Assignment

February 11: Due, in class: One-paragraph summary of (1) which of the two research paper questions you will answer, (2) which country you are likely to examine, and (3) why it appears to be a good case for that question.

April 12: Due, in class: Two-page (double-spaced) summary of your research project to date. Which question did you choose, and which country did you choose? How does that country fit with the discussions of causal factors we have had? Are there any (tentative) conclusions/lessons from your case? **(single-spaced)**

April 26: Due, in class:

In around 15 pages (this means no more than 16!), with 1 inch margins and 12 pt. CG Times or Times New Roman font, answer one of the three questions below. This is a research paper. I expect you to find information about the country that you are choosing. You should look not only at news magazines like _____ but also at books and scholarly journals that may carry articles on your country. Be aware of the dates of your sources, and do not assume that a book with a 2002 copyright was written in 2002. You are responsible for knowing the current structure of the political system of the country you choose, as well as its current economic and social conditions. We will discuss citation and other formatting issues in class.

(1) Choose a non-democratic country anywhere in the world. Describe the elements of the political system that make this a _____, and provide a brief _____ for how they got that way. Then, employing the various causal factors and theoretical arguments about them that we have examined this semester, _____ occurring in this country in the near term (next three to five years) and medium term (next ten to twenty years). Of the various factors you examine, which ones should scholars be paying especially close attention to in this case, and why?

OR

(2) Choose a country anywhere in the world that has democratized in the last ten to fifteen years but that you consider to be a _____ democracy. Paying particular attention to the transition from established to consolidated democracy, explain the democratization process in this country, employing the various causal factors and theoretical arguments about them that we have examined this semester. Given its relative infancy, why are you so confident that this democracy is already consolidated? What lessons can we draw from this case about democratic consolidation in other cases?

OR

(3) Choose a country anywhere in the world that has democratized in the last ten to fifteen years that you do **not** consider to be a _____ democracy. Explain the democratization process in this country, employing the various causal factors and theoretical arguments about them that we have examined this semester. Why is this democracy not yet consolidated? What are the prospects for consolidation in the near term (next three to five years) and medium term (next ten years)? Why? What lessons can we draw from this case of non-consolidation about the process of democratic consolidation in other cases?