



# Comparative Politics

*Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*

FOURTH EDITION

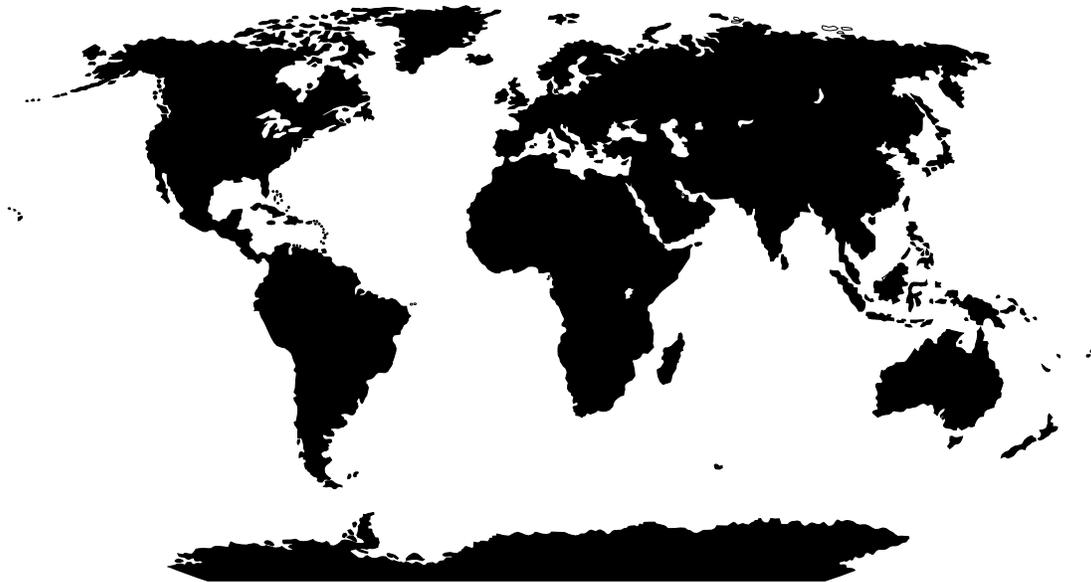
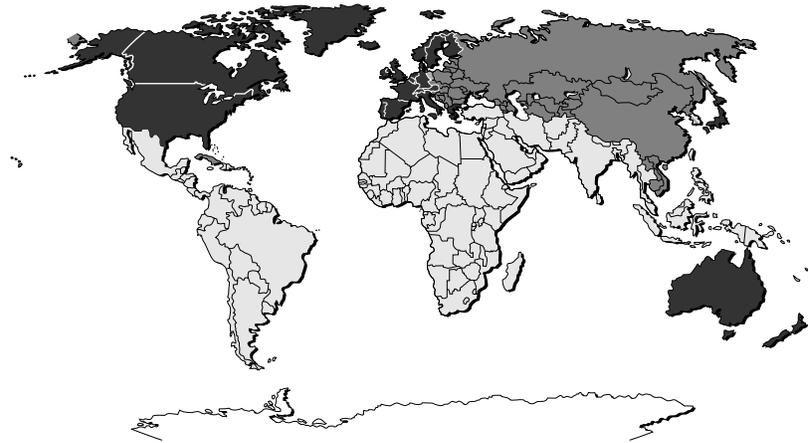
CHARLES HAUSS

# SEEKING NEW LANDS, SEEING WITH NEW EYES

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The Day the World Changed  
... or Did It?
- Three Leaders
- The State: One Focus Among  
Many
- Comparative Politics
- Three Templates
- Five Themes
- Using This Book

0 1000 2000 Miles  
0 3000 Kilometers



*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands but in seeing with new eyes.*

MARCEL PROUST

## **The Day the World Changed . . . or Did It?**

September 11 began as a normal, late summer day in New York City and Washington, DC. The sun was out; it was going to be warm.

But then at 8:46 A.M., anything normal about the day ended. A plane slammed into one of the towers at the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan. The initial media reports were confused. Bob Edwards of National Public Radio wondered if it could be some sort of tragic mistake. About fifteen minutes later, we knew better when the second plane hit the other tower, this time captured live by the leading television networks. An hour later, a third plane rammed into the west wall of the Pentagon just outside of Washington. A fourth plane was in the air and headed back toward Washington, but it crashed in Pennsylvania after a group of passengers overwhelmed the hijackers. Later in the morning, both towers collapsed. Before the day was over, everyone on board the planes plus over three thousand people in the three buildings were dead.

What followed was shock, fear, and anger, not just in the United States but in the rest of the world. The next day, there were military police and humvees at all the major intersections in downtown Washington. Most people went about their daily lives in a haze. The difficulties continued when letters containing deadly anthrax spores began appearing at media outlets and government offices.

The Bush administration, however, immediately set out to forge an international coalition not only to bring the perpetrators of these attacks to justice but to put an end to terrorism once and for all. Soon it became clear that the attacks were the work of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda (the Base) network, which had its headquarters in Afghanistan thanks to its relationship with the government there, led by the radical Muslim Taliban.

Within a month, what Bush called the “war on terrorism” had begun. Air strikes occurred day after day in Afghanistan, and rebel factions gained strength. Eventually, British and American ground troops entered the fray. By Christmas the Taliban was out of power, and the remnants of al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan were in hiding.



The second World Trade Center tower, hit by a hijacked airplane on September 11.

But the war was not over. Neither bin Laden nor Mullah Omar, head of the Taliban, had been caught. And there almost certainly were al-Qaeda cells, not to mention other groups of terrorists, still able to carry out attacks.

When this book went to press in February 2002, the only thing that was clear was that the crisis was far from over. Most policymakers assumed that the war on terrorism would continue beyond Afghanistan. In his State of the Union Address earlier that year, President George W. Bush had called Iran, Iraq, and North Korea an “axis of evil.” American troops were in the Philippines helping their soldiers end an uprising by a group which had been linked to al-Qaeda. At the same time, many of the same people were noting that, in the long-term, ending terrorism would require addressing the unmet human needs that gave rise to such hatred against the United States and the West in general. And, that can not readily be done using war or the “politics as usual” that will be featured in the pages that follow ([www.crininfo.org/terrorism](http://www.crininfo.org/terrorism)).

The events of 9/11 will not feature all that prominently in the pages that follow, because few of the countries involved in the attacks or the war are on center stage here. However, I chose to start with 9/11 not only because it is so important in all our lives but also because it illustrates many of the key themes in this book in particular and in comparative politics in general.

The first and most obvious is the importance of the book's subtitle—"Domestic Responses to Global Challenges." If we ever needed a vivid reminder of the role international forces play in political life, it came on that fateful Tuesday morning. Terrorists from several countries in the Middle East by way of Afghanistan and Germany struck deadly blows at the leading symbols of U.S. economic and military might. What's more, the conventional interpretation of al-Qaeda was that it was a response by fundamentalist Muslims against aspects of the broad set of trends political scientists refer to as **globalization**.

But second, and just as importantly, it revealed the importance of domestic politics. The United States changed many of its laws and policies as quickly and coherently as at any point in its history, as did its leading ally, Great Britain. The German government made a major commitment to the coalition and barely survived a vote of confidence. And Russia and China both tempered their criticisms of aspects of American foreign policy.

There is no doubt that the attacks of 9/11 were a colossal political "wake-up call" for millions of Americans and others around the world. No single attack of that magnitude or with so much shock value had ever occurred before.

However, many of the underlying themes we can tease from the events of 9/11 had been apparent for quite some time. In fact, we have been living for many years in an environment in which, as the cliché has it, "change has been the only constant."

Events in the news also remind us of how much and how fast our world is changing. A century ago, India, Iraq, and South Africa were colonies, as was most of the world. A half-century later, Germany and Japan were economically devastated by their defeat in World War II and were occupied and governed by the victorious Allied powers. A generation ago, Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) ran the country without any serious opposition, communists were firmly in power in the former Soviet Union, and the apartheid government in South Africa seemed as invulnerable as ever. A decade ago, Japan was considered a threat to American and European prosperity, and its state was considered a model of how a government could steer a capitalist economy.

In 2002 there are almost no colonies left. The Soviet Union has disintegrated, and communism in Eurasia is no more. South Africa's multiracial democracy has held two elections and seen its charismatic first president, Nelson Mandela, go into retirement. The PRI has lost its first election ever. Japan continues to struggle a decade after its "bubble economy" burst.

None of these events or trends were as dramatic as the terrorist attacks and their aftermath. However, they demonstrate that the most important conclusions observers have drawn about 9/11 have been part of our lives for quite some time:

- The rapid pace of change
- The growing importance of globalization even in the strongest states
- The continued importance of domestic politics even in the weakest states

Comparative politics is but one of several academic disciplines you can turn to if you want to understand these and the other trends we will discuss in the pages that follow. As you will see, its focus is on domestic politics—that is, on what happens inside a country.

To that end, this book and the course you are taking will introduce you to the ideas, findings, and techniques of comparative analysis. As such, this will be like many other introductory courses you may have taken, in that you will be exposed to a lot of new information. However, subjects like comparative politics demand more of you than many other academic topics, largely because the material is almost always controversial and often quite confusing.

Therefore, if you are going to truly master the material, you have to take to heart the advice of the French novelist Marcel Proust that begins this chapter. You will be seeking new lands, because much of this book and the course will focus on ideas and places you probably know little about. But, if Proust is right, you will not get very far in that voyage of discovery unless you also try to see those lands with new eyes—those of comparative political analysis. To do that, you have to do more than simply read these pages, highlight the most important material, and repeat it on an examination. You also have to question everything—from what you think is normal to what you think is proper and just in political life. And, if you do, you will find that the study of comparative politics can be enlightening as an intellectual exercise, useful to you in your role as a citizen long after the course is over, and even enjoyable.

### Three Leaders

This chapter focuses on how comparative politics can help us understand political life around the world. However, because the concepts underlying the field are rather abstract, we will begin with a brief discussion of three of the more important national lead-

ers who came to power in recent years, all of whom will also be dealt with in more depth in subsequent chapters. This discussion will illustrate the terminology and techniques of comparative analysis.

During the first months of 2001, the popularity of Prime Minister Yori Moshiro<sup>1</sup> plummeted. When polls revealed that he had the confidence of less than one Japanese voter in ten, he decided to resign as both president of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and prime minister. The LDP, which has been in power virtually without interruption since the 1950s, was expected to choose a conventional politician committed to maintaining the status quo.

Instead, the maverick Koizumi Junichiro ([www.g8.gc.ca/japanbio-e.asp](http://www.g8.gc.ca/japanbio-e.asp)) came from nowhere to win the presidency of the LDP and become Japan's tenth prime minister in eleven years. Koizumi is an unusual politician in Japan, labeled *henjin* (weird person) by his former foreign minister, Tanaka Makiko. Unlike the vast majority of Japanese politicians, he is divorced and single. The mop-topped Koizumi also has been known to sing in karaoke bars.

Koizumi inherited a difficult situation. The economy had been faltering for a decade, and most analysts expected conditions to deteriorate for at least another year. There was also widespread dissatisfaction with the politicians, civil servants, and business elite who had ruled the country for a half-century. Upon taking office, he proposed sweeping reforms of the country's financial system and sharp limits on government spending and borrowing. In introducing those reforms to the Diet (parliament), he put the problem bluntly: "Since the 1990s, the Japanese economy has struggled for a long time, people have lost faith in politics and there is an air of stagnation in the society."

In seeking to change economic policy and bring more openness and honesty to Japanese government, Koizumi enjoys immense popularity among voters. However, he still has to retain the support of LDP politicians, many of whom oppose the package of reforms that are at the heart of his legislative agenda.

Tanaka is a personal symbol of the uncertainties surrounding Koizumi's government. Observers who

<sup>1</sup> As is the case in most of East Asia, the Japanese present their family name first and their given (or first and middle) names last. Thus, President Bush's name would be rendered Bush George Walker. Many Western academics and journalists use the first-name/last-name format for Japanese, but not Chinese, names. To be consistent from chapter to chapter and to respect the preferences of most Japanese people, we will use the last-name-first/first-name-last convention here. We will return to this issue in chapters 8 and 11.



Japanese prime minister Koizumi Junichiro.

think he will prove to be a reformer point to the fact that she was the first woman foreign minister in Japanese history. Those who expect there to be more continuity than change note that her father was one of the most notorious (and, some say, corrupt) kingmakers and prime ministers ever.

Vladimir Putin has been in power the longest of the three leaders but may end up having less of an impact on his country than the other two ([abcnews.go.com/reference/bios/putin.html](http://abcnews.go.com/reference/bios/putin.html)). On 31 December 1999, Boris Yeltsin made the surprising announcement that he was resigning immediately as president of Russia. According to the Russian Constitution, which had been written by Yeltsin to enhance his own power, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin became acting president until new elections could be held.

Before summer 1999, Putin was a virtual unknown. He had spent most of his career in the KGB, the Soviet spy agency, before joining the city government of

Russian president Vladimir Putin with his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin.



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St. Petersburg in the mid-1990s. He moved to Moscow in 1996 and held a number of minor posts before being named head of the Federal Security Bureau (FSB), the KGB's successor organization. In August 1999, Yeltsin nominated Putin to be prime minister, the fourth person to hold the job that year.

Putin proved remarkably popular and effective. He got a lot of credit for his forceful prosecution of the renewed war with rebels in Chechnya seeking independence. He also steered the new political party, Unity, to a surprisingly strong showing in the 1999 legislative elections and then won a decisive victory in the presidential elections in March 2000.

That does not make Putin an immediate success as president. A year and a half into his presidency, he had made little progress in solving the country's most pressing problem—an economic decline in which overall production dropped by half in a decade. He had also moved to centralize power in the hands of the presidency and other Moscow-based institutions in ways that led many to question his commitment to democracy.

In short, although Putin lacks his predecessor's personal flair and his personal liabilities, we still have to ask the same basic question about Russia that we did throughout Yeltsin's presidency: Will it be able to make the transition from communist rule to a democratic state and capitalist economy?

On 1 December 2000, a new political era began in Mexico. After over seventy years in power, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) had lost an election and handed over power to the conservative, business-oriented National Action Party (PAN) and the

new president, Vicente Fox ([www.wjz.com/now/story/0,1597,252072-367,00.shtml](http://www.wjz.com/now/story/0,1597,252072-367,00.shtml)).

From the 1980s onward, the corrupt PRI's hold on power had widely been criticized at home and abroad, and support for the party had been dwindling for years. Indeed, the opposition would probably have won the 1988 election had the votes been counted honestly. In the meantime, PRI leaders had had little choice but to adopt economic policies known as structural adjustment, which opened Mexico to more foreign investment, reduced state spending, privatized many government-owned enterprises, and rescheduled much of its massive foreign debt.

As the 2000 election campaign began, two major opposition candidates—Fox and Cuautemoc Cardenas of the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)—faced off against the PRI's Francisco Labastida. In the end, Fox won an overwhelming victory for the presidency, and his party won a plurality, but not a majority, in both houses of Congress.

As with Koizumi, however, it was not clear how much he could actually reform Mexico. Because the PRI has already opened up the economy, we should not expect dramatic change. Instead, Fox is expected to try to make the economy more efficient and to provide credit for individuals to form small businesses that could help the 40 percent of the population that lives on less than \$2 a day. After one year in office, Fox was facing more concerted opposition in Congress, and some of the luster had worn off his image. Still, the very fact that he won in the first place has made it all but impossible for Mexico ever to return to single-party rule under the PRI.





Mexican president Vicente Fox at his swearing-in ceremony.

## The State: One Focus Among Many

### *Politics and Power*

Students of comparative politics concentrate on the way scarce resources are allocated. That, in turn, means focusing on the common denominator of political life—**power**<sup>2</sup>—which is most often defined as the ability to get people or groups to do what they otherwise would not do. Those last five words are key. They suggest that power entails coercion. People typically have to be forced into doing things they don't want to do. The exercise of power does not always involve the use of physical force, but the threat of force is always there.

**Politics** is not merely about power. In the pages that follow, you will encounter plenty of people who

<sup>2</sup> Terms set in boldface can be found in the list of key terms at the end of each chapter and in the glossaries of concepts, people, acronyms and organizations, places, and events at the end of the book.

have been driven to act politically for other reasons, such as the desire to help people or to create a fairer society. There are also newer definitions of power that strip the necessity of coercion from it. However, as things stand now, in most countries at most times, there is no escaping the centrality of power as physical force in political life.

### *The State*

Central to the exercise of power is the **state**, which is the linchpin to political life. It is also the first term in this book that we need to define with some precision. Many people use the terms *government*, *state*, *nation*, and *regime* interchangeably. In the case of some countries, like the United States, it may not be terribly misleading to do so. When we consider the former Soviet Union or Iraq, however, treating the terms as synonyms can be extremely misleading.

- **Government** refers to a particular set of institutions and people authorized by formal documents such as a **constitution** to pass laws, issue regulations, control the police, and so on. For the moment, it is enough to note that the government rarely holds all the power available in a given country and in some cases can be far less influential than other actors. That is certainly true of what are referred to as failed states, in which the government lacks the ability to do much of anything in a society wracked by civil war. To a lesser degree, it was true of Mexico before Fox's election, when the PRI was far more important than government institutions.
- **State** is a broader concept that includes all the institutions and individuals that exercise power. One of Putin's main accomplishments in his first year and a half in office was a sharp reduction in the political clout of a shadowy group of extremely wealthy businessmen, known as the oligarchs, who had had tremendous leverage during the Yeltsin years.
- **Nation** is a psychological rather than an institutional concept, as political scientists use the term. It refers to the cultural, linguistic, and other identities that can tie people together. Thus, the Chechens who want to secede certainly do not think of themselves as Russians. Indeed, as we will see in several chapters, a lack of national identity often reflects deep-seated ethnic and other divisions that can undermine support for any state, whatever institutional levers it may have for exerting power.



## USEFUL WEB SITES

The Internet has become an essential tool for students of comparative politics. There are not many sites dedicated to comparative politics per se. However, the Internet is filled with information on specific countries, individuals, and issues. In particular, because so many newspapers, radio and television networks, and news services have gone on-line, it is easy to keep up with breaking news and evolving trends around the world.

That said, the Internet is increasingly hard to use because there are so many sites, and even the best search engines can catalogue only a tiny fraction of them. Therefore, I have created Comparative Politics On-Line, which includes links to what I think are the best sites for the issues and countries covered in this book, updates on the countries, sources of statistical and other data, and quizzes on each chapter so you can gauge how well you have mastered the material. You can also email me with questions about the book or issues that have arisen in your own course. It is located at:

[classweb.gmu.edu/chauss](http://classweb.gmu.edu/chauss)

Each chapter includes a box like this one with links to portals and other general sites. Specific web sites will be inserted in the text the first time an institution or individual is mentioned, as was the case with the brief biographies of Koizumi, Putin, and Fox in the preceding section.

There are other good resources for comparative politics. Here are three general sites that divide up the field in different but useful ways from the Universities of Colorado, Keele, and West Virginia, respectively:

[sobek.colorado.edu/POLSCI/RES/comp.html](http://sobek.colorado.edu/POLSCI/RES/comp.html)

[www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area.htm](http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area.htm)

[www.polsci.wvu.edu/polycy/pscomp.html](http://www.polsci.wvu.edu/polycy/pscomp.html)

- **Regime** refers to the institutions and practices that typically endure from government to government or, in American terms, administration to administration. Later, we will see that this distinction between the government of the day and the regime is extremely important, especially since countries in which people strongly support the latter tend to be the most stable, whatever attitudes they have toward whoever is in office at the moment.

### Types of States

It should already be clear that there is no single type of state. Some, like the United States, are large, rich, stable, and powerful. Others, like Somalia, are so poor, fragile,

The Internet also has dozens of sources providing basic data on countries that take you far beyond what can be covered in a single book and that include material on events occurring after this book was published. The CIA Factbook is a treasure trove of information about the world's countries and is updated quite frequently. The other three sources are the work of international "open source" teams of men and women willing to volunteer their time to provide general information about countries in general and elections in particular. And the virtual library is an effort by librarians and scholars to provide links and other resources in academic disciplines, including political science as a whole.

[www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html)

[www.adminet.com](http://www.adminet.com)

[www.politicalresources.com](http://www.politicalresources.com)

[www.electionworld.com](http://www.electionworld.com)

[spirit.lib.uconn.edu/PoliSci/polisci.htm](http://spirit.lib.uconn.edu/PoliSci/polisci.htm)

Finally, it is important to keep up with the news in any course in comparative politics and international relations. At this point, all of the world's major newspapers, news services, and broadcast media put much of their material on the web. Many, however, take the postings down after a week or two. The BBC and CNN do not and have searchable data based on their coverage, including items that never made it on air. That said, their coverage on third world issues is not great. Therefore, I also frequently look at One World, which is a good source for that part of the planet.

[cnn.com](http://cnn.com)

[news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk)

[www.oneworld.net](http://www.oneworld.net)

and weak that a "state" hardly seems to exist. About the only thing all countries have in common is that what each state does—and doesn't do—matters for its own citizens and for many other people outside its borders.

Unfortunately, political scientists have still not reached agreement about the best way to classify states. Despite all the changes of the 1980s and 1990s, I have decided to stick with the traditional three-way classification:

- Industrialized democracies
- Current and former communist regimes
- The third world

This way of dividing up the world is outdated. Nonetheless, because the industrialized democracies and the

**TABLE 1.1** Basic Data

COUNTRY	POPULATION (MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN 1999)	AVERAGE POPULATION GROWTH 1990-99 (PERCENTAGE)	GNP PER CAPITA (U.S. \$)	RANK IN GNP PER CAPITA	GROWTH IN GNP 1990-2000 (PERCENTAGE)	INFANT MORTALITY (PER 1,000 BIRTHS)	AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY
China	1,250	1.1	780	142	10.7	36	72
France	59	0.5	23,480	21	1.7	5	79
Germany	82	0.4	25,350	13	1.5	6	77
India	998	1.8	450	162	6.1	83	45
Japan	127	0.6	32,730	6	1.4	5	77
Mexico	97	1.8	4,400	71	2.7	35	72
Russia	149	-0.1	2,720	98	-6.1	20	65
South Africa	42	2.0	3,160	86	1.9	83	63
United Kingdom	59	0.3	22,640	22	2.2	7	77
United States	273	1.0	30,600	8	3.4	7	77
High-income	891	0.8	25,730	NA	2.4	8	77
Low-income	2,417	2.0	410	NA	2.4	107	60

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report*. [www.worldbank.org/poverty/wdrpoverty/report/index.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/wdrpoverty/report/index.htm). Accessed 26 December 2001. Iraq not included because data are incomplete.

once-solid communist bloc in particular have many historical and contemporary traits in common, it still makes sense to use this framework.

The **industrialized democracies** present us with a paradox. On the one hand, they have the most resources and, so, the greatest potential for powerful states. Like Great Britain, most are wealthy and have at least reasonably effective and popular political institutions. As table 1.1 (also on the inside front cover) shows, the citizens of industrialized democracies enjoy standards of living similar to those of most Americans. Virtually everyone can read and write, and the infant mortality figures suggest that they enjoy at least basic health-care coverage.

On the other hand, these states also have the most built-in restraints on the exercise of power. Most of those limits on what leaders can do are laid out in constitutions and other laws. What the state can do is also determined to some degree by public opinion and by the results of competitive elections to select the leaders themselves.

That paradox is reversed in the current and former **communist** states. During their heyday, they were extremely strong. The government controlled almost everything, from the schools to the press to the economy. Indeed, the term **totalitarianism** was coined to describe these and other states that sought complete control over their societies.

The collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, however, demonstrated that repression and central control were not enough to keep these states strong indefinitely. The collapse of the Soviet Union thus resulted in large part from its inability to devise new and innovative economic policies, which,

in turn, reinforced the hostility toward a regime that suddenly lost most of its political teeth. There were many reasons the USSR and its allies failed to meet that challenge. At or near the top of any list is the decision by the Soviet and Eastern European leaders to give their people more freedom in order to breathe new life into their economies. Once that happened, they could no longer rely on repression, and they lost the political “glue” that kept them in power.

The Chinese followed a different path, offering economic reform while retaining tight control over political life. So far, this strategy has “worked” in that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is still in power. However, most observers doubt that the CCP can continue stifling dissent indefinitely.

The **third world** is much harder to describe as a whole, which is hardly surprising, given that it includes over 130 countries. Above all else, the third world is poor. Some third world countries are so impoverished that the average citizen has no more than \$300 to \$500 a year to live on. Table 1.1 shows just how wide the gap between the industrial democracies and the forty-one poorest third world countries is. Moreover, as the shortage of doctors, the number of young people, and the degree of illiteracy in the poorest countries suggests, third world governments face far more problems than the other two types of states. To make matters even worse, many still have not been able to forge states with functioning courts, bureaucracies, and other institutions people in the industrialized democracies take for granted. Many, too, have experienced military coups and other forms of political upheaval that have sapped a succession of regimes of the popular support vital to the long-term strength of any regime.

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## FIVE CRITICAL DEFINITIONS

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- **Power**—as conventionally defined by political scientists, one’s ability to get someone else to do something he or she otherwise would not do. Sometimes also defined simply as the ability to get things done, but not necessarily with coercion.
- **State**—all individuals and institutions that exert power and make public policy, whether they are in the government or not.
- **Government**—the leadership in power at a particular moment, roughly akin to an American administration.
- **Nation**—the primarily psychological sense of identification with a people (for example, I am an American).
- **Regime**—the institutions and practices that endure from government to government (or administration to administration).

There are exceptions to this otherwise gloomy situation—the so-called **newly industrializing countries** (NICs), which have made great strides in breaking out of the trap of underdevelopment. The most famous are the Asian tigers—South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia—as well as perhaps a few other Asian countries, Mexico, Brazil, and Chile. Although there is still some debate about what allowed these countries to grow so fast from the 1970s through the mid-1990s, every list of causes includes the way each state was able to build cooperative relationships with business and labor, albeit sometimes through force.

### Strong and Weak States

We will also be asking why some states are stronger than others. Obviously, every state has tried to respond to the kinds of challenges faced by the three leaders discussed earlier. Just as obviously, there is tremendous variation in what these leaders have been able to accomplish.

The distinction between strong and weak states is one of the most controversial in comparative politics. In a textbook for an introductory course, however, we can use a fairly simple definition. **Strong states** take on more responsibilities and generally carry them out more effectively than do weaker ones. **Weak states**, by contrast, are less able to define and carry out policy goals than are stronger states.

Comparativists do not yet know enough to reach many general conclusions about the factors that determine how strong a given state is. The best we can do

is to note that, over the long term, strong states are relatively wealthy, their regimes have widespread popular support, and their governing elites work reasonably effectively together. The use of repression can strengthen states in the short run. However, as events of the past two decades suggest, it may not be enough to sustain such states under today’s social and economic conditions.

Basic patterns in state structure and power roughly coincide with the three types of states outlined earlier. In particular, the former communist states could not adapt to the changing social and economic conditions they faced in the 1980s because their strength lay in their ability to maintain order, not innovate. Similarly, poverty, internal divisions, and other factors are part of the reason most third world countries have relatively weak states as well.

No state comes close to being able to do whatever it wants whenever it wants. If anything, most states are losing the ability to shape their own destinies in the light of globalization, which we will discuss shortly.

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## Comparative Politics

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Comparativists agree on very little. We do, however, have one point of view in common—a way of analyzing the political world. We are convinced that you can reach the most accurate and insightful conclusions by comparing two or more examples of the phenomenon you are interested in—in this case, states. In this text, we will use eleven states and one international organization as intellectual springboards in trying to understand political life as a whole.

Though comparativists do so in many different ways, we all start by asking two sets of questions about the phenomena that we are interested in:

- What are the key similarities and differences among them?
- How can we explain those patterns?

There is an extensive and often complex literature on what it takes to do comparative political analysis. In practice, however, it is quite easy to compare. When George W. Bush had to choose a running mate in 2000, he compared Dick Cheney with a number of other possible candidates and decided that someone with Cheney’s vast experience, including service in the first President Bush’s cabinet, would provide his ticket with the balance it needed. You, too, have undoubtedly done some serious comparing—for instance, in deciding which college or university to attend.

To see what comparative political analysis can do, consider the following simple example from the 2001 British general election. A total of 58 percent of registered voters over age eighteen voted. That one fact tells you very little about Britain or its political system. But the picture changes dramatically once you add two more pieces of information that allow you to compare Britain over time (it was the lowest turnout since 1935) and with another country (it is rare that much more than half of registered American voters vote in presidential elections). With those two pieces of comparative data, you can learn a lot more and can pose far more insightful questions about elections in general. For example, why is turnout in British elections normally higher than that in the United States? Why has it been declining in recent elections? What difference does turnout make? Does the fact that nearly three-fifths of the people voted make it easier or harder for Prime Minister Blair to meet the challenges he will face while in office?

### Three Templates

Comparative analysis can be a powerful tool. Comparison, however, is not powerful enough on its own to lead us to the kinds of overarching conclusions mentioned previously. We also have to know what to compare, what questions to ask, and which criteria to use in evaluating the evidence we uncover.

Most political scientists believe that theories best provide that focus. Unfortunately, comparative politics is not chemistry, physics, or microeconomics, each of which has a single theory or paradigm that structures everything from cutting-edge research to introductory textbooks. The best tools we have available are less powerful models that only allow us to see how the various components of a state are related to one another.

Think of models as equivalent to the templates for typical, routine tasks that computer companies provide when you buy new software. The three models that follow weave together most of the themes discussed so far in this chapter and so will help you organize the material in the rest of the book.

### *The Political System*

The chapters on individual countries are organized around a model known as **systems theory** (see figure 1.1). Although most of the natural sciences are based on it, it is no longer very popular in political science. Nonetheless, it is more useful for our purposes than its intellec-

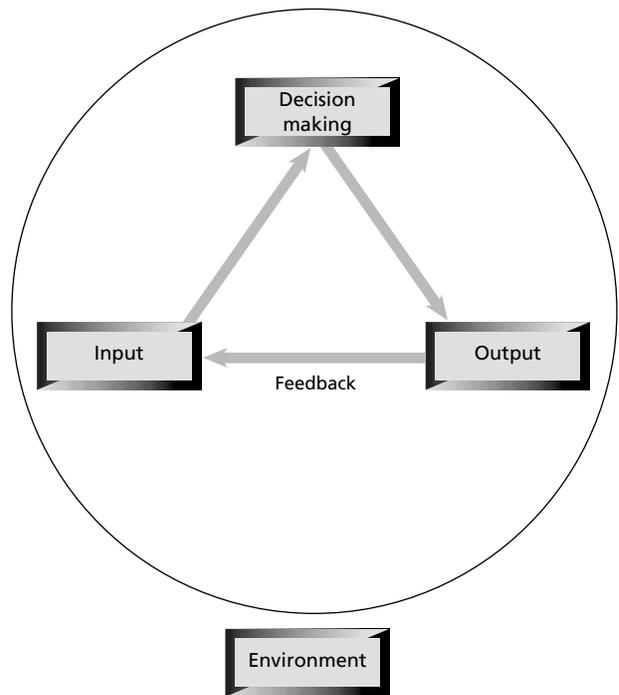


FIGURE 1.1 The Political System

tual competitors are because it allows us to see how a state's components interact over time and how nonpolitical and international forces shape what it can and cannot accomplish.

Systems theory revolves around five concepts: inputs, decision making, outputs, feedback, and the environment.

#### Inputs

**Inputs** are the ways average citizens and the groups they form affect political life. David Easton, who adapted systems theory to political science, divided them into two types of activities: those that **support** and those that place **demands** on the state. Supports and demands come in many forms.

Individuals can act on their own by, for example, voting or writing a letter to the editor. However, most activity, especially that of a demanding nature, is channeled through two types of organizations: **interest groups** and **political parties**. Interest groups typically deal with a limited range of issues and represent a narrow segment of a country's population. Examples include trade unions, business associations, and environmental groups that organize and "lobby" around specific issues and interests. A political party, in contrast, tries to bring the interests of a number of groups together and to gain control over the government either

on its own or in a coalition. A party need not build its support or power largely, or even primarily, through elections.

The conventional wisdom is that Japan has fewer interest groups than other industrialized democracies. Nonetheless, the LDP has been able to stay in power for so long because of its close ties to big business. And although the LDP has been what political scientists call a dominant party, Japan has always had a number of opposition parties. It is difficult, however, to pin down exactly how many there are because a number of them have splintered and/or merged in recent years.

Sometimes demands go beyond the conventional “inside-the-system” activities of interest groups and political parties. Protesters, for instance, blocked the construction of Tokyo’s Narita airport during the 1960s and 1970s. Chechen rebels have fought two wars in a thus-far vain attempt to win their independence from Russia. But there is no better example of “outside-the-system” protest than the attacks on 9/11. Analysts will long debate what motivated the nineteen hijackers and their supporters. However, there seems little doubt that their faith and their hatred of Western politics and policies led them to be willing to take not only their own lives but those of thousands of people in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the four airplanes.

Political participation is also shaped by a country’s **political culture**, or the basic attitudes people have toward each other, the state, and authority. A culture, in essence, reflects the impact of history on a society’s beliefs.

In Japan, the legacy of feudalism and Confucianism remains in the broad acceptance of a social structure based on hierarchy and group loyalty. Mexico’s voters routinely reelected the PRI in part because of its ability to build support for what we call patron-client relations in later chapters. And, most obviously, Russians’ values today are in large part shaped by more than seventy years of communist rule. Finally, the Chechen case also shows us that not all countries are homogeneous and that some have very different subcultures as well.

## Decision Making

Easton’s second main concept, **decision making**, covers the same intellectual ground as the state, and thus does not need much elaboration here. It is enough to note that we will examine states from two main angles: the structure of their institutions and the values, skills, and personalities of their leaders. Institutions matter more in older, established regimes like Japan’s in which the

rules of the LDP, as well as the Japanese constitution, limit what any leader can do, including a maverick like Koizumi. That is less the case in a country like Mexico, where the PRI did political end runs around constitutional arrangements, or in Russia, where the institutions are not yet a decade old. Each of the three examples presented earlier highlights the importance of leaders’ values (Fox’s commitment to a more open government), skills (Putin’s ability to consolidate power), and personality (Koizumi’s maverick nature).

## Outputs

Inputs and decision making are important in their own right. However, their importance grows when we take the next step and explore what those decisions lead to—what we label the system’s **output** or **public policy**.

The most common type of policy regulates the behavior of individuals or organizations. Thus, Japan has had to institute stricter regulations than it used to have on its banks in the wake of a string of bankruptcies and banking scandals.

Other policies redistribute resources, sometimes to such a degree that they alter a society’s basic patterns of wealth and power. That, of course, has always been the goal of Marxists and other socialists. But even with the growing support for market economies, states are still heavily involved in distributional politics. Thus, Fox inherited a system in which the state channeled funds for local construction or other projects to gain support for the PRI.

Policies can also be symbolic. Under both Yelstin and Putin, the Russian government has tried to build support for the symbols associated with the new state, including adopting a new national anthem. Even more obvious on this score is the fact that the new South African government changed both its flag and its national anthem to reflect the multiracial and democratic nature of the new society when it came to power in 1994. Along those same lines, President Mandela resisted demands that rugby—a sport played almost exclusively by Afrikaners—be banned. Instead, he attended the 1995 World Cup wearing a copy of the team captain’s shirt as yet another sign of his desire to build bridges between the country’s racial communities (South Africa won, which also helped).

We will also encounter examples of nonpolicies in which what they do not do are also significant. To cite but one example, Putin initially chose not to challenge the power only of those oligarchs who controlled television networks, which could have aired critical views of the new administration.

### Feedback

Systems analysis is also the most useful general model for our purposes because it incorporates **feedback**, which is the process through which people find out about public policy and the ways in which their reactions to it help shape the next phase of political life. Sometimes a decision directly affects an individual or group. More often, people only learn about a policy indirectly, either through the media or by word of mouth. Indeed, in each of the countries we will be covering in this book, the media play a powerful, and frequently quite biased, role in political life, either in supporting the state or in criticizing its policies. There are times, too, when people do not find out about state policies at all, which can result either from conscious attempts to keep these policies secret or from public apathy.

Feedback makes systems analysis particularly useful, because it forces us to consider how a system changes over time. Too many of the other models political scientists use provide the intellectual equivalent of snapshots that show what a system is like during a relatively brief period. Focusing on feedback, however, draws our attention to how the entire system has evolved over the years, thus turning the snapshot into the intellectual equivalent of a videotape—and an extended-play one at that.

### The Environment

The **environment** is simply everything lying outside the political system. Systems are defined as being “bounded” or having an autonomous identity and organization. No system, however, is completely autonomous. All politicians and citizens have to react to forces beyond their control that can limit—sometimes sharply—their ability to shape their own destinies in three main ways.

The first is the impact of history discussed earlier. No country’s history shapes exactly what happens today. Nonetheless, it does help set the political stage, determining what is and is not likely to work. Thus, there is no way either Putin’s government or Putin himself can escape their communist past, including the fact that he spent part of his political career in the KGB.

Second are the limits imposed by domestic social, economic, and physical conditions. Japan is very densely populated. The fact that Tokyo’s subway system has to employ people to shove as many people as possible into each car before it leaves a station reflects the fact that its leaders have to pay more attention to mass transit than do, say, officials in Nevada.

Finally, and today perhaps most importantly, there are the global forces that arise outside a country’s border, as this book’s subtitle suggests. Sometimes their impact is hard to miss, as when British or American planes bomb Iraq. Other times they are subtler and far harder to document, as when global media conglomerates assume more control of a country’s television and other outlets. Sometimes they are very visible and have massive consequences, as did Mexico’s entry into the global marketplace after 1982. Other times the impact can be more limited, as was the European Court of Justice’s 1995 decision overturning rules that limited the number of foreign players on a professional soccer team.

Those global forces are part of the broader, widely commented on, but still poorly understood phenomenon of globalization. For some, it is simply the rapidly increasing integration of the world economy, with most of the power concentrated in the rich, industrialized capitalist countries. It will be used here in a broader sense to include the “shrinking” of the world and the decreasing importance of national borders in culture, politics, communications, and travel as well. Perhaps most importantly, in the language of international relations, globalization is limiting the *de facto*, if not the *de jure*, sovereignty of all states.

### *Historical and Contemporary Factors*

Table 1.2 draws our attention to four types of forces that have gone a long way toward determining basic patterns of politics in all countries, including the strength or weakness of most states. The first row of the table highlights the broad historical forces that set the stage for the “dramas” of global political life today. Undoubtedly, the most important ones are **imperialism** and the imposition of Western political, economic, and cultural elements in the rest of the world. The impact of imperialism is still easy to see, for instance, in the role Western values play in the third world. Indian politicians are not clones of their former British colonial masters. Nonetheless, India’s constitutional system has changed little since the country gained independence. Similarly, imperialism created a global economy marked by sharp and lasting inequalities. To this day, many of the former colonies are desperately poor and dependent on the policies and practices of the wealthy states and private corporations in the “north.”

Imperialism was also important in determining how the modern system of states was formed. In many respects, the modern state itself is a by-product of

**TABLE 1.2** Factors Affecting the Development of States

	INTERNATIONAL	DOMESTIC
<b>Historical</b>	Imperialism	State and nation building
<b>Contemporary</b>	Globalization and the end of the cold war	Pressures from below

imperialism. Prior to the 1600s, the European monarchies were rather weak and decentralized. But once the kings and other leaders decided to expand abroad, they needed more powerful states that could raise armies and feed, equip, and pay them.

State building has never occurred smoothly. Everywhere, the power of the state grew at the expense of at least some of its citizens and therefore left lasting scars. It was particularly difficult when one or both of two problems emerged. First, when the state developed quickly, antagonisms arose toward a national government that all of a sudden demanded more of its people. Second, when minority ethnic, linguistic, or religious groups were forcibly incorporated into the emerging state, this tended to produce tensions that undermined the state's ability to govern.

The difficulties associated with state building have been particularly pronounced in the third world. Gaining independence usually involved an intense struggle with the old imperial power. And, when the conflict was especially prolonged or violent, as in Vietnam or Algeria, the new nation found itself physically and economically drained once it finally did gain its independence.

Moreover, when the imperialist powers carved up the Southern Hemisphere, they did so largely for their own reasons, ignoring traditional boundaries and lumping together groups that had historically been antagonistic toward each other. As a result, new states such as Angola, Afghanistan, and Nigeria faced deeply rooted ethnic tensions, which made it all but impossible for leaders to agree on anything.

As the second row in table 1.2 suggests, you cannot understand everything about political life today merely by putting it into historical perspective. If you could, there would be little reason to take a course such as this one or to want to change a world whose basic contours are already set!

The most important contemporary global force remains the **cold war** between the United States and the former Soviet Union. The two countries emerged from World War II as the most dominant powers on earth, ushering in an unprecedented period in which two superpowers alone shaped the destinies of almost every other country.

As the United States and the Soviet Union jockeyed for position, regional problems became global ones as well. When the superpowers' interests collided most directly, countries such as Vietnam, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan paid the price. Even such regional powers as Japan, Britain, Poland, Hungary, and the two Germanys saw their freedom to maneuver limited by "their" superpower.

Now that the cold war is over, no one is quite sure how those international forces will play out. Some observers think supranational institutions like the United Nations or the European Union will play a larger, more constructive role in finding peaceful resolutions to the conflicts that still plague international and domestic political life. Others are more skeptical. They point to the Gulf War, the fighting among the former Yugoslavian republics, and the escalating activities of dozens of terrorist groups, and suggest that we may be entering a more violent period in which we might even miss the security and stability of the cold war. This uncertainty was particularly evident in the first weeks after the attacks of 9/11. On the one hand, optimists thought the global shock wave caused by the events would unite the international community and go a long way toward eradicating terrorism once and for all. On the other hand, pessimists worried that the attacks on al-Qaeda and the Taliban would only sow the seeds for more and bloodier terrorist violence in the future. No one, however, doubts that international political forces will remain an important determinant of domestic events around the world.

Since the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo of 1973–74 and the economic downturn that followed, we have become aware of another global force limiting what individual states can do—the **international political economy** (IPE). To some degree, the IPE is a legacy of imperialism. But as we are all painfully aware from the daily news reports about the loss of American factory jobs to the destruction of the Brazilian rain forest, the IPE has taken on a life of its own.

The countries that are suffering as a result of globalization are indeed in a difficult bind. How can the poorest nations break out of their poverty when those international dynamics are leaving them ever further behind? How can countries as different as Mexico, Poland, and the United States solve their domestic problems when they owe billions of dollars to other governments and private financiers? How can a country like Brazil balance the needs of the environment with those of its impoverished citizens?

Finally, there is the traditional subject matter of comparative politics—what is happening within indi-

vidual countries today. Because of what occurred in the past and because of what is taking place now outside their borders, few states are as fully masters of their own destinies as they were even a generation ago. Conversely, no state is completely at the mercy of globalization, although some states are better able to shape their future than others.

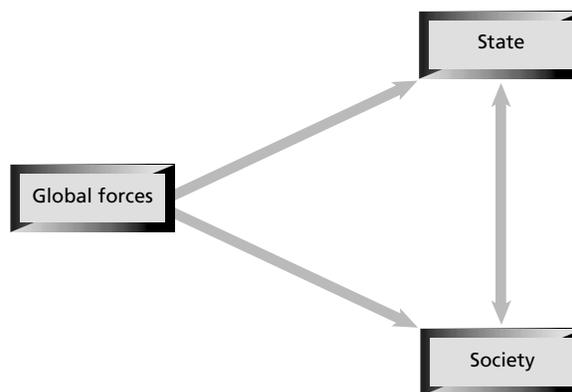
### *State, Society, and Globalization*

We can work through the third template quickly because figure 1.2 covers many of these same phenomena. What makes this template different is its focus on the causal links among three key global and domestic factors that will provide a rough framework to stitch the pieces of this book together. In other words, because we have largely covered the content of the boxes in figure 1.2, we will use it instead to focus on the key ways in which the trends discussed so far affect each other.

At least since the time of Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century, most political theorists have pointed out that individuals and the groups they form tend to seek ever more freedom and power. The more pessimistic of them have feared that people motivated by such self-interest would tear society apart if left to their own devices. Thus, like it or not, we have to create authorities that maintain order by keeping such centrifugal forces in check.

As a result, most political scientists believe that state and society exist in what they call an inverse relationship: For the power of one to increase, that of the other must be reduced. For example, the Republicans, who took control of both houses of Congress in 1994, were convinced that the way to give average Americans more power was to limit the jurisdiction of what they believed was a far too dominant state. Similarly, the creation of the National Health Service in Great Britain in 1948 left doctors less free to practice medicine as they saw fit and left affluent patients less able to choose their own health-care options than they had been beforehand.

Moreover, this inverse relationship seems to hold rather consistently across all types of political systems. Giving more power to Mexican businesses or to Soviet citizens in the 1980s came at the expense of the state, at least in the medium to long term. Similarly, plenty of well-intentioned leaders in the third world argue that their countries need strong—even authoritarian—governments because they cannot afford, politically or economically, the rough-and-tumble of democracy. The Taliban victory in Afghanistan perhaps illustrates this point as well as any political trend in recent years. Its state imposed a strict code of behavior based on what its



**FIGURE 1.2** The Impact of Global and Domestic Forces on the State

leaders saw as Islamic law. Among other things, men were forced to grow long beards, and women could neither work nor go to school and could go out in public only if fully covered in a *burka*.

It also draws our attention to the way globalization is reshaping political life by reducing the real ability of states to determine how their societies will develop. This is most evident in the way globalization is limiting the power of states to set and implement economic policy. Although international institutions such as the European Union and the International Monetary Fund play a critical role in this respect, rarely can we pinpoint exactly how such influence is wielded, because these pressures are far subtler than those used by the U.S.-led coalition in the war against terrorism. Nonetheless, they are real and important enough that they may force us to change the ways in which we view global political life both as academics and as average citizens.

Even the more restrained analysts of globalization stress the degree to which states are losing influence, especially over the formation and implementation of economic policy. If current trends continue, we will soon have to develop wholly new intellectual models in which the line between comparative politics and international relations is blurred, if not eliminated altogether—a point we will return to in the final chapter of this book.

### **Five Themes**

**Y**ou will also find it easier to absorb the material in the chapters that follow if you keep five overarching themes in mind. All of them have been mentioned before, but they bear repeating here because they are excellent vehicles for helping you compare. For that

same reason, there will be boxes on each of them in chapters to come to help you put the countries and types of regimes in a broader perspective.

First, as should already be clear, political life is filled with conflict. The citizens, parties, and interest groups of a relatively stable country such as Great Britain differ sharply on a number of issues, including Northern Ireland, the European Union, and the future of the welfare state. In most other countries, the conflicts are even more intense and frequently erupt into violence, which threatens the very existence of regimes and even the states themselves. And, despite tremendous progress in methods of managing, preventing, and resolving conflict in recent years, there are typically at least thirty states in the midst of a civil war or other armed conflict at any time.

Second, there has also been a significant shift toward more democratic governments in the past decade or so. The end of the cold war ushered in new regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that at least hoped to become democratic. In the same vein, President George H. W. Bush used to delight in pointing out that 1990 marked the first year that all the countries in South America had democratically elected governments. However, as with globalization, the past few years have brought sobering news that **democratization** is not as easy as many had thought and hoped. Most of the newly created democratic regimes are fragile at best. Meanwhile, there still are plenty of ruthless dictators, and military coups remain a possibility in much of the third world.

Third, among the most important changes of the past twenty years has been the resurgence of capitalism and market economies as the preferred system for most of the world's political and business leaders. As recently as the late 1970s, Marxism and other forms of socialism still had a tremendous appeal. And, even in countries that were basically capitalist, economic theories that emphasized state coordination and planning still held sway. Since then, two things have happened that have tilted the balance toward less state involvement and a greater reliance on markets. The first was the declining performance of state-led and relatively autarchic policies in response to global and domestic economic pressures, which put a premium on innovation and other attributes that large organizations—public and private alike—rarely possess. The second was the crisis and then collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and its allies, which left Marxism a highly unpopular political and economic ideology.

Fourth, globalization refers to the apparent “shrinking” of the world amid the simultaneous integration of our economic, social, environmental, and cultural lives. As such, it has probably been the most hyped concept in recent years. Some critics have cast doubt on how fast

globalization is occurring and how interdependent the world really is. Nonetheless, as noted earlier, there is no denying that global forces increasingly constrain what even the strongest states can do. Therefore, no book on domestic politics would be complete without attention to globalization and the ways in which states and their citizens are coping with it.

Together, the first four themes lead to the fifth—the challenges most states face at the dawn of the twenty-first century. With but few exceptions (for example, South Africa), states, their leaders, and their citizens are finding it ever more difficult to develop mutually acceptable and effective policies to cope with their problems, whether domestic or international in origin. Although comparativists still focus on the state as their key unit of analysis, researchers are beginning to question whether it remains the institution that is best able to cope with the problems we expect to face in the next millennium, an argument I will address in the final chapter.

Again, the events of 9/11 provide us with the most visible, if not the most typical, example to use in getting a first glimpse at these five themes—albeit in a slightly different order from the one presented here, which is also the way they will be developed in the rest of the book. If we take the words of Osama bin Laden seriously, the struggle or conflict he has helped to launch is a direct outgrowth of his rejection of aspects of globalization, including the deployment of Western troops in Islamic countries and the spread of Western cultural values, such as those regarding the status of women. In his case, the anger toward the West is driven as well by one of the most important economic trends of the past fifty years—the growing importance of oil and gas in international economic life. This fact has also reinforced the power of the major oil companies and the moderate Arab states, which the likes of bin Laden believe violate Islamic religious precepts and law. Thus, such concerns have led him and his colleagues to launch terrorist attacks not only on the United States but also on the moderate regimes in the Middle East that may well be their more cherished target. And it's not simply radical groups like al-Qaeda. Time and time again in the pages that follow, we will see how these factors come together to create more conventional “inside the system” challenges to each and every state we consider.

## Using This Book

**Y**ou are at the beginning of what in one sense will be a typical introductory course with a typical textbook. To fully master the material, however, you will have to go beyond the typical, because you will

constantly be confronted with controversial questions that do not have clear and obvious answers. What's more, most of them will have a direct bearing on your life for years to come.

In short, you will have to do more than merely memorize the notes you take in class or highlight the key points in these pages. Courses that deal with new, complex, and/or controversial subjects succeed only when students stretch themselves, consider unsettling ideas, question their basic assumptions, and sift through evidence to reach their own conclusions.

This book has a number of features that make the "active learning" side of the course as useful (and, I hope, as enjoyable) as possible. They start with the structure of the book itself. The second chapter in this introduction gives a brief overview of politics in the United States, which American readers, in particular, can use as a frame of reference for the other countries covered in parts 2–4.

The core of the book covers politics in the three kinds of states mentioned earlier—industrialized democracies, current and former communist regimes, and the third world. Each part begins with an overview chapter that explores the key trends, theories, and ideas about that type of state. The other chapters are case studies of countries chosen because they are important in their own right and because you can use them as intellectual springboards for reaching more general conclusions about the political trends (re)shaping our world. These countries are:

- **Industrialized democracies:** Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, the European Union
- **Current and former communist regimes:** Russia, China
- **The third world:** India, Iraq, South Africa, Mexico

In addition, the book's web site (see below) has briefer chapters on Canada and Nigeria, which you might consult to deepen your understanding of some of the issues raised in these pages.

Because this book focuses on countries and individual instructors assign various subsets of them in their classes, it is hard to build comparative analysis into the text itself. However, each chapter has boxes on the five themes discussed earlier in which comparative questions and themes are explored.

As also noted earlier, this book has a web site, Comparative Politics On-Line, that was designed to help students go beyond the basics that can be covered in rather brief chapters (<http://politicalscience.wadsworth.com/hauss>). The site has links to other sites on the web with information on the key concepts and countries covered here. I will include some of the best sites in the text



## InfoTrac College Edition Sources

Bates, Robert. "Comparative Politics and Rational Choice Theory: A Review Essay."

Hauss, Charles. "Duh, or the Role of IT in Teaching Comparative Politics."

Wiarda, Howard. "The End of the Great International Systems Debate."

Wilsford, David. "Getting Students to Think (Comparatively)."

here; however, Comparative Politics On-Line has a lot more. I will periodically update the information on each of the countries covered in the book to chronicle events and trends that occurred after this book went to press in early 2002.

Wadsworth provides two other services that your instructor may use. The first is the InfoTrac® College Edition database of articles from scholarly journals and other periodicals that you can use to supplement and update what you read in these pages. Second, the book comes with a CD-ROM that includes access to its web site; an interactive study guide that, among other things, allows you to move back and forth between concepts and countries more easily than you can with a book; self-paced quizzes on each chapter; quantitative exercises using MicroCase data; and additional information about other countries not covered in these pages.

I have tried to write a challenging book that you will enjoy reading. But, to get the most out of it and out of this course in general, much of the burden will fall on you. You will have to go beyond what I've written or your instructor presents in class and interpret the material in your own terms. To do so, you really will have to follow Proust's advice and seek new lands by seeing with new eyes.

## Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Do the various assertions made in this chapter still make sense? In what ways? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask whether people think the country is heading in the "right" direction or "is on the wrong track." If you were asked such a question about politics in the world as a whole, how would you answer? Why did you reach that conclusion?
3. Take your campus, community, or state, and analyze it using the systems model. What new insights did this



## Key Terms

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Cold war	Industrialized democracy	Power
Communist	Input	Public policy
Constitution	Interest group	Regime
Decision making	International political economy	State
Demand	Nation	Strong state
Democratization	Newly industrializing countries	Support
Environment	(NICs)	Systems theory
Feedback	Output	Third world
Globalization	Political culture	Totalitarianism
Government	Political party	Weak state
Imperialism	Politics	

exercise lead you to? What, if any, important facts, trends, or institutions were left out of the analysis?

4. Of all the concepts covered in this chapter, which do you think are the most and the least important? Why did you reach this conclusion?

5. You could interpret this chapter as arguing that it is becoming harder for governments to govern effectively. Do you agree? Why (not)?

## Further Reading

Almond, Gabriel, and G. Bingham Powell. *Comparative Politics: System, Policy, and Process*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1978.

Dated, but still the best presentation of the classic approach to comparative politics.

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Friedman, Tom. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2000. The most influential and controversial book on globalization.

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. A powerful but controversial book about the way cul-

tural change is remaking the political world; by one of the most respected and conservative analysts, who has left his mark on this field since the early 1960s.

Lane, Ruth. *The Art of Comparative Politics*. Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn & Bacon, 1997. One of the few recent books arguing that comparativists have made substantial progress.

Lichbach, Mark, and Alan Zuckerman, eds. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. A fairly dense but important set of essays by political scientists writing from a number of perspectives.

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Soe, Christian, ed. *Comparative Politics: Annual Editions*. Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin, published annually. A collection of recent articles from the press. Your best bet to stay up-to-date if you don't have access to InfoTrac®.

Stoan, Alfred. *Arguing Comparative Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. A collection of essays by one of the few leading scholars in comparative politics willing to take on most issues and most regions.

Wilson, Frank L. *Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2002. An excellent introduction to the basic ideas in comparative politics by one of the best writers in the field who, alas, died just after his book was published.

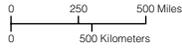
Zahariades, Nikolaos. *Theory, Concepts, and Method in Comparative Politics*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996. One of the few attempts to update the ideas of comparative politics since the 1960s.

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# THE UNITED STATES

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The Longest Election
- Thinking About the United States
- The Making of the American State
- The American People and Politics
- The Weak American State
- Public Policy
- Feedback
- Conclusion: The Bottom Line



*Perhaps the most striking feature of the recent political history of the United States is the stability of its basic institutions despite the stress of assassinations, war, racial strife, political scandal, and economic dislocation.*

ALAN ABRAMOWITZ

## The Longest Election

For years, representatives of the U.S. government and nongovernmental organizations have gone abroad to monitor elections in new, struggling democracies. Two centuries of democratic success—admittedly with some blemishes—had convinced most Americans that they really knew what it meant to be democratic and how to run a free and fair election.

Then came Florida. For thirty-six days after the election of 7 November 2000, the United States was in political limbo.

No one thought the 2000 presidential campaign represented democracy at its best. The candidates were less than stellar. The candidates on both parties' tickets had done little to quell the bitter partisan divisions that had characterized American political life, at least since the "Republican revolution" of 1994 had given the GOP control of both houses of Congress. And these divisions had been further magnified during the failed attempt to remove President Clinton from office as a result of the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

The Republican candidate, George W. Bush, was widely viewed as too inexperienced, if not wholly unqualified, to be president. Vice President Al Gore's wooden personality and the common perception that he would say anything to anyone to get himself elected left him behind in the polls though he closed the gap in the campaign's final hours.

So, most politically interested Americans expected to spend a long night on 7 November waiting for the results to come in. However, during the early evening hours, it looked as if we might be able to go to bed fairly early. Before 10:00 P.M. eastern time, the networks and the agency that conducted the exit polls "gave" Pennsylvania and Florida to Gore, which put him on the verge of victory.

But then, something remarkable happened. One by one, the networks realized that they had "called" Florida

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## THE UNITED STATES: THE BASICS

Size	9,158,960 sq. km
Population	278,000,000
GNP per capita	\$30,600
Ethnic composition	83.5% white, 12.4% black, 3.3% Asian, 0.8% Amerindian (1992)
Religion	56% Protestant, 28% Roman Catholic, 2% Jewish, 4% other, 10% none (1989)
Capital	Washington, D.C.
Head of state	President George W. Bush (2001– )

too quickly. Midnight passed. Then 2:00 and 3:00 A.M. Gore seemed certain to win the popular ballot by a few hundred thousand votes. However, the presidency is determined by the electoral college, whose members vote on a state-by-state basis.

Four states were still in doubt, though there was only one prize. Given the limited number of electoral votes in New Mexico, Wisconsin, and Oregon, they could not determine the winner. Whoever took Florida would win the White House. At 3:00 A.M., Bush was ahead by over 50,000 votes with only a few precincts left to count. Gore called Bush to tell him that he would shortly concede the state and the election.

But then, Gore called back and rescinded his concession. He was getting almost all the remaining votes, and it looked as if he might actually win. When the preliminary tallies were all in, Bush had won by less than a thousand votes out of more than 7 million cast in the state.

Even so, the election was far from over. Florida's county voting boards had to wait two weeks for ballots from members of the military serving abroad to trickle in. Meanwhile, Florida law required an automatic recount of any election determined by less than one tenth of one percent.

It was at that point that things turned ugly and the rest of the world learned about butterfly ballots and dimpled chads. To put it in the most positive light, Florida did not have the clearest or most up-to-date rules for running either an election or a recount.

First, it was determined that in heavily Jewish Broward County the peculiar layout of the ballot almost certainly led about two thousand people who intended to vote for Gore to vote instead for Pat Buchanan (who was widely viewed as anti-Semitic) or somehow to vote



A bleary-eyed ballot counter in Broward County trying to determine how someone has voted.

© AFP/CORBIS

for both men. Statisticians showed that this was about as likely as the world being hit by three huge meteors on successive days. Had Gore won half of those votes, he would have won Florida.

Even more importantly, several hundred thousand ballots had been discarded because the holes voters had punched—or hadn't as the case may be—could not be read by the antiquated machines used for counting the vote. To make matters worse, Florida did not have unambiguous methods in place for handling such a situation. This meant that counties developed their own procedures for determining if a chad had been properly punched or if bleary-eyed counters could determine what the voter had truly meant to do.

Needless to say, the two candidates put all their energies into the recount because so much was at stake. Their senior advisers, spin doctors, and lawyers moved to Florida along with thousands of media types. The spin doctors spun. The pundits opined. The journalists filed stories about shifts of thirty or so votes in either direction. And, of course, the lawyers filed lawsuits.

Case after case was heard in county- and state-level courts in Florida and in a number of federal jurisdictions. No two decisions were the same. As we approached 14 December, when the Florida vote had to be officially certified, we were greeted with the spectacle of a convoy of rented trucks driving the disputed ballots from Miami and other cities to the state capital.

Finally, in perhaps the most controversial decision of all, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5 to 4 that the recount plan then in place by order of the Florida State Supreme Court was unconstitutional. Whatever the legal merits of the case, the Court voted largely along party

lines, with justices appointed by Bush's father offering some of the strongest opinions. At that point, Gore was out of options and conceded the election.

We will never know who would have won Florida had all the votes been counted as the voters thought they voted. Most people were, however, prepared to move on and accept Bush's presidency. Still, it was the closest presidential election in history. And the congressional elections were almost as tight. The Republicans kept control of the House of Representatives, but by only six seats. After the weeks it took to determine the last Senate races, the upper house split 50/50, which meant that Vice President Dick Cheney would cast the deciding vote when and if the senators voted strictly along party lines. But then, in the spring, Republican Jim Jeffords of Vermont quit the GOP to become an independent, thereby giving the Democrats control of the Senate.

In the weeks after the election, both sides talked about a new culture of civility. In their speeches on the night of the Supreme Court vote, both Bush and Gore spoke of the need to find common ground. However, as economic conditions worsened in the aftermath of 9/11, the political differences between the two parties re-emerged, and politics in Washington turned as acrimonious as ever.

## Thinking About the United States

If the first three editions are any indication, the vast majority of this book's readers will be Americans. Consciously or not, most of you will therefore use the United States as your intellectual starting point in analyzing the countries and concepts covered here.

There is nothing wrong with that if you keep one thing in mind: Political life in the United States is by no means the norm. In other words, to use the United States effectively as a frame of reference, you need to first take into account the ways in which it is different from—though not necessarily better than—other countries.

Therefore, I have included this brief chapter on the United States. It is not as detailed as any of the chapters on individual countries that follow, since my goal is not to provide a comprehensive overview of American government and politics. Instead, I have tried to highlight those differences, many of which would not be stressed in a course or a book that focuses only on the United States.

In short, this is a chapter about what academics call "American exceptionalism." All countries, of course, are unique. However, the United States is so different from most other countries in so many ways that it is, again,

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## THE WRONG NAME

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I have already misused the word “American” several times.

We in the United States use it as a shorthand word to describe our country and ourselves. We should not do so, since Canadians, Mexicans, Brazilians, Peruvians, and more are Americans, too.

Alas, our version of English has evolved in such a way that it is the only viable term we have to describe ourselves.

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critical to underscore the peculiarities of its political life, many of which can be seen in the saga of the vote and everything that followed in Florida.

The United States also has a **federal** system, in which the national (sometimes called the federal) government shares power with states, cities, counties, and other jurisdictions. In this case, states are responsible for determining how elections are held and votes counted. Washington only gets involved in setting some basic parameters, such as the fact that elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, and in ensuring that civil rights and other laws are upheld.

At the national level, the United States has a strong system of **checks and balances**, formally known as the **separation of powers**. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches all have unique powers, but rarely can one of them act on its own without oversight and approval from at least one of the others. That did happen in Florida because the Supreme Court did not have to consult either the White House or Congress. On most policy matters, however, at least two of the three branches must reach an agreement.

That is one of the reasons most comparativists argue that the United States has a weak state. That might seem absurd at first glance, since the United States is so wealthy and exerts so much power on the world stage. However, the founders intentionally created a system with separation of powers that required politicians to compromise on almost every issue and that makes it hard for them to act in a rapid and decisive manner. As we will see, that also means that it is hard for American politicians to enact coherent policies that systematically address pressing social and economic issues.

Underlying American exceptionalism is an unusual history that spawned a distinctive political culture that, in comparative terms, grew out of a history in which politically change has occurred gradually and incrementally. In particular, that culture includes widespread ac-

ceptance of the political “rules of the game.” To be sure, the United States has had, and continues to have, its share of protest, including over the way the election was conducted in Florida. However, virtually no one believes that the irregularities in the vote and the ambiguities in the recount rules require profound changes in the way the country is governed. Tom Brokaw put this well at 3:30 A.M. when NBC News went off the air after it seemed that Bush had finally won: “After months of bitter campaigning and a long night of partisan rhetoric, Americans can go to sleep comfortably because, unlike many other countries, we hold our elections with no need for tanks or even the police to keep order in the streets.”

That, in turn, leads to two characteristics the United States shares at least with the other industrialized democracies. The first is a decline in civic engagement, not just in politics but in churches, community organizations, interest groups, and all the other bodies that make up **civil society**—and which, Harvard’s Robert Putnam argues, are critical for a vibrant democracy.<sup>1</sup> The decline in such involvement has probably not been as great in those other countries as in the United States. Most, too, have not suffered through the same kind of “culture wars” that this country has. Nonetheless, there has been some decrease in trust in politicians and in political involvement in all the industrialized democracies.

That said, the dissatisfaction only goes so far. In chapter 1, I drew the distinction between the government and the regime. In the United States and the other industrialized democracies, virtually everyone agrees that it is perfectly legitimate for citizens to criticize incumbent politicians and their policies. However, there is such widespread acceptance of the regime that the constitution and the institutions it created are almost never criticized. In parts 3 and 4, you will see that one of the main differences between the industrialized democracies and the rest of the world is this powerful acceptance of regimes in the former, the absence of which dramatically raises the political stakes in most of the former communist and third world countries.

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## The Making of the American State

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**A**merican political exceptionalism begins with the evolution of its state and the fact that the United States was able to handle the challenges outlined in the top row of table 1.2 with *relative* ease. The United

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<sup>1</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

States has faced its share of challenges, not all of which it met easily. Nonetheless, compared with the other countries we will be considering, the United States has been largely free of outside constraints. And, again compared with those other countries, it has faced relatively few divisive issues and has been able to resolve most of those that did arise in ways that enhanced support for the regime, at least in the long run ([www.americanhistory.about.com](http://www.americanhistory.about.com)).

Not everything has come smoothly for the United States. “Manifest destiny,” or the expansion of the United States from coast to coast, occurred at the expense of the Native American population. North fought South in a civil war that was as bloody as any conflict ever up to that point. Industrialization was wrenching, too, especially for the waves of immigrants who lived in slums and worked in sweatshops.

Nonetheless, compared to most countries, the United States was fortunate, which is why the word “relative” is emphasized in the first sentence of this section. Only Britain established democratic institutions as smoothly, but that country was left with far more class conflict. No other regime enjoyed the wealth, power, and political support that allowed the United States to become the world’s first superpower after World War II. (See table 2.1.)

### The Constitutional Order

We begin with the adoption of the Constitution in 1787. Events before then certainly were important. However, given this chapter’s goal of giving you a frame of reference, the critical starting point is the widespread acceptance of this document, which continues to shape American political institutions and culture to this day.

At the time, the new United States was in trouble. In the years since the Declaration of Independence was signed, the new country used the Articles of Confederation, which vested almost all power in the states. That should not be surprising, given that the thirteen colonies had staked their claim to independence on the unjust nature of the centralized and arbitrary rule of King George III’s England.

Quickly, however, the new country had to deal with problems that threatened to tear it apart. States imposed tariffs on each other that all but brought interstate trade to a halt. In every state, rural and urban interests—or factions as they were known—clashed, often violently.

By 1787 the state legislatures recognized that the situation had gotten out of hand and sent delegates to Philadelphia to amend the Articles. But they soon concluded that they could not solve their problems by

**TABLE 2.1** Key Turning Points in U.S. History

YEAR	EVENT
1781	Victory over the British in the Revolutionary War
1787	Constitutional Convention
1861–65	Civil War
1890	Passage of first antitrust act
1917	Entrance into World War I
1933	Beginning of the New Deal
1941	Entrance into World War II
1945	End of World War II; start of cold war
1964	Start of the “Great Society”

amending the Articles and so set out to create a new form of government altogether. The delegates then found themselves grappling with two goals that, according to the conventional wisdom of the time, were incompatible: centralizing power to overcome squabbling and incompetent state governments and continuing to protect against the arbitrary exercise of power. By the end of the summer, however, they had reached a series of momentous compromises and had written the Constitution.

To help persuade the states to ratify the Constitution, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay wrote a defense of the document in the now-famous *Federalist Papers*. There—as well as in the diaries Madison kept during that long, hot summer, and in the Constitution itself—lie the key principles that remain at the heart of American politics to this day.

Of particular importance was the founders’ novel approach to what Madison called “the evils of faction” in *Federalist* #10 ([www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed.htm)). He argued that there was no way to avoid factions, as most democratic theorists of the time had hoped. They were a natural and inevitable outgrowth of an open society. The evils arose only in small units in which one group could dominate, leading to what Alexis de Tocqueville would call the “tyranny of the majority” a half-century later. Therefore, the best thing to do was to concentrate power in larger jurisdictions such as the national government. That way, there would be little chance that any single faction could control things, obliging the large number of smaller ones to compromise with each other.

To make that happen, the founders created institutions that are radically different from those used in all other industrialized democracies. All the others have adopted a version of the parliamentary system, in which the legislature and executive are fused. (See chapter 3 for details.) In particular, prime ministers can expect to see their proposed legislation enacted largely intact as long as they maintain a clear majority in parliament.

The American presidential system was designed to work in almost exactly the opposite way. The founders understood that the United States would need a stronger central government than the Articles of Confederation allowed in order to control the evils of faction. However, they were equally convinced that they also had to find ways to make it as difficult as possible for the people who ran the new state to abuse their power. Instead, they wanted to make compromise and incremental change the normal method of policy making, through what is informally known as the system of checks and balances.

### *Trends Since the Time of Founders*

Even more unusual and remarkable than these ideas themselves is the fact that they continue to be the dominant ones in American political life more than two centuries later. A brief examination of some historical trends that have shaped both the continuity of and changes in the American system reveals that staying power.

The biggest crisis the United States has ever faced was the Civil War. After decades of grudging compromise over slavery and other issues, the Southern states no longer felt they could stay in the Union and seceded. For four years, “brother” killed “brother” in a war that ended with the defeat of the Confederacy and the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

For our purposes, it is even more important to see how the country rebuilt itself after the war. The North imposed a coercive regime to “reconstruct” the defeated South. Yet, within a decade, the former Confederate states had been readmitted to the Union. And, rather than bearing Washington the resentment many expected, White Southerners became the most patriotic and conservative group in the American population.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution created tremendous concentrations of wealth and a host of problems in the burgeoning cities with their factories and slums. With these new developments came the first significant demands for an activist or interventionist state. But even here, the American approach was unusual. Rather than enacting extensive welfare programs or taking over industries, the United States passed a series of antitrust laws designed to break up monopolies and oligopolies. The goal then—and now—was to use government as a last resort and to emphasize the preservation of competitive markets with minimal government intervention.

Much the same can be said for policies toward the poor. The United States did adopt the substantial social service and welfare programs of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal during the Great Depression and of Lyndon

Johnson’s Great Society of the mid-1960s. Whatever we may think of those programs, they did mark a dramatic expansion of the American state at both the national and local levels. That should not keep us from seeing that these programs have always been less extensive and been viewed with more skepticism by the public than those in the other liberal democracies.

## **The American People and Politics**

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Those historical patterns are reflected in what American citizens think and do politically today. However, as the global and domestic issues in the bottom row of table 1.2 have come to play a more prominent role, there have recently been some important changes that have both increased pressures “from below” and led to declining support for politicians and some political institutions, but not the regime itself.

### *The American Political Culture*

The echoes of that unusual past are most evident in the American political culture. Systematic research on public opinion only began in the late 1940s. Still, scholars are convinced that at least three unusual trends in the American political culture can be traced back to the nineteenth century and that they parallel the origins of the weak state.

First, with the exception of the years just before the Civil War, no more than a tiny minority of Americans have questioned the regime based on the Constitution of 1787. Americans do debate issues such as abortion or the Vietnam War as heatedly as anyone, and in recent years, distrust of politicians has reached alarming levels. Yet it is political suicide to advocate rewriting the Constitution, something the French have done eleven times since the 1780s.

Second, almost all Americans accept the weak state. Indeed, American students have a hard time believing that most people in Germany, France, or Japan think that a strong state is a good thing.

Third, **individualism** remains one of the most widely held beliefs among all major groups in American society. Whatever the real chances of upward mobility might be, most Americans still think anyone can “make it” through hard work—pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. More so, too, than the Europeans, Americans are convinced that if someone “fails” it is his or her fault and, therefore, that there is little need for the government to step in with extensive social service programs.

## Economic Liberalization in the United States

**THE UNITED STATES has not had to adopt reforms to liberalize the economy as sweeping as those of the other countries we will be covering, because it did not institute as many or as extensive intervention policies in the first place. Economic liberalism and “free market” capitalism developed hand in hand with many of the ideas the founders drew on during the Revolutionary War and the period of Constitution building that followed. Support for the idea that “the government that governs least governs best” has been part of U.S. political culture from the beginning, and most Americans have turned to a more active state only when other approaches to solving problems have failed. And, when Americans have done so, they have kept ideas akin to “curing the evils of faction” in mind and created programs to safeguard against anyone amassing too much power—as shown in America’s penchant for antitrust and other antimonopoly legislation. This does not mean that the United States has a small state. It has grown dramatically, especially since the 1930s. However, Americans have always been reluctant to turn to the state and have been loath to give it the power to act quickly or coherently when establishing new public policies.**

The net impact of this has been the paradoxical nature of what Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba called a **civic culture**.<sup>2</sup> Polls conducted since their research was done in the late 1950s have shown that Americans are more convinced than their European or Japanese counterparts that they could do something about a government action they objected to. Yet, even though plenty of avenues for political involvement exist, few Americans actually bother to become politically active. To cite but one glaring example, barely half the eligible American population votes in most presidential elections, and only 39 percent turned out for the 1994 Republican congressional landslide, figures that leave the United States with one of the worst turnout rates in the democratic world. Another team of scholars who wrote at about the same time called this state of affairs “functional apathy,” because it meant that average citizens put few pressures on their leaders, allowing them more leeway to govern than did their equivalents in France or Italy.

<sup>2</sup>Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963). Also see their *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979).

**TABLE 2.2** Declining Trust in the United States

Question: How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

YEAR	PERCENT SAYING “ALL OR MOST OF THE TIME”	PERCENT SAYING “SOME OF THE TIME”
1964	76	22
1968	61	36
1972	53	45
1976	33	63
1980	25	73
1984	46	51
1988	44	54
1992	23	75
1996	25	71

Source: Adapted from Steffen W. Schmidt, Mack C. Shelly, and Barbara A. Bardes, *American Government Today* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1997), 233.

The political difficulties of recent decades have taken their toll on the American political culture. According to every indicator, faith in politicians and involvement in social and political life have declined dramatically. However, as Alan Abramowitz suggests in the statement that begins this chapter, that dissatisfaction has not led people to begin questioning the regime under which they live. (See table 2.2.)

Some observers do worry that the rise of militias and other extremist groups could be the tip of a much larger political iceberg. For the moment, at least, they remain “fringe movements,” and fundamental constitutional reform has as little popular support today as ever.

## *The American People and Politics Today*

Americans are also unusual in their commitment to the **two-party system** ([www.rnc.org](http://www.rnc.org) and [www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org)). Only two parties have truly vied for power since the end of the Civil War and Reconstruction. There have been several challenges to the hegemony of the Democrats and Republicans, the most recent of which was launched by maverick millionaire H. Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996. However, one or both of the main parties eventually adapted enough to undercut the support of the “third” party that sought to replace them.

Many American political scientists think the United States needs the two-party system to ensure the smooth functioning of the government, even though none of the other democratic countries we will be covering have ever had as few as two parties. Whatever the link between the number of parties and the process of government, no other democracy has seen such continuity in its party system.





For much of American history, voters have had a strong sense of party identification ([www.umich.edu/~nes/nesguide/nesguide.htm](http://www.umich.edu/~nes/nesguide/nesguide.htm)). This meant that there were only relatively minor shifts in voting patterns from one election to the next because each party had the support of broad, yet distinct, coalitions of loyal voters. Thus, in the half-century following the New Deal, the Democrats won most of the votes from poor people and members of racial and religious minorities, and the Republicans did the same in rural areas and among the more affluent groups in the White community.

Much of that commitment and stability has evaporated since the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. (See table 2.2 again.) Party identification and voter turnout rates are both at an all-time low. Swings from one election to the next are bigger and more unpredictable than they used to be. The United States had a divided government during twenty-seven of the thirty-seven years from 1964 to 2001. In other words, at least one house of Congress was controlled by the Democrats during a Republican presidency, or vice versa. As table 2.3 shows, four of the last ten presidential elections have featured a “third party” candidate who won more than 5 percent of the vote.

There has also been a marked upsurge in protest and other “demanding” activity on the part of increasingly sullen elements of the public. Much of this activity takes place outside the traditional network of interest groups and political parties. In both the United States and the industrialized democracies discussed in part 2, three trends stand out.

The first was the emergence on the political scene of the **new left** in the 1960s. As in most liberal democracies, the “old left” consisted of voters and parties that sought more economic equality and protection for the interests of the poor. The new left added new issues, most notably the promotion of civil rights and opposition to the Vietnam War. Soon, other issues captured the attention of a core of mostly young activists, including the environment, feminism, and gay and lesbian rights. Throughout the industrialized world, these activists found broad support, some of which came from parts of the middle class that had never been associated with the left before.

By the early 1970s, however, support for the protest movements had begun to ebb. The new left itself has largely disappeared from the headlines. It remains important today primarily due to the “gender gap” and “soccer mom” phenomena that have left the Democrats with a huge lead among women because of the party’s support for abortion rights, affirmative action, and other legacies of the 1960s.

**TABLE 2.3** Recent Presidential Elections in the United States (Percentage of the Popular Vote)

YEAR	DEMOCRAT	REPUBLICAN	MAJOR INDEPENDENTS
1964	61.1	38.5	—
1968	42.7	43.3	13.5
1972	37.3	61.3	1.4
1976	50.1	48.8	1.0
1980	41.0	51.0	7.0
1984	40.8	59.2	—
1988	46.0	54.0	—
1992	43.2	37.7	19.0
1996	49.2	42.8	8.0
2000	48.3	48.1	3.6

**Democrats:** Johnson 1964, Humphrey 1968, McGovern 1972, Carter 1976 and 1980, Mondale 1984, Dukakis 1988, Clinton 1992 and 1996, Gore 2000

**Republicans:** Goldwater 1964, Nixon 1968 and 1972, Ford 1976, Reagan 1980 and 1984, G. H. Bush 1988 and 1992, Dole 1996, G. W. Bush 2000

**Major independents:** Wallace 1968, Schmitz 1972, McCarthy 1976, Anderson 1980, Perot 1992 and 1996, Nader 2000

Second, a **new right** has supplanted the new left as the most powerful dissenting force in American politics. It is far more diverse than its left-wing equivalent ever was. Its most visible advocates are drawn from the roughly 20 percent of the population who consider themselves fundamentalist or evangelical Christians. It includes, as well, people who oppose legalized abortion, multicultural education, higher taxes, and the undermining of what they see as traditional American values.

Politically, the most important component of the American new right so far has been the “Reagan Democrats,” who voted Republican during the 1980s. These were mostly White, working-class men and women, who were at the core of the New Deal Democratic coalition. Turned off by the new left and frightened by their own prospects in a rapidly changing economy, they initially drifted to the Republicans to vote for Richard Nixon and, of course, Ronald Reagan. They made up the lion’s share of the “angry White men,” who gained notoriety in the aftermath of the 1994 midterm congressional elections.

Third, there has been a groundswell of anger in American politics, as reflected in the spread of NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) opposition to the location of unpopular facilities. But it was the emergence of the new left and then the new right, and the shifts in public opinion along socioeconomic lines that accompanied it, that made the United States, for once, quite like the other industrialized democracies we will be considering. To be sure, Newt Gingrich, Jesse Jackson, Rush Limbaugh, and Jane Fonda are quintessentially American figures. However, they have their equivalents in all the other countries covered in part 2, and similar shifts in the political

tectonic plates are having the same unsettling effects everywhere.

Although historians have a hard time quantifying such things, it does seem that the American people in general are placing more demands on their state than ever before. And this is occurring at a time, as we will soon see, when the state is having unprecedented difficulties in responding to them.

## The Weak American State

**D**espite conservative complaints about an excessively powerful federal government, the United States has one of the weakest states among the industrialized democracies—an assertion that often takes readers by surprise. After all, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States is the world's only superpower.

This does not mean that the United States has a strong state for the kinds of domestic issues comparativists are most interested in. Compared with the other liberal democracies, the U.S. government has taken on fewer social and economic responsibilities. And it is generally less effective than those other governments when it does act.

This weakness is no accident. It is, instead, a consequence of the system the founders created in 1787. As we saw earlier, they created a state in which multiple, overlapping levels of authority prevent any one person, group, or party from getting everything it wants and force all actors to seek compromise solutions to their problems.

## The Legislative Process

To see the weakness of the American state, start by considering the way Richard Neustadt began his path-breaking book on presidential power:

**In the early summer of 1952, before the heat of the campaign, President Truman used to contemplate the problems of the general-become-president should Eisenhower win the forthcoming election. "He'll sit here," Truman would remark (tapping his desk for emphasis), "and he'll say, 'Do this! Do that!' And nothing will happen. Poor Ike—it won't be a bit like the Army. He'll find it very frustrating." Eisenhower evidently found it so.<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup>Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (New York: Wiley, 1960), 9.



## USEFUL WEB SITES

There are literally thousands of web sites on politics in the United States. The White House and Thomas (run by the Library of Congress) provide gateways to the executive and legislative branches.

[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

[www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov)

The Supreme Court also has its own site, but the one maintained by Cornell's Law School is actually better.

[www.supremecourtus.gov](http://www.supremecourtus.gov)

[supct.law.cornell.edu/supct](http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct)

Polling Report is the best on-line source for public opinion data. Vote Smart provides nonpartisan, unbiased information on pending issues to help voters make up their minds. The Public Agenda Foundation does much the same in analyzing policy issues themselves.

[www.pollingreport.com](http://www.pollingreport.com)

[www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)

[www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org)

Neustadt went on to show that there are very few things a president can make happen automatically. Rather, his is the "power to persuade" and little more.

The president has to do more persuading than most democratic leaders because the rather fragmented American political institutions lack the mechanisms that facilitate executive leadership in parliamentary systems, as we will see in the next chapter. Instead, the president is merely the most important person in a complex decision-making process. Along the way, decisions are made at many points, and the men and women involved have no compelling reason to go along with what the president wants.

Compared with other democratic heads of state, the president often has problems within his own administration. He makes over 4,000 appointments to policy-making positions. By contrast, the British prime minister has barely a hundred political jobs to fill and is thus far more dependent on career civil servants. At first glance, this would seem to make the president extremely powerful. But if we probe just a little deeper, it is easy to see that having so many political appointees can be a mixed blessing.

To begin with, merely finding people to fill those positions is difficult and time consuming. A number of appointments go to people being rewarded for political

service to the president and his party. But many of them know little about the policy areas they will be working in—certainly less than their civil servant counterparts in France or Japan.

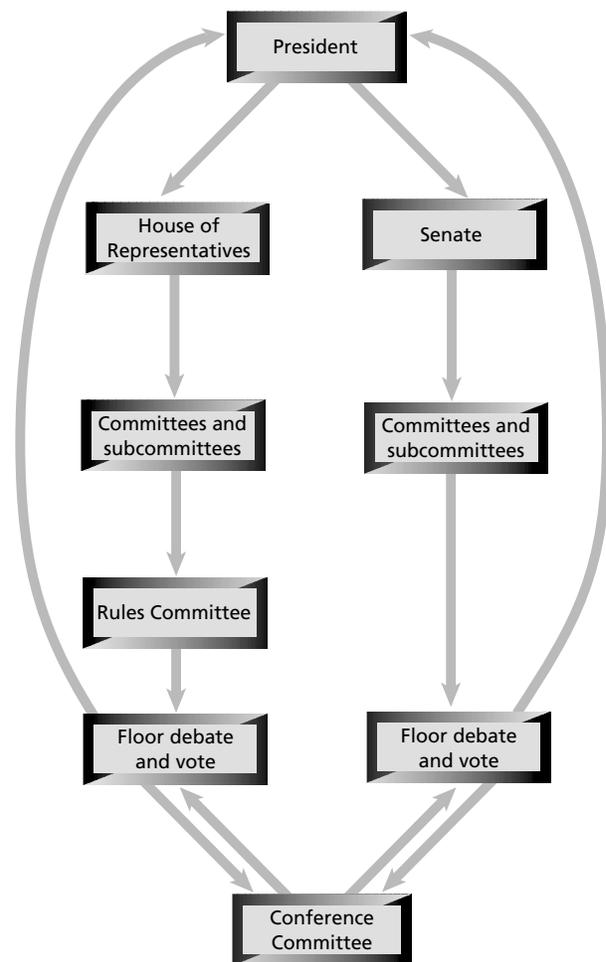
In short, the president has something decidedly less than a unified team working for him. Coordinating an administration and its policies is made all the more difficult by the fact that lines of authority are not clearly drawn. For example, three different departments and two agencies—the Departments of Defense, State, and Energy, and the CIA and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency—have direct responsibility for developing policy to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Department of Commerce is also indirectly involved because it promotes American exports, including some technologies that could be used in a nuclear weapons program.

Once the executive branch reaches an agreement on proposed legislation, it has to overcome a far more imposing hurdle—Congress. It is in the interplay between legislators and the president, who wield autonomous but overlapping powers, that manifestations of the founders' fear of strong government are easiest to see.

The roots of congressional power lie in the multiple, independent decision-making points outlined in figure 2.1. When a bill is submitted, it goes through a ceremonial “first reading” and is sent to the appropriate standing committees (and their subcommittees) of the Senate and House of Representatives, where most of the real work on a bill gets done. Many members of Congress serve on committees that deal with issues they know a lot about or that directly affect their districts. More importantly, the committees and subcommittees have large staffs with expertise on the subjects under their jurisdiction.

The first thing the committee has to do is decide whether to consider the bill. If it chooses not to, the bill dies. If it takes a bill on, it begins by doing research that often includes extensive hearings, some of which are televised on C-SPAN. If the president is lucky, the committee then “marks up” the bill. This is not, as the words may suggest, merely an editorial task. More often than not, major portions of the proposed legislation are eliminated and replaced with entirely new provisions. If the president is unlucky, the committee or subcommittee either declines to consider the bill or votes it down, both of which kill it.

The same thing can happen to the bill when and if it reaches the full House and Senate after favorable committee “reports.” Once again, amendments can be made, and once again, a negative vote can kill it outright. The



**FIGURE 2.1** The President and Congress

latter is what happened to the Clinton administration's health-care initiative in 1994.

The House and Senate almost never pass identical versions of the same bill. Therefore, if each passes a version of the bill, those documents go to a conference committee of members from both houses whose job is to “iron out” the differences between the two. When and if the conference committee reaches an agreement, the bill is returned to both houses, either of which can kill it once again.

In principle, the same thing can happen in a parliamentary system (see the next chapter for details). All have committees, floor debates, and votes, and parliamentary approval is required for most policy initiatives. The key difference between the United States and the other industrialized democracies is the degree of party discipline in the latter. A British prime minister can be all but certain that colleagues in the House of Commons

from his or her party will support the government's proposed legislation. Because prime ministers can count on that majority, legislative programs are passed without any significant changes or delay.

However, American members of Congress do not have to vote along party lines. Research over the past forty years has uncovered five main factors that shape the way members vote. Some reflect the levers presidents have at their disposal. On balance, however, they show why presidents so rarely get what they want.

The first, of course, is the president. The White House Congressional Liaison Office regularly lobbies on Capitol Hill. Whenever a bill the president is especially interested in nears a final vote that might be close, the nightly news shows a parade of senators and representatives visiting the White House. The president cannot force members of the House or Senate to support him. What he can do, however, is offer his own support for the members on other issues or even threaten to work to defeat them at the next election.

Second is the party, though it is by no means the most important factor as it is in parliamentary systems. Both parties have "whips" who try to convince members to vote the way the leadership wants. Toeing the line can help advance a member's career and can even bring leadership support for a bill he or she is interested in. Nonetheless, on almost every piece of legislation, a substantial number of representatives and senators do break ranks.

Third are the members' peers. No senator or representative can keep up with all the legislation pending before Congress. So, especially on matters of little interest to themselves or their constituents, members often defer to their colleagues who are experts or to those whose constituents do care.

Fourth is what the members' constituents want. All of them use their extensive staffs to keep track of constituent mail, the press back home, and other evidence of where voters stand on the issues. Many conduct polls. Even with all this information, members can never tell exactly what their constituents want, and some critics suggest that they tend to listen not so much to the population as a whole as to the people who donated the most money to their election campaigns. Still, there is an important link between member and constituency. Voters are not likely to elect someone who does not share community views about important local issues in the first place. And members do tend to keep the people back home happy both by voting the "right way" and by providing services to their communities and constituents. As a result, although Congress as an institution may not be highly respected, individual

## Conflict in American Politics

**EXAMINING POLITICAL** conflict in the United States is an ideal way to reveal the critical distinction between the government of the day and the regime.

The United States has seen major protest movements for civil rights for racial minorities, women, and gays on the left, and against abortion on the right. Although most of those efforts have been nonviolent, the United States is hardly immune from confrontation. Moreover, some of the individuals and organizers themselves have opted for violence as a strategy, as the Weathermen faction of the Students for a Democratic Society did in the 1960s and as a small number of antiabortion activists have done more recently in bombing clinics and even killing doctors.

However widespread the confrontational and violent protests may be, the protesters rarely question the legitimacy of the regime set up by the founders over two hundred years ago. To be sure, some groups, such as the militias, advocate radical change in the constitutional framework. But there are few such people, and they have virtually no support in the population as a whole.

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members who choose to run are almost always reelected. Even in the anti-incumbent climate of 1994, over 90 percent of the incumbents who ran were reelected.

Finally, there are the members' own views. Americans expect senators and representatives to exercise their judgment at least on matters that are not extremely important locally. There are, however, some examples of members voting their conscience against their constituents' wishes—as, for example, the late Senator William Fulbright (D-Ark.) did in supporting civil rights legislation during the 1960s. More common are representatives and senators who are particularly interested in a given issue and pursue it, as Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) has done with national health care and the late Representative Mickey Leland (D-Tex.) did in trying to aid the starving in Ethiopia.

Americans derive some important benefits from a Congress whose members are willing and able to reshape legislation initiated by the executive. Constituency interests are considered far more in the United States than they are in parliamentary systems. Congress also provides far more effective protection against the abuse of power by the executive. But, as all those diverse

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 THE JEFFORDS FACTOR
 

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AP Photo/Stephan Savoia

Jim Jeffords announcing that he was becoming an independent, thus giving the Democrats control of the Senate.

forces enter into the process, whatever coherence there was in the original bill typically is sacrificed.

In other words, the American state usually cannot act either quickly or coherently even during those increasingly rare times when the White House and Capitol Hill are controlled by the same party. Instead, policy making tends to be slow and characterized by **incrementalism**, or limited, marginal, or minor changes. It is hard to see how it could be otherwise. There are simply too many decision-making points, and a group only has to win at one of them to block change.

This was true even in the aftermath of 9/11, when American politicians and citizens alike were more united than they had been in years. President Bush, for instance, had to make a major compromise and agree that security officers at airports would become federal employees in order to get his airline security bill passed. And, even though there was widespread agreement that the attacks and the recession that set in at about the same time required additional government spending,

The 2000 election was unusual in many respects, including a 50-50 split in the Senate. That meant that Vice President Dick Cheney would cast the tie-breaking vote and thus allow the Republicans to retain control of both houses of Congress.

However, within four months of taking office, President Bush and the Senate Republican leadership had so alienated Vermont's moderate Republican senator, James Jeffords, that he quit the party and became an independent. He agreed to vote with the Democrats on organizational votes, which meant that they now took over. Tom Daschle became majority leader, and the Democrats gained a one-seat majority on every committee.

Jeffords' switch did not affect the outcome of votes on the floor. After all, the same men and women remained in the Senate, and Jeffords' personal views had not changed. However, the defection was crucial in terms of the legislative process as discussed here. Because the Democrats gained control of every committee, they could play the determining role in when and if presidential nominees were considered, how the markup of bills would proceed, and what the agenda for floor debates and votes would be.

These decision points are at least as important as floor votes, as President Bush discovered when he found it far more difficult to get hearings scheduled on his nominees or to move key legislation, (such as the faith-based initiative), out of committee.

Congress adjourned that December without passing an economic stimulus package.

### *The Rest of the Weak State*

The relationship between Congress and the presidency contributes more than anything else to making the American state weak. However, there are at least four other factors that make it weak and thus deserve our attention in passing.

First is the bureaucracy. Recall that the president appoints about four thousand people to policy-making and administrative positions. Some of them are experts in their field and have a wealth of experience inside and outside of government service. However, well trained or not, presidential appointees have to rely on senior civil servants to provide the technical expertise needed to draft most laws. Typically, civil servants who make it to the top of the government bureaucracy are experts in their fields, and because they retain their jobs from ad-

ministration to administration, they provide a degree of continuity political appointees cannot. Recent research has shown that members of the Senior Executive Service are as well trained and hardworking as their European or Japanese counterparts, who play a much more central role in policy formation. In France, Germany, and Japan, high-level civil servants are among the most respected people in the country, and there is widespread support for their involvement in policy making. However, the American bureaucrats are not widely respected in a culture that views government in general and civil servants in particular with disdain.

Second, the United States is rare in giving its courts wide-ranging powers of **judicial review**. The Supreme Court and lower federal and state courts can rule on the constitutionality of government actions. Judicial decisions and interpretations have often marked important turning points in the evolution of American public policy. The most striking examples in recent years have to do with civil rights. It was a Supreme Court decision (*Plessy v. Ferguson*) that initially upheld southern laws segregating Blacks and Whites in 1896. Another decision sixty years later (*Brown v. Board of Education*) overturned the doctrine of “separate but equal” and also served as a major catalyst for the modern civil rights movement. Beginning in the 1980s, a more conservative Court issued a series of decisions that sharply limited the use of affirmative action (for example, *Adarand v. Peña* in 1995).

Third, the United States is a federal system, which means that Washington shares power with state and local governments. Most other liberal democracies have **unitary states** in which the central government—not the constitution—determines which powers are granted to subnational units. In the United States, state and local governments have more of the responsibility for education policy and have always had a lot of leeway in determining how social services programs are run. Among other things, that makes it difficult for the federal government to impose national standards.

Finally, from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s, the United States had another unique institution—the special prosecutor. Appointed by the executive branch but responsible to Congress and/or the judiciary, special prosecutors were used primarily to investigate and, if necessary, prosecute cases of alleged misconduct by members of the executive branch.

The first special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, spearheaded the Watergate investigation that led to Richard Nixon’s resignation in 1974. The most famous special prosecutor was Kenneth Starr, who was named to investigate alleged wrongdoing by President and Mrs. Clinton

and others in the Whitewater affair. His probe went far deeper and culminated with exposure of the Monica Lewinsky affair and Clinton’s subsequent impeachment and acquittal. However, there was so much controversy surrounding Starr and other recent special prosecutors that the law was allowed to lapse, and the office no longer exists.

### **Consensus Policy Making**

There is one new policy-making arena in which the American state does not seem quite so fragmented or weak. The United States has been home to many organizations that promote the use of win/win conflict resolution and cooperative problem solving.

Until the 1990s, the use of these practices was limited largely to the corporate and nonprofit world. Today, however, there is growing interest in **consensus policy making**, which is quite different from **compromises**, the most common way decisions are reached in the United States today. Consider an example used at a workshop I attended while writing this chapter. We were paired up and asked to role-play the atheist who sued a midwestern city to force it to remove a large monument with the Ten Commandments from the town square and the mayor who wanted to keep it. One pair decided to compromise and literally split the difference, keeping five commandments. Once the laughter stopped, we were asked to try to reach a consensus we could all be happy with. Most of the participants ended up with more creative outcomes, such as building additional monuments to other religious and spiritual traditions or moving the Ten Commandments to an equally prominent place on private land in front of a church.

Since 1990, ten states have adopted consensus councils (though some use other names) to forge policies that go beyond compromise and meet everyone’s goals. These bodies are adjuncts to the normal decision-making process. Composed of a broadly representative board of directors and a staff of trained conflict resolution and policy specialists, such a council works on issues referred to it, typically by a political leader. It convenes all the stakeholders in the issue and holds both open forums and private meetings until all participants agree on an outcome that meets all or most of their needs. That agreement then goes through the normal legislative or regulatory process, usually without much dissent since all the stakeholders have already accepted it.

These councils have shown remarkable promise. The North Dakota council enabled lawmakers to end an enduring logjam over the right to die. Montana’s council reached a broadly accepted agreement on the normally

contentious issue of hazardous waste disposal. In Delaware and California, consensus councils helped groups that had previously disagreed bitterly to find common ground on the use of the shoreline and coastal waters. In perhaps the most impressive accomplishment yet, a consensus policy-making process was used to ease the impact of floods in three states in the upper Midwest and in the Canadian province of Manitoba ([www.policyconsensus.org](http://www.policyconsensus.org)).



Then, in 2001, Search for Common Ground, the world's largest conflict resolution organization, decided to bring the idea of a consensus council onto the national stage in two ways. First, it convened a task force of prominent Americans of all political persuasions to create a federally chartered United States Consensus Council, modeled along the lines of those used in the states. When this book went to press, legislation had been introduced in both the House and Senate. Second, in response to a request from Senator Rick Santorum and former Senator Harris Wofford, it convened a Working Group on Human Needs and the Faith-Based and Community Based Initiatives, which had proven to be one of the most controversial items proposed by the Bush administration. The working group brought together thirty-five of the most prominent people involved in the debate on the initiative from all points on the political spectrum. The group members were able to reach agreements on most issues in the debate and to narrow their differences on those for which they could forge a full consensus.

## Public Policy

**T**he American cultural qualms about an active state and the fragmented nature of its institutions has resulted in a government that does less than most of the other liberal democracies.

In recent years, the most widely discussed aspect of that limited involvement has been health care. Although Americans as a whole spend more on health care than anyone else, the United States is the only industrialized democracy that does not guarantee everyone basic coverage. Most middle-class and wealthy Americans get top-notch medical treatment, because they can afford good insurance and can pay for care the policies do not cover. But roughly 40 million uninsured Americans have to fend for themselves, and perhaps as many with only minimal coverage get anything but high-quality health care. This disparity is one of the reasons at least twenty countries have a lower infant mortality rate than the United States.

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## THE WEAKENING AMERICAN STATE?

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**N**o one has done a definitive study of the strengthening or weakening of the American state in recent years. However, there is a rough consensus that it is not as effective as it used to be, if by that we mean it is less able to define policies that tackle social and economic problems in a reasonably consistent manner.

Other than globalization, there are two main reasons this is the case, reasons that reflect the domestic pressures cell of table 1.2. First, like all states, the American government now simply faces more issues that tax its resources in ways no one imagined even fifty years ago. If the critics are right, the United States may be worse off than some other countries (see the chapters on France, Germany, and Japan) because it continues to rely on institutions and practices designed two hundred years ago, and current conditions are so very different. Second, it probably also faces more pressures from below from a wider variety of groups than it did in previous generations. As research on social movements in Europe and North America has shown, this is not unique to the United States. However, because power is so fragmented in the United States, the government has had a relatively hard time trying to respond to those demands.

It's not merely health care. Unemployment compensation and pension payments are lower. So, too, is the minimum wage. Publicly supported mass transit systems are almost never found outside big cities, and the passenger rail system is a shadow of its former self.

The government also does relatively little to coordinate economic policy. When it does, this usually involves cooperation among interest groups from a single industry and their supporters in Congress and executive branch rather than the economywide strategies found in Germany, France, and Japan. The Clinton administration started out doing more in that respect, especially during the late Ron Brown's tenure as secretary of commerce. However, the future of such programs is uncertain, given the opposition of many conservative Republicans.

There is also a widespread belief that when the government does act it usually does so inefficiently and sometimes corruptly. Federal and state programs are often divided up among dozens of agencies, which makes coordination difficult at best. To maintain its own control and supposedly to guard against corruption, Congress tends to micromanage federal agencies, often determining exactly how much money they can spend on computers or even what kinds of ashtrays they could

buy (in the days when civil servants could still smoke in their offices). When applied to the private sector, such detailed and seemingly irrational regulations spawn complaints about a government that weighs too heavily “on the backs” of the people and their businesses. The Clinton administration sought to change things on this front with its “reinventing government” package of reforms designed to “steer the boat” of public policy rather than do the “rowing,” or make every decision. So far, however, those proposals have done little other than provide intellectual justification for the dramatic downsizing of some federal agencies.

## Feedback

Of all the countries covered in this book, the United States is the one on which the most research on feedback has been done. The results are mixed but are largely worrisome whatever one’s ideological perspective. Although there has been an explosion in the number and type of media available, there has actually been a sharp decline in the quantity and quality of the political news most Americans pay attention to.

Readership of quality newspapers and magazines is down. Most people rely primarily on network television news for their political information, and the consensus among researchers is that network television does a less effective job of covering “serious” political news than it once did. To make matters even worse, fewer and fewer people are watching the news now that cable and direct satellite broadcasting give them dozens of other options during the slots the networks and local stations typically reserve for it.

Last but by no means least, American politicians are the acknowledged world masters at the art of spin-doctoring, or packaging their statements and actions in ways they think people will find most attracting, and often hiding the real import of the activity in the process. They do rely heavily on public opinion polls and focus groups, but one has to question how valuable these are for a public that is increasingly disinterested in political life and whose views are shaped by the spin doctors themselves.

## Conclusion: The Bottom Line

There is a lot missing from this chapter, including the differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate, the electoral college, and pressures for tax and campaign finance reform. Adding



## InfoTrac College Edition Sources

- Conlan, Timothy, and François Vergniolle de Chantal. “The Rehnquist Court and Contemporary American Federalism.”  
 Damico, Alfonso J., M. Margaret Conway, and Sandra Bowman Damico. “Patterns of Political Trust and Mistrust.”  
 Glad, Betty. “When Governments Are Good.”  
 Kettl, Donald. “The Transformation of Governance: Globalization, Devolution, and the Role of Government.”  
 Mann, Thomas. “Governance in America 2000.”  
 Mead, Walter Russell. “Notes from the Next War.”  
 Pfiffner, James. “Recruiting Executive Branch Leaders.”

more material would take most readers—especially those who have had a course in American politics—more deeply into it than they need to go. And in so doing, it might obscure the key point being made here—that American exceptionalism is manifested in an unusually tranquil political history, supportive political culture, and weak or fragmented state.

## Key Terms

Checks and balances	Individualism
Civic culture	Judicial review
Civil society	New left
Compromise	New right
Consensus policy making	Separation of powers
Federalism	Two-party system
Incrementalism	Unitary state

## Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed in the United States since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of American politics presented in it still make sense? In what ways? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think the country is headed in the “right direction” or is “on the wrong track.” If you were asked such a question about politics in the United States, what would your answer be? Why did you reach that conclusion?
3. Select a hotly debated domestic policy issue in the news, and analyze it in light of the themes developed in this chapter. Is the United States having trouble solving it? Do you see evidence of the American cultural reluctance to use government to solve social and economic problems? Do you see evidence of the conflict between the legislative and

executive branches? Other examples of the fragmentation or weakness of the American state?

4. Why has the United States been so stable? Is that stability likely to continue? To remain an asset?

### ***Further Reading***

Ambrose, Stephen, with Douglas Brinkley. *The Rise to Globalism*, 8th ed. New York: Penguin Books, 1997. The best short volume outlining global history since World War II.

Dionne, E. J. *They Only Look Dead: Why Progressives Will Dominate the Next Political Era*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. By one of America's most distinguished political journalists (who also holds a Ph.D. from Harvard), an exploration of why the left might be able to reassert itself in the next century.

Dionne, E. J., Gerald Pomper, and William Mayer, eds. *The Election of 2000: Reports and Interpretations*. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 2001. The most recent in a series of excellent commentaries on U.S. presidential elections.

Hacker, Andrew. *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*. New York: Scribner, 1992. A brief but comprehensive book on the sorry state of race relations in the United States.

Halstead, Ted, and Michael Lind. *The Radical Center: The Future of American Politics*. New York: Doubleday, 2001. A provocative new book on making dramatic policy changes from the middle of the political spectrum rather than the extremes.

Kuttner, Robert. *Everything for Sale*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1998. A solid analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the new conservative economics by one of the United States' leading left-of-center pundits.

Neustadt, Richard. *Presidential Power*. New York: Wiley, 1960. The classic book on the presidency. It has been republished in several new editions since then.

Nye, Joseph R., Philip D. Zelikow, and David C. King, eds. *Why People Don't Trust Government*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997. An important volume contrasting interpretations of why trust in government and other key indicators of public political satisfaction are down.

Pfiffner, James. *The Modern Presidency*, 3d ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1999. The best brief textbook on the American presidency.

Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. The most thorough and most controversial book on declining civic engagement in the United States.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. New York: Vintage Books, 1945. The classic account of American life by a French traveler and theorist, written in the 1830s.

**EXPLORING with the CD-ROM**

This book comes with a CD-ROM and a web site that complement the material presented in these pages. The web site has hundreds of links to useful resources, updates on the countries written when important events occur, and quizzes you can take to gauge your progress.

The CD-ROM lets you go deeper into some of the issues raised in the book. At the end of the first chapter of each of the first four parts of the book, I provide some guidelines for using the CD-ROM for that section.

A study guide, developed by Ken Wedding, focuses on key issues raised in each chapter. In part 1 the focus is on key concepts in comparative politics and the degree to which the United States should (and should not) serve as our frame of reference.

Map exercises, also developed by Ken Wedding, will give you a better “feel” for what the various countries are like. The maps are based on the excellent series of outline maps that the CIA includes in its *World Factbook* ([www.odci.gov](http://www.odci.gov)).

Additional information supplements the “basic” data tables that begin each chapter. This information, like the tables themselves, is taken mostly from the *World Factbook*.

Constitutions and other key documents allow you to explore some of the formal political arrangements in the countries covered in this book. For the United States, for instance, you might want to look at the highly ambiguous language of the Second Amendment, which lies at the heart of the dispute over gun ownership and control.

There are questions to ask in reading at least two InfoTrac College Edition articles per chapter. For chapter 1, you might want to think about a phenomenon I call the “parable of the frog” in assessing the state of comparative politics in in the post-cold war teaching environment.

Perhaps the most distinctive part of the CD-ROM is its incorporation of statistical and other data collected by my colleague and friend Michael LeRoy for his comparative textbook, which uses the MicroCase software package. Clicking on the MicroCase option when you load the CD-ROM will take you to its web site (your internet connection must be on).

There you can do some simple mapping exercises and statistical analyses of selected variables drawn from his file of “global” data and national-level statistics. The examples we have developed can be done using the function that gives you maps depicting differences from one type of country to another. If you have had courses in statistics and research methods, you can use more advanced statistical techniques.

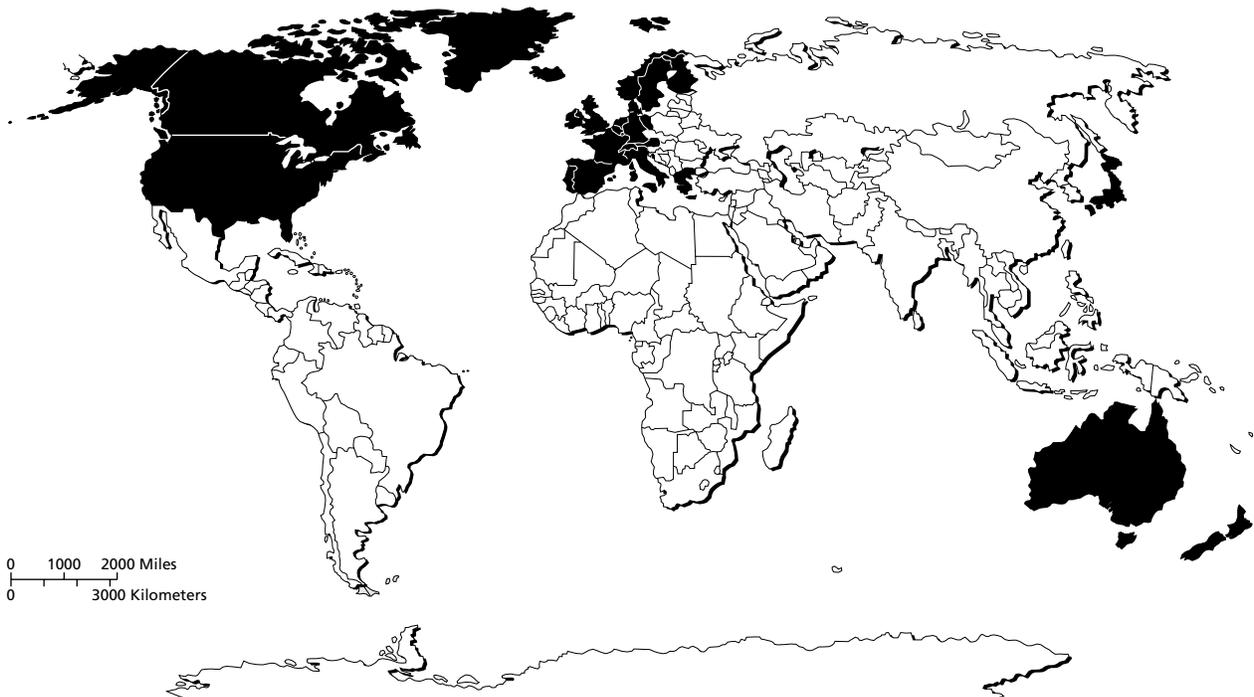
Instructions for using MicroCase are provided on the CD-ROM.

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# THE INDUSTRIALIZED DEMOCRACIES

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Quel Scandale!
- Thinking About Democracy
- The Origins of the Democratic State
- Political Culture and Participation
- The Democratic State
- Public Policy
- Feedback
- Conclusion: The Worst Form of Government Except for All the Others?



*Democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others.*

WINSTON CHURCHILL

## Quel Scandale!

As 2001 dawned, France faced two major political scandals that reached the very top of its political elite. That French politicians were accused of corruption was nothing new. France has had more than its share of scandals over the years, including the Dreyfus Affair, in which the 1894 framing of a Jewish army officer on espionage charges came close to toppling the Third Republic.

The more recent scandals did not have as serious ramifications, because they did not place France's Fifth Republic in jeopardy. And it is for that very reason that they are useful for giving us a first glimpse into both the strengths and the weaknesses of democracy today.

On 29 May 2001, former foreign minister and president of the Constitutional Court Roland Dumas was convicted of influence peddling, sentenced to eighteen months in jail, and fined more than \$130,000. The seventy-eight-year-old Dumas was a hero of the World War II Resistance against Germany. He was also a close confidant of former president François Mitterrand, who had himself been touched by a number of scandals, including allegations that he faked an assassination attempt on his own life early in his political career.

Dumas was convicted for good reason. In 1990, as foreign minister, he recommended that Prime Minister Edith Cresson (later implicated in a financial scandal in her own right) accept a \$2.8-billion agreement to sell six ships to Taiwan. Dumas' recommendation came on the heels of intense lobbying by his mistress, Christine Deviers-Joncour, who was following the orders of Alfred Sirven, a senior executive at the state-owned oil company, Elf-Aquitaine.

Charges of improper use of funds and influence only surfaced seven years later when another company went public after it refused to pay "commissions" to Deviers-Joncour. When she was arrested, she claimed that she had received about \$10 million from Sirven for her "lobbying." The next year, she published a "tell all" book, *Whore of the Republic*, in which she de-

## THE INDUSTRIALIZED DEMOCRACIES: THE BASICS

REGION	DEMOCRACIES	CONTENTERS
Europe	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey
The Americas	Canada, the United States	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, most Caribbean Islands
Asia and the Pacific Islands	Australia, Japan, New Zealand	Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan
Africa		Botswana, South Africa

tailed her work for Elf-Aquitaine and her affair with Dumas. Meanwhile, Sirven mysteriously left France and went into hiding, only to be arrested in the Philippines in 2000.

As the inquiry continued, more juicy details were uncovered. Dumas and Deviers-Joncour were each given millions of dollars, ancient Greek statues, and a luxury Parisian apartment for their rendezvous. Dumas also got a \$1,500 pair of luxury boots.

At the same time, an even more far-reaching fundraising scandal involving all the major political parties came to light and seemed to implicate President Jacques Chirac on the eve of his bid for a second term. On 21 September 2000, *Le Monde*, France's most prestigious newspaper, published the transcript of a videotape made by property developer Jean-Claude Méry prior to his death. In it, he detailed how he helped to win public works contracts in the Paris region for his company and others by giving money to Chirac's RPR (Rally for the Republic) party. He said he did so on Chirac's orders when the president was mayor of Paris. He also alleged that President Chirac was in the room when he handed nearly \$7 million in cash to the president's chief of staff.

The expected decline in support for the RPR was limited because the Socialists and Communists were implicated as well. To make matters worse, Méry's lawyer gave former Socialist Finance Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn a copy of the tape, which he held onto for two years. The same lawyer also represented the fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, who was under pressure from



Former foreign minister and Constitutional Court president Roland Dumas with his mistress, Christine Deviers-Joncour. Both have been convicted on charges of corruption.

the finance ministry to pay over \$10 million in back taxes and by the fact that Strauss-Kahn had been implicated in the Elf-Dumas affair.

France is not alone, of course. All the democracies we will cover in part 2 have had major political scandals in recent years. Former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl is in disgrace and under investigation for having taken similar kickbacks. During the 1980s, one Japanese politician apparently received a shopping cart full of cash for his “political services.” British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s closest adviser has had to resign from office twice because of alleged improprieties. Last, but by no means least, the United States is still recovering from the series

of scandals that led to President Clinton’s impeachment by the House of Representatives.

## Thinking About Democracy

### Key Questions

These scandals all have one thing in common, one thing that sets them apart from events like the Dreyfus Affair. Although some of them destroyed the careers or reputations of the individuals involved, none put democracy itself in jeopardy.

You can never say “never” about anything political. Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine how any of the democratic regimes we will cover in part 2 could collapse. Their institutions are strong and have deep public support, whatever qualms people might have about individual politicians.

There is widespread dissatisfaction with politics and politicians today. Trust and confidence in politicians have plummeted. Rates of voter turnout and participation in most interest groups have declined. **Civil society**—the network of organizations that many political scientists believe is needed to buttress a democracy—has weakened.

But nowhere have these trends and perceptions translated into opposition to the regime or to democracy itself. This is the case in large part because almost everyone agrees with the statement by Winston Churchill that begins the chapter. You will have to read about those other types of governments in parts 3 and 4 before you

### SCANDAL WEB SITES

Scandals are not a major feature of this book. However, interested readers should consult the web site maintained by Roy Davies, a librarian at Britain’s University of Exeter, which has material on political scandals around the world. Readers who speak French can consult the less well-developed second site below, which is run by a rather eccentric radar engineer.

[www.ex.ac.uk/~RDavies/arian/scandals/political.html](http://www.ex.ac.uk/~RDavies/arian/scandals/political.html)

[www.multimania.com/corruptn/index.htm](http://www.multimania.com/corruptn/index.htm)

can fully assess democratic regimes. Nonetheless, the ability of these democracies to survive scandals and other crises gives you at least a first glimpse at the strength of such regimes.

As the fallout from the Dreyfus Affair also suggests, democracies have not always been that strong or popular. In fact, stable democracies were very rare until the last half of the twentieth century and, as we will see later in the book, have yet to be established in much of the world.

In sum, the discussion of scandals leads us to four questions that will be at the heart of the rest of this chapter and of part 2 as a whole:

- Why did democracy emerge in the first place?
- Why did democracy become remarkably durable in the second half of the twentieth century, because it certainly was not earlier?
- Why is there so much debate about public policy in the industrialized democracies at the dawn of the twenty-first century?
- Why has that debate not gone one step farther and led many people to question their regimes or democracy itself?

### *The Basics*

There is another obvious question that was left unasked: What is democracy?

At first glance, defining **democracy** seems remarkably simple. The term has its origins in the Greek words for rule by the people. Literally, then, democracy refers to a government in which average citizens make the decisions that shape their lives.

In practice, however, democracy has proved to be anything but simple. In a literal sense, democracy cannot exist, because the people cannot rule. Even the small New England communities that still use the town meeting form of government are too large and have too many pressing issues for everyone to take part in making every decision. Instead, they have had to follow the path of all countries that claim to be democratic—adopting representative systems in which people select men and women to govern in their name.

In other words, democratic reality has always fallen short of the ideal. All generally acknowledged democracies compel their citizens to do things that they would rather avoid—pay taxes, serve in the military, drive at the speed limit, not drink alcohol before a certain age, and so on. All, too, have imperfect ways of holding elected officials accountable, which, after all, should be the essence of democracy itself.

Yet almost every government claims to be a democracy. Theoreticians weave elaborate arguments justify-

ing why just about any regime could be considered democratic. For some, democracy revolves around the personal freedoms valued in the West. For others, personal freedoms are not enough; there has to be a substantial degree of economic equality as well before people can realistically hope to exercise those rights. Some insist on a particular type of institutional arrangement. Others are convinced that democratic principles can be compatible with almost any governmental structure.

Although there is no commonly accepted definition of what such a democracy is, all so-called democracies share at least the first two—and perhaps all five—of the criteria that follow.

### **Rights**

Democracies guarantee basic individual freedoms of press, religion, association, and speech. Most observers are convinced that people cannot participate effectively in making the decisions that shape their lives unless those rights are guaranteed.

Different countries have expressed those rights in different ways. Many have enshrined them in their constitutions. For example, these rights and others are expressed in the first paragraphs of the French Fifth Republic's constitution and in the Basic Law of Germany. Even where they are not included in a constitution, as in Great Britain (which does not have a written constitution), they are deeply ingrained in the culture.

These are not mere paper rights. The few restrictions placed on people's freedom are very much on the margins of political life. The French still have a law that allows the government to ban organizations whose goal is to overthrow the state. The Japanese constitution has a clause that permits the government to put the "public welfare" ahead of civil liberties if it believes that national security or other key policy goals are threatened. The French and German governments can declare a state of emergency and rule in what amounts to a dictatorial manner for a limited time. All these countries have police and intelligence agencies that have infiltrated organizations the government deemed subversive. The important point here, however, is that these provisions are rarely used and have had little impact on political life in these countries since the end of World War II and, in some cases, longer.

### **The Rule of Law**

Related to civil liberties is a reliance on the **rule of law**, which means that people are governed by clear and fair rules rather than by the arbitrary, personal exercise of

power. What they can and cannot do is spelled out in constitutions and in laws. As a result, people can expect to be treated fairly by the government both in their routine dealings with the state (for example, in the way taxes are assessed) and on those rare occasions when they come up against it (for example, after being accused of a crime). The importance of the rule of law is actually easiest to see in its absence, which will be a common theme in parts 3 and 4.

### Competitive Elections

At least as important as the basic right to civil liberties and the reliance on the rule of law is the requirement that the government be chosen through regular, free, and fair elections in which people can choose between two or more candidates and/or political parties. Simply holding elections is not enough. Mexico, for instance, holds elections for all key offices, but few observers believe that the Institutional Revolutionary Party would have been able to stay in power from the late 1920s until 2000 had the elections been run honestly and fairly. The former Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc allies also held elections, but voters had only a single candidate, who had been handpicked by the Communist Party, to vote for. Other countries, such as Nigeria in 1993 or Panama in 1989, conducted elections, only to see the military reject the outcome and seize power.

The electoral and party systems in the industrialized democracies are not all alike. The United States is unique in having only two major parties, but the peculiar on-again/off-again candidacies of H. Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996 remind us that this has not always been the case ([www.ifes.org](http://www.ifes.org)). Most of the other countries have always had more. In Great Britain and Germany, two major parties vie for power, but a number of smaller ones play a pivotal role in raising issues in both countries and in forming governing coalitions in the latter. In Japan, a single party has dominated electoral politics and governments since the 1950s, but it rarely comes close to winning a majority of the popular vote. France and the Scandinavian countries have five or more parties, but they fall into two blocs, one on the left and the other on the right, one of which normally wins each election. Israel and the Netherlands have as many as a dozen parties with seats in the national parliament.

These differences exist in large part because the industrialized democracies are divided along different lines, which we will explore later. They also use different **electoral systems**, or ways of counting votes and allocating parliamentary seats. These often highly technical provisions can go a long way toward determining how many parties there are, how they compete, and who

wins. The United States and Great Britain, for example, use **single-member districts** and a **first-past-the-post system**. The country is divided into a large number of constituencies. Any number of candidates can run, and whoever gets the most votes in the district (hence, first past the post) wins. But most countries use a version of **proportional representation (PR)**. Voters do not vote for individual candidates in local districts, but choose between lists of candidates presented by the parties for larger constituencies, sometimes covering the entire country. Parties receive seats in parliament according to their share of the vote. Thus, if one party receives 27 percent of the vote, the first 27 percent of the candidates on its list wins seats.

Germany and Japan (since 1993) use hybrid electoral systems that combine first-past-the-post and proportional elements. France (and Japan prior to 1993) uses a dramatically different and more complicated system, but discussion will be deferred until the country chapters that follow.

Other things being equal, single-member districts make it relatively easy for major-party candidates to win and discourage the formation of new or, in American terminology, “third” parties. In proportional systems, parties do not have to win many votes to get into parliament. As a result, it is much easier for new parties to gain a toehold, and the countries with large numbers of parties typically use electoral systems with a strong proportional element.

### Civil Society

There is far more uncertainty and controversy about the last two criteria that define a democracy. Neither is included in every basic definition of democracy. However, each has been so closely identified with it that most political scientists are convinced that both play a vital role in sustaining a democracy, if not creating it in the first place.

The pathbreaking research on the subject began in the late 1950s when Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba conducted surveys in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Mexico.<sup>1</sup> They concluded that stable democracies have a **civic culture** in which people accept not just the rules of the political game but the elites who lead them. Other pollsters have found that people in the United States and Great Britain, in particular, tend to be “joiners” who belong to many social and political

<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Countries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963).

groups, which ties them into their society and brings them into contact with people from a variety of social, economic, and political backgrounds.

With the upsurge of protest movements in the late 1960s, academic interest in civil society and civic culture waned. However, the past three decades have seen a decline in support for politicians and in interpersonal trust in the liberal democracies. Given that trend and the dozens of attempts to build democratic regimes elsewhere in the world, these ideas have returned to intellectual center stage. Although we do not fully understand how they operate, all the signs indicate that a civic culture and civil society psychologically bind people to their states, make it hard for “antisystem” protest to take root, and thus help make democracies resistant to sweeping change.

### Capitalism and Affluence

Most—but not all—political scientists assume that democracy can only exist alongside an industrialized capitalist economy based in large part on private ownership. There is no denying that the industrialized democracies are the richest countries in the world. Most of their people live in cities, and almost all are literate. (See the table on the inside front cover.) Most have access to basic health care, which translates into a low infant mortality rate and high life expectancy.

Industrialized democracies are not all equally wealthy, of course. Great Britain’s gross national product (GNP) is only two-thirds that of the United States. Some of the countries not included in this book (for example, Spain, Portugal, and Greece) are only about half as well off as Britain. And not all provide the same services for their people, as reflected, for instance, in the United States’ fairly high infant mortality rate, which actually surpasses that of some newly industrialized countries. Nonetheless, they are all dramatically better off than the countries we will consider in parts 3 and 4.

Scholars debate how, why, and if democracy needs affluence and capitalism. At the very least, there has been a historical connection between the rise of capitalism and the establishment of democracy. Although the causal connections are murky and hotly debated, it is true that, with the exception of India, only reasonably affluent and industrialized societies have been able to sustain governments that satisfy the other three criteria for an extended period. The example of India, Jamaica, and some of the countries in the “contender” column of the table that opens this chapter suggest that affluence, at least, may not be as important as some theorists have suggested. Nonetheless, given the political uncertainty in most of the “contender” countries and the historical

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## CRITERIA FOR DEMOCRACY

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There is no single, uniformly accepted set of criteria in determining whether a country is democratic. Of the five that follow, the first three are on virtually every list.

- Basic freedoms
  - The rule of law
  - Competitive, fair, and free elections
  - A strong civil society
  - Capitalism and affluence
- 

link between capitalism and democracy, the focus in part 2 is on countries in the industrialized world.

### *Who the Democracies Are*

Using these criteria, it is easy to identify some twenty-plus countries as “definitely democratic.” Most of these, as the chapter’s basic table suggests, are in western Europe or in parts of the world Europeans colonized. The one obvious exception is Japan. All of these countries have met the five criteria for at least fifteen years—which seems to be enough time for them to develop sufficient support for their democracies that there is little chance of their regimes collapsing.

It is not easy to make judgments about a few other countries in the “contender” column. India has had a functioning democracy for a half-century, as have a few of the tiny Caribbean island states. None of them, however, meet the affluence criterion. Israel certainly is a democracy for its Jewish citizens, but it cannot be said to be one for the Arabs who live inside either its pre- or post-1967 borders. Some of the former communist states may well be added to this list in the future, but they certainly cannot yet guarantee that basic freedoms will be tolerated or that elections will determine who governs. For the same reasons, most observers do not classify Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Turkey, South Korea, or Taiwan (Republic of China) as democracies.

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### The Origins of the Democratic State

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You cannot make sense of politics in any country today without understanding its historical evolution ([www.nipissingu.ca/departement/history/muhlberger/histdem/index.htm](http://www.nipissingu.ca/departement/history/muhlberger/histdem/index.htm)). As we explore the origins of the industrialized democracies in this section,



you will see three main conclusions that are important not only for these countries but also for the ones discussed in parts 3 and 4.

First, the domestic concerns listed in table 1.2 (state and nation building, pressures from below) mattered far more than the international ones (imperialism, globalization) in their development. International concerns were important, of course. These countries fought countless wars, many of which strengthened their states, if not their democracies. On balance, however, the key determinants were the ways in which these countries' leaders and their people handled a series of crises that were predominantly domestic in origin. That was less the case in the rest of the world, where international forces mattered more—especially the impact of the countries to be discussed here.

Second, it is impossible to disentangle the history of democracy from that of Europe and North America. Thus, we cannot determine with any certainty which of the characteristics discussed here are essential to democracy anywhere and which are peculiar to the European and North American experiences.

Third, democracy in these countries took a long time to develop. Leaders in the former communist countries and the third world are trying to condense what took centuries in Europe, North America, and Japan into a few short years. Although they might succeed, there is little historical evidence to suggest that they have a good chance of doing so.

### *The Early Democracies*

Modern democracy dates back only to the late eighteenth century. There were democracies in the ancient Greek city-states and in medieval Poland and Switzerland, but they do not warrant consideration here, because none of them involved states with either large populations or extensive civic responsibilities.

The foundations of democracy had been building for at least two hundred years. With the rise of individualism, capitalism, and Protestantism, the emergence of the scientific revolution, and the exploration of the New World from the fifteenth century onward, new ways of thinking took hold whose roots lay in such diverse fields as Newtonian physics and Protestant theology. The innovative thinkers of the time believed that society is naturally composed of separate and autonomous actors who pursue their own interests and desires. For most of these thinkers, this “state of nature” was fraught with danger. They recognized that people freed of the shackles of feudalism and other social hierarchies would be more creative and productive. But they also realized that

these people and the groups they formed would put new demands and pressures on the weak monarchies of the feudal period.

The most important of these theorists was **Thomas Hobbes** (1586–1679). He claimed that if people were left to their own devices the competition among them would be so intense that it would turn into the “war of all against all.” Therefore, to protect against anarchy, people had no choice but to give up some of their freedom to a large and powerful state—what he called the Leviathan.

Some radicals who did not share this pessimistic view of human nature and its political implications came to the fore during the English civil war of the 1640s. Most of the men who were to forge the first liberal democracies were more inclined to agree with Hobbes, even if they were not quite as pessimistic about human nature. In other words, although they understood that the trend toward individualism could not be stopped, they recognized that it had to be balanced by the creation of a strong authority for the protection of all.

Meanwhile, industrial capitalism was fast becoming the dominant economic system, which reinforced the shift toward more democratic government. Like the political theorists, the capitalists opposed a society still governed using feudal institutions and values. They began to demand a form of government that gave individuals free rein to pursue their economic interests. During the 1700s, their views crystallized as **laissez-faire** capitalism. Drawn from the French word “allow to do,” laissez-faire theory calls on government to stay out of economic life because the “invisible hand” of the market allocates resources far better.

In practice, the early liberal capitalists did not demand the abolition of government. They shared Hobbesian fears about the state of nature, especially as far as the lower classes were concerned. Therefore, most shared **John Locke's** (1632–1704) notion that the state's role was to protect “life, liberty, and property.”

Laissez-faire did not take hold everywhere as the theoretical underpinning of capitalism. In Germany and Japan, industrialization occurred as a result of the cooperation of an authoritarian government and a tiny business elite, which, together, imposed their will on the population as a whole.

The laissez-faire capitalists and their political allies added two key ideas to budding democratic thought. First, the state should be limited. Second, it should no longer try to prescribe what people do in all areas of life, as had been the case under feudalism. Rather, it should be more of a referee whose job is to protect society from the arbitrary use of power and the excessive demands of the “mob” or the “dangerous classes.”

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## THE L WORD

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American students are often confused by the word *liberal*. In the United States, it refers to people who support the left and an interventionist government. Everywhere else in the world, however, it has almost exactly the opposite connotation—opposition to government interference in the economy and any other area in which individuals can make decisions for themselves. The term will be used in this latter sense in the rest of this book.

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Given the criteria laid out in the previous section, no country could have been called democratic in the early nineteenth century. All sharply limited the suffrage (the right to vote). For instance, no women and only a handful of freed African Americans could vote in the newly independent United States. In Britain, barely 5 percent of men had the franchise even after the passage of the Great Reform Act in 1832. What's more, the democratizing changes that occurred did not come quickly or easily, requiring massive protests in Britain and revolutions elsewhere.

Still, an important precedent had been set in those two countries: Political power could no longer be monopolized by monarchs. Much of it had shifted into the hands of representatives who could, to some extent, hold rulers accountable and who were themselves accountable to at least some of the people.

Even more importantly, the theorists and politicians who built the first democratic states opened a door that could not easily be shut. Over the next century, popular pressure forced the expansion of democracy in much of Europe and North America. Most countries were able to develop democracy under highly favorable international conditions. In 1815 the Congress of Vienna established a balance of power that left Europe largely free of war for the next century. The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were, if anything, even freer of outside interference.

More and more people gained the right to vote. Most white American males had it by the 1840s. All French men gained the franchise with the creation of the Second Republic in 1848. In Britain, the right of men to vote was gradually expanded, culminating in the Reform Act of 1918, which removed all property qualifications and income restrictions.

Eventually, the vote was also granted to women. In the United States, women won it with the ratification of

the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. An act of Parliament did the same in Britain four years later.

In the meantime, other opportunities for political engagement grew. Most American states passed laws enabling citizens to put proposed legislation on the ballot in a referendum. In France and Britain, laws limiting citizens' rights to form associations were abolished, permitting the growth of trade unions and other mass-based interest groups.

In much of Europe, popularly elected houses of parliament gained the all-important right to determine who governed. By the late 1870s, the two houses of the French parliament had stripped the presidency of all effective power. In 1911 the British House of Lords, which represented the hereditary nobility, lost the power to do anything more than delay the final passage of legislation. By the 1920s, cabinets everywhere in Western Europe had become responsible to parliaments, with members remaining in office only as long as they retained the support of a majority in the lower house.

There was also growing support for **social democracy**. During the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution gave rise to a massive and impoverished working class. Marxists and other revolutionary socialists claimed that exploitation could be ended only by overthrowing capitalism and the liberal democratic state that propped it up. But others, like the Fabians in Britain and the revisionists in Germany and France, argued that the expansion of the vote meant that the working class could win a majority in parliament and use it to pass sweeping reforms. (See table 3.1.)

### *The Late Democracies*

The development of democracy was far more conflictual and took much longer in Germany, Japan, France, and other "late entrants," where democracy became solidly entrenched only after World War II. Thus, although France's Third Republic did survive for nearly three-quarters of a century (1875–1940), it was constantly

**TABLE 3.1** Key Turning Points in the Development of Industrialized Democracies

CENTURY	TRENDS
Seventeenth	Emergence of the modern state
Eighteenth	First democratic revolutions Development of <i>laissez-faire</i> theory
Nineteenth	Industrial revolution Spread of voting and other democratic institutions
Twentieth	Further expansion of the vote Defeat of fascism and solidification of democracy in western Europe



British women demanding the right to vote in 1909.

The Granger Collection

under threat from forces wanting to restore either the monarchy or the empire. Germany, Japan, Italy, and other countries saw their very tentative first steps toward democracy interrupted by fascist regimes.

These countries' difficulties can best be understood by returning to the historical row of the table on the inside front cover. All Europeans had to come to grips with four domestic transformations over the past several centuries:

- The creation of the nation and state itself
- The role of religion in society and government
- The development of pressures for democracy
- The industrial revolution

In places where democracy developed earlier, divisions over these issues were resolved relatively easily. This happened in part because their crises were spread out over a number of centuries, and the societies and leaders were able to reach closure on one crisis before the next one occurred.

The situation was very different in countries that had more trouble democratizing. There, the crises were not resolved in anything approaching a consensual manner, and they left deep **cleavages**, or social divisions. In France and Italy, conflict over the role the church should play in politics overlapped with controversies

over whether the government should be democratic. Until the late 1800s, there was no unified Germany or Italy, which made it impossible for democracy to develop. Moreover, the fact that these deeply divisive issues remained unresolved meant that by the late nineteenth century the governments of the newly formed nation-states were dealing with all these issues simultaneously.

The late democratizers also found themselves in a more difficult position internationally. Germany, Japan, and Italy, in particular, were new entrants in great power politics and found themselves lagging behind Britain and France economically and militarily. Desirous of power and prestige, and fearful of invasion, leaders in all three countries believed that they had to catch up with the other great powers as quickly as possible. They were also convinced that they could do so only if the state took the lead and forced the pace of development. Each therefore imposed strict limits on popular political rights. Adult males did get the vote, but real political power remained in the hands of the bureaucratic and military elites, which built industrial and military machines that would rival those of Britain and France by the time World War I broke out.

After World War I liberal regimes were established in much of central and eastern Europe, and Japan adopted a much more democratic constitution. Most of those states, however, quickly ran into trouble, giving rise to

## Democratization

**THE RECENT wave of democratization in the former communist countries and in much of the third world has led political scientists to reconsider democracy's emergence in Europe and North America. Their conclusions are not all that encouraging for new and hopeful democracies.**

**Depending on how we count, it took generations, if not centuries, to create the first democracies in the United States and Great Britain. The history of democratization stretches back to the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215, and some people are convinced that it is still going on today, given that groups such as gays and lesbians are denied what they claim to be their full civil rights. Even with a more limited definition of what it means to be democratic, it took the Anglo-American societies at least three centuries to secure basic political rights for all their citizens.**

**What's more, democratization was a tumultuous process. There is a tendency to look upon the process as one of gradual and consensual reform. Compared to the political histories of most other countries, this may be true. However, even the United States and the United Kingdom have faced major upheavals, including a civil war and other prolonged periods of unrest, during which elites tried to hold onto their power.**

**However, we should also recognize that no real attempts were made to consciously create a democracy before the establishment of the Weimar Republic in Germany after World War I, and no successes were recorded until after World War II. Conditions may have changed enough, and leaders in the new democracies may have learned enough, that they can escape the problems that befell all but the most successful of the countries discussed in this chapter.**

concerns about the dangers of excessive and disruptive popular participation. Extremist parties on the left and right won ever larger shares of the vote. Thousands of disgruntled workers and veterans took to the streets and formed private militias. Effective democratic government became all but impossible.

One after another, the new democracies turned to authoritarian leaders and **fascism**—the most important examples of which were Benito Mussolini in Italy and Adolf Hitler in Germany. These men and their parties won in large part because they built a strong popular base working through the liberal democratic system and came to power as part of an elected coalition government.

World War II marked the last watershed in the evolution of democratic theory and practice—so far. The rise of fascism, the carnage of the Second World War, and the outbreak of the cold war led many to question

whether average citizens were capable of sustaining a full-blown democracy, especially in a country with a history like Germany's or Japan's. One group of scholars argued that there was a widespread "authoritarian personality" that left people vulnerable to appeals from communists and fascists. Others stressed the uneven development in those countries in which economic growth far outstripped social advances, leaving the populace unprepared for responsible democratic participation. Still others showed how proportional representation and other institutional arrangements made it easier for the Nazis and fascists to gain a toehold in parliament and then build on it until they were able to seize power.

Two changes after the war, however, helped establish democracy in Germany, Japan, and a few other countries with similar pasts. Both reflected the growing preference among academic political scientists to limit the extent of democracy. Basic rights and freedoms were in no way restricted. But politicians set up procedures and implemented policies that helped elites govern without as much pressure "from below," which the theorists argued had been primarily responsible for the rise of fascism and communism.

First, provisions were added to the constitutions of the countries that had to start from scratch. Among other things, these included measures that made it more difficult for potentially disruptive parties to get their members into parliament and for divided legislatures to hamstring governments.

Second, a strong democratic state was in some respects a by-product of the cold war that began as World War II ended. Early on, Europe was its main "battle-ground"; the communist revolution in China then made Japan vitally important to the West as well. The United States sent billions of dollars in aid to help the European and Japanese economies recover and thereby block the spread of communism.

Political scientists and historians still debate how these various forces came together. But come together they did. Within a generation, democratic regimes were securely in place in "free world" countries that had so recently opted for some of the most brutally authoritarian regimes ever.

## Political Culture and Participation

### *The Civic Culture?*

After World War II, a number of political scientists turned their attention to the reasons for the collapse of democracy and the rise of fascism. Many of them ended up concentrating on political culture.

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## LATE DEMOCRACY/ STRONG STATE

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There is a powerful theme lurking just below the surface in this discussion that will have a tremendous bearing later on in the book. Because they eschewed democracy in favor of “top-down” development, countries like Germany and Japan continued their tradition of a strong state into the democratic period after World War II. At that time (though not earlier), in combining democracy with a strong state, they spurred unprecedented economic growth and political stability that lasted until the early 1990s.

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Here, Almond and Verba’s *The Civic Culture* proved extremely influential in how political scientists came to view democracy. They contrasted the United States and Great Britain with Germany, Italy, and Mexico, emphasizing the importance of a culture in which democratic beliefs exist alongside a degree of political passivity. For example, they explored political efficacy—people’s belief that they can do something about political decisions they disagree with. However, most also acknowledged that people rarely do so because they trust their leaders to do what is right.

The massive protests of the 1960s and 1970s soon undermined the more simplistic arguments linking a civic culture to democracy. Today, political scientists are returning to the role of political culture, albeit in a more nuanced way. There is no consensus yet in the scholarly community, but three conclusions from recent studies will prove important throughout part 2.

First, in successful democracies, people have a deeply felt sense of **legitimacy** and accept the “rules of the game.” Critical here is the distinction between the government of the day and the regime, first drawn in chapter 1. As we will see in chapter 4, even Britain had to cope with protests that reflected unprecedented anger toward the Labour government of 1974–79 and its Tory successor in the 1980s. However, no evidence suggests that the protesters’ ire extended beyond the Callaghan or Thatcher administrations to the British constitutional order itself. Perhaps even more importantly, much the same is true of protests in countries that had not developed strong democratic regimes prior to the war. Thus, despite the massive protests of May and June 1968 that almost toppled General Charles de Gaulle’s government in France, there was little talk of scrapping the Fifth Republic, and any inclinations to do so were long gone before the socialists finally won power thirteen years later.

Second, that feeling of legitimacy has remained despite a dramatic drop in most forms of political participation and in trust in most politicians. Initial estimates were that only 58 percent of British voters bothered to go to the polls in 2001, the lowest figure since 1918. Turnout was particularly low in Britain’s inner cities and among the young, of whom barely a third cast a ballot. In other words, even though all the industrialized democracies have seen something like the decline in social capital and civil society that Robert Putnam has documented for the United States, it has not led to a parallel decline in support for democracy in general.

Third, it is now clear that American and British cultural norms are the exception, not the rule. People in France, Germany, and Japan are more willing to turn to a strong state in solving political problems than are their counterparts in the United States or Britain.

### *Political Parties and Participation*

The democracies are different from other countries in large part because they give their citizens a wider variety of ways to participate in political life. None of them is more important than their involvement (or lack thereof) in the competitive elections that determine who fills the top offices in the government. And, with the exception of some local races in the United States, any analysis of elections and voting has to concentrate on **political parties**, the organizations most responsible for contesting elections and forming governments afterward.

There is a bewildering array of political parties in the four democracies to be covered in part 2. Most, though, have their roots in the cleavages left by the historical transformations discussed in the previous section. Not all countries were left with deep and lasting divisions. To the degree that they were, however, they left an indelible imprint by giving rise to the parties that have dominated electoral politics since the 1920s.

A few new parties have emerged in the past twenty years, which we will consider later. None of them, however, are strong enough yet to win elections or play a regular role in determining the composition of governments. In other words, if we are to understand the heart of the electoral process, we have to begin with the parties formed as a result of those four historical forces as outlined in table 3.1.

Parties are discussed along the traditional left-right spectrum. Unlike most political terms, these two widely used ones do not have particularly revealing meanings. They have their origins in the seating arrangements in the French parliament after the revolution of 1789, when deputies who favored radical change sat on the left of

**TABLE 3.2** The Changing Meaning of Left and Right

PERIOD	LEFT	RIGHT
Eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries	Prodemocratic Anticlerical Promarket	Antidemocratic Proclerical Ambivalent on market
Industrial era	Prodemocratic Anticlerical For socialism and/or welfare state	More prodemocratic Usual proclerical Less positive about welfare state, against socialism
Postindustrial era	Egalitarian, but qualms about welfare state and socialism as we know them Mostly globalist New social issues	Promarket capitalism Traditional values More nationalistic

the speaker's rostrum and those who opposed it sat to his right. Since then, the meaning of the terms has evolved in the ways summarized in table 3.2.

On the **left** end are what remain of the **communist parties**. They were formed in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution of 1917, when members of the more radical wings of the socialist parties quit and formed new organizations to support the Bolsheviks in Moscow. Over the years, the communist parties have been the most radical critics of capitalism and the strongest defenders of what they claim are the interests of the working class. Most were all-but-uncritical supporters of the Soviet Union before 1991. Of the countries we will be covering, only France still has a significant Communist Party, and it has been in decline for years, a decline that has accelerated since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Next are the **social democratic** parties. They, too, traditionally supported the **nationalization** of industry and social welfare programs, and promoted greater equality. Unlike the communists, however, the socialists rejected revolution and were harsh critics of the Soviet Union. Most moderated their positions even further in the postwar years, and by the 1990s they had shed all but the most empty rhetorical references to Marxism and nationalization. Some people think that recent attempts, mainly by Tony Blair and his colleagues in the British Labour Party, to create a "third way" between socialism and capitalism might breathe new ideological life into these parties, but it is too early to tell. Only in Japan have socialists not regularly been serious contestants for power, although they did hold the prime ministry for a brief period following the collapse of the Liberal Democratic government in 1993.

In the center are parties known as either liberals or **radicals**. They gained their radical label in the nineteenth century when they did stand for fundamental

change—the separation of church and state, a free economy, and the establishment of democracy. The British Liberals were one of the two main parties until the 1920s, and the Radicals were France's most influential party under both the Third and Fourth Republics (1875–1958). Today, they appeal primarily to the wealthy and have no significant impact on who governs. The one exception is the German Free Democratic Party (FDP). Although it has never done well at the polls, the FDP has provided the votes either the Socialists or the Christian Democrats needed to form a governing coalition for all but three years between the creation in 1949 of the Federal Republic and 1998.

Countries that had deep and unresolved divisions over the relationship between church and state at one point or another have had explicitly religious, **Christian Democratic** parties that appealed primarily to Catholic voters. Some Catholics had qualms about democracy, and others advocated social reforms much like those backed by the social democrats. With the onset of the cold war, however, most Christian Democrats aligned themselves with the United States on foreign policy issues and with proponents of a capitalist economy at home. And they have been extremely influential, dominating governments in Germany and Italy for most of the postwar period. Indeed, France is the only country with a large Catholic population in which the Christian Democrats have been eclipsed by other right-of-center parties.

Britain—with very few Catholics—and Japan—with very few Christians—have not had major Christian Democratic parties. Instead, the **right** side of the political spectrum has been dominated by secular conservatives. Parties like the British Conservatives, French Gaullists, and Japanese Liberal Democrats are not all that different from the Christian Democrats except that they do not have a religious orientation. American readers should note that they are not conservative in the sense that the term is used in the United States. They have not traditionally opposed state intervention in the economy. Indeed, as we will see in chapters 5 and 8, they have developed effective mechanisms whereby the state works with private enterprise to stimulate growth.

Some observers claim that democratic party systems today are not working very well because they have such old roots. As we will see in the chapters that follow, many have had a hard time adapting to the changes of recent years, especially the rise of new social movements and the globalization of the world economy.

In part, that reflects their adoption of more moderate positions for most of the past forty years. During the 1950s, political scientists began to notice a marked shift

**TABLE 3.3** Main Types of Political Parties by Country

COUNTRY	TYPE OF PARTY					
	Communist	Socialist	Liberal	Christian Democratic	Conservative	Other
Great Britain	—	Labour	Liberal Democrats <sup>a</sup>	—	Conservative	Regional <sup>b</sup>
France	PCF	PS	c	c	RPR/UDF	Green National Front
Germany	PDS	SPD	FDP	CDU	—	Green National Front
Japan	JCP	DSPJ	—	—	LDP	Komeito

<sup>a</sup>Liberal to 1983, Liberal–Social Democratic Alliance 1983–87, Liberal Democrats 1988 on.

<sup>b</sup>Nationalist parties of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

<sup>c</sup>The French Radical and Christian Democratic parties are no longer big enough to include here.

in public opinion toward the center. A combination of sustained economic growth, development of the welfare state, and escalation of the cold war undermined support for radical politics.

At first, the left was slow to respond. The British Labour Party and the German Social Democrats (SPD) clung to their traditional socialist appeals even though their electoral fortunes continued to sag. Gradually, however, a new generation of leaders moved their parties toward the center and led them to victory in the 1960s.

The changes on the right were less striking, but no less significant. Conservatives, too, had to accommodate the emerging consensus about the welfare state. The British Conservatives, French Gaullists, and German Christian Democrats accepted the idea that government should provide extensive social service programs and actually expanded these programs when they were in office.

The moderation was so marked during the 1950s and early 1960s that some analysts began writing about the “end of ideology.” They were convinced that sharp ideological divisions were a thing of the past and that subsequent elections would be contests between similar teams of politicians.

Those ideological trends were reinforced by an even more dramatic change in the way election campaigns were conducted. By the 1960s, most people got most of their information about politics from television. Because it is impossible to say anything nuanced or detailed in a sixty-second news clip, the growing role of television accentuated the trend away from ideological appeals.

The issue-driven activists who dominated the old “mass parties” gave way to spin doctors who learned how to promote telegenic candidates. Parties no longer appealed only to their “own” portion of the electorate (for example, socialists to the working class) but now tried to reach out to everyone, and so were dubbed **catch-all**. (See the top half of figure 3.1.)

As we are about to see, events undermined the central assumptions of the broader argument about the end of ideology. However, the technological dynamics that

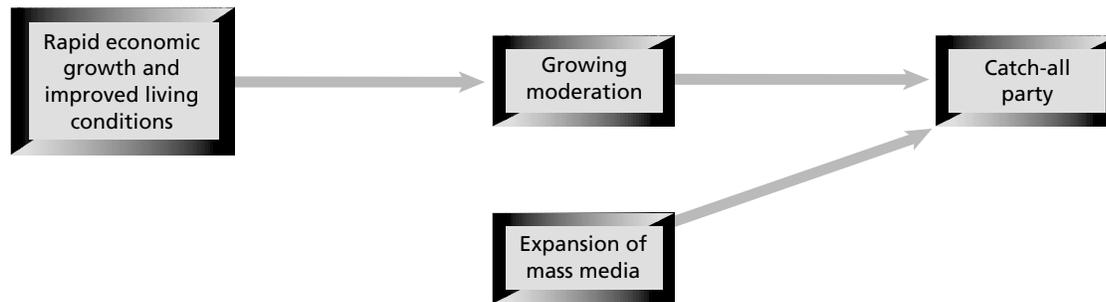
led to the catch-all party have, if anything, intensified. There have been instances in which parties and candidates made major breakthroughs by stressing ideological themes, most notably in the victories of Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain (1979) and Ronald Reagan in the United States (1980). Yet even their campaigns featured slogans and video clips. Polls, focus groups, and other forms of market research have led party leaders to run campaigns that “sell” to marginal voters. How much these changes have sapped parties of the ability to take strong stands and thus help shape public opinion for extended periods is still very much an open question. But the spread of media-based campaigns clearly has heightened the cynicism many voters in democracies feel toward politicians.

### *New Divisions*

The discussion of the party system summarized in table 3.1 is somewhat misleading because it implies that party systems were defined by old cleavages and are still largely set in stone. The parties that have a realistic chance of winning most elections do have old and deep roots, but important changes are occurring on the fringes of the electoral mainstream that may have more dramatic consequences in the next few years.

Most visible is the growing differences between men and women. Women used to be more conservative than men. They were less likely to work outside the home and so were less exposed to the left-leaning influence of trade unions. They were also more religious and thus more heavily affected by the usually conservative clergy. As more women joined the workforce and were swept up in the feminist and new left movements of the 1960s and 1970s, some began to question conservative positions, especially those involving reproductive rights and the family. Many (though by no means all) began to realize that their interests lay with progressive parties. In the United States, this has led to the “gender gap” in which the Democratic vote among women can be as much

### The Catch-A Party



### New Divisions



FIGURE 3.1 Political Participation in Flux: Two Versions



### USEFUL WEB SITES

There actually are not all that many web sites that deal with democracy per se. That's partly because theorists do not use the Internet as comparativists do. It's also because few comparativists study all the democracies as a whole. Nonetheless, there are a few sites that can help sharpen your understanding of the ideas behind and the realities of democracy today.

The U.S. State Department has an excellent site that explores many of the issues raised in this chapter. Political Resources is a wonderful source for material on individual countries, while Election World has the most recent election results from every country in the world.

[hypatia.ss.uci.edu/democ](http://hypatia.ss.uci.edu/democ)

[www.ned.org](http://www.ned.org)

[usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem](http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem)

[www.politicalresources.net](http://www.politicalresources.net)

[www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org)

as 20 percent higher than among men. In Britain, it prompted the Labour Party to field a slate of candidates in 1997 that led to the election of over a hundred female **members of parliament** (MPs).

Meanwhile, many men—especially those with limited professional skills—felt that their livelihoods and positions of dominance were under threat. Some made

the opposite switch, abandoning traditionally left-wing parties to become “Reagan Democrats” in the United States, Thatcherites in Britain, and supporters of the racist National Front in France.

The gender gap is but the tip of a much larger, but poorly understood, political iceberg. For more than thirty years, Ronald Inglehart and his colleagues have been studying how the social and economic changes creating our **postindustrial society** are playing themselves out politically. (See the bottom half of figure 3.1.) Their theoretical assumption and research methods have been the subject of much controversy. Nonetheless, their empirical findings are so consistent that they unquestionably have tapped an important trend.

Inglehart uses the same starting point as the end-of-ideology theorists—rapid economic growth and improved living conditions—but then diverges sharply. From this perspective, the unprecedented economic growth of the past half-century has produced a new type of middle-class, **postmaterialist** voters. They are often the third generation to be raised in affluent conditions and can realistically assume that they will have productive and rewarding careers, and will not have to worry much about their economic security. As a result, they tend to focus on what Inglehart calls “higher-order” values, including job and personal satisfaction, self-actualization, and international understanding. In the process, postmaterialists have become far less conservative than earlier generations of affluent voters. In American terms, postmaterialists largely overlap with the “soccer moms”



AP/Wide World Photos (Tony Harris)

Clare Ward, at twenty-four years old, the youngest of more than 100 women elected as Labour MPs on May 1, 1997.

(and dads) who gained so much notoriety for their support of President Clinton in 1996.

They have not become traditional leftists by any stretch of the imagination; most have serious qualms, for instance, about the welfare state and socialism. However, they supported the peace movements of the 1980s and, more recently, environmentalism, now more than any other socioeconomic group in the electorate. They are most likely to support the one type of new party that has had a significant impact—the **Greens**. Greens are best known for their strong stands against nuclear weapons and power and for their support for environmental causes. Party ideology, at least, goes a lot further to stress “deep ecology,” or a world view based on the assumption that all life is interconnected. Green parties have done rather well in most of Europe, often approaching 10 percent of the vote, most of which comes from younger postmaterialists. They have had the greatest impact in Germany, where they have been in the par-

liament since 1983, and they entered the governing coalition with the SPD after the 1998 election.

On the other end of the spectrum are older, less well-educated people who have not benefited as much from the economic growth. Indeed, in a high-tech world in which more and more low-skill jobs have been either automated or shipped abroad, these people feel most threatened by all the changes going on. As a result, the political priorities of these “materialists” include maintaining their own standard of living and national economic strength and security—however you define that term. Even though they may have been raised in left-wing families, many have moved rightward to parties that are hostile to women’s and minorities’ rights and that defend economic nationalism and “traditional values.” They have, in short, become the conservatives of the new millennium.

### *Realignment?*

It’s important not to read too much into the emergence of postmaterialism or parties like the Greens or the National Front. If anything, they reflect just how slowly the individual parties and national party systems have been to respond to the social and economic changes that have swept through the industrialized democracies since the 1950s.

In other times of major change, the party system ultimately did respond. Existing or new parties took the lead by adopting strong positions on key issues, appealing to new segments of the electorate, and producing lasting changes in basic patterns of support for the parties and, hence, the government. In the United States, such realignments typically occurred in a thirty-two-year, or eight-election, cycle.

Political scientists have been waiting for such a realignment to occur throughout the democratic world since the late 1960s. At most, two parts of it may have already occurred.

First, de-alignment always precedes **realignment**. Before they are “free” to support new parties, voters have to sever the psychological ties that bind them to the ones they have traditionally supported. A massive amount of polling evidence suggests that rates of party identification have plummeted almost everywhere and that more and more voters are skeptical about what parties and politicians can or will deliver.

Second, as implied previously, the right has gone a long way toward redefining itself. Led by the likes of Thatcher and Reagan, parties on the right have staked out new positions on the economy, racial diversity, and national security. In so doing, they have kept some of

their traditional voters in the fold while appealing to many of the newly conservative materialists. Nonetheless, many have moved so far to the right that they have a hard time winning elections now that the first generation of “new right” leaders have left the scene and their policies no longer have quite the appeal they did in the 1980s.

The left, by contrast, has had a much harder time redefining its image and appealing to a new coalition of voters who could propel it into office with a workable ideology and majority. But that may be changing. Beginning with Bill Clinton in the United States, more moderate politicians have taken over most of the leading left-of-center parties, including Tony Blair in Britain and Gerhard Schröder in Germany.

With the support of the Democratic Leadership Council, Clinton came to office hoping to redefine what it meant to be on the left. However, a combination of Republican congressional victories and personal scandals sapped the Clinton White House of any real hopes of pulling off the realignment.

Leadership of the progressives advocating change has been assumed by Blair and his colleagues, who have been promoting a loosely defined third way since his 1997 election. They argue that the left still has to support egalitarian goals, but it can only do so by accepting the primacy of the market and global forces in the economy. This involves such novel ideas as welfare reform that requires people to go to work or, better yet, get job training. Similarly, unlike in the class-versus-class rhetoric of the past, they emphasize partnerships in which government, business, and labor work together to create jobs and maximize economic growth. And, as Blair and his ilk see it, the left also has to reach out to the middle class for the simple reason that there are not enough blue-collar workers to sustain any party that hopes to win at the polls.

Unfortunately, it is too early to tell if this third way will prove to be anything more than another catchy slogan that disappears from the political landscape almost as soon as it appears. Although Blair’s Labour Party won another landslide victory in 2001, many of those who had high expectations for his government have been disappointed by what they see is more of an emphasis on style than on substance.

### *Interest Groups*

Fewer people are active in **interest groups** than in the past. Fueled by stories of influence-peddling lobbyists and massive campaign donations by PACs (political action committees), interest groups now have a rather neg-

ative image in the United States. Political scientists, however, view them in a much more favorable light.

The industrial democracies all have groups that seek to promote just about every point of view on just about every imaginable issue to the point that it is impossible for scholars to keep track of them all! As a result, political scientists have concentrated on trade unions, business groups, and other associations that are the most visible, use the most disruptive tactics, and/or have the greatest apparent influence.

The shifts in public opinion discussed earlier are reflected in the interest group world as well. In most countries, trade unions are now much weaker than they used to be. There are also new groups, including hundreds of organizations working on environmental issues, expanded rights for women and minorities (both for and against), and a host of foreign policy issues. Some are quite aggressive, such as the animal rights groups in England that try to disrupt foxhunting parties and the export of chicken and sheep for slaughter on the Continent. Others are more conventional lobbyists who operate “inside the system,” trying to translate their wealth and contacts into influence.

Because there are so many interest groups, it is hard to reach many firm conclusions about them. In the chapters that follow, we will concentrate on two. First, organizations that concentrate on economic issues and represent groups central to the country’s economic future tend to have the most influence. Generally, business groups have more influence than unions do. Second, the nature of the relationship interest groups have with decisionmakers varies tremendously from country to country. In weaker states like the United States and Great Britain, civil servants and politicians try to keep their distance from interest group representatives. In Germany, France, and Japan, there is a long history of open and close collaboration between interest groups and the state, which contributed heavily to the economic success of these countries from the end of World War II until the early 1990s.

### *Political Protest*

The industrialized democracies all have protest movements that go beyond the activities of traditional interest groups. Some use violence. Some protests involve large numbers of people, as in the “events” of May and June 1968, which we will cover in the chapter on France. Others involve only a handful of people, such as the vigil antinuclear protesters have maintained for years across the street from the White House. Some are national in scope, and others address issues of only local concern.

Some come from the left end of the political spectrum, others from the right—however you define those terms.

We will concentrate on two contrasting trends in the chapters that follow. First, there is plenty of protest, the angriest and loudest of which comes from groups that feel they are least well represented in the electoral process. Many pro-life activists believe they have no choice but to disrupt—and sometimes destroy—clinics where abortions are performed. Top business executives, however, rarely have to take to the streets to have their views heard.

Second, virtually none of it involves people who question the legitimacy of their regimes, let alone democracy itself. There are some such opposition groups on the fringes of the political system, but the Maoists and Trotskyites on the left and the American militias and European neofascists on the right have so little influence that they will rarely appear in the next five chapters.

## The Democratic State

The elections, which determine who the leading policymakers are, and the informal access provided by interest groups and political protest, give the people in industrialized democracies more clout than their counterparts living under other kinds of regimes have. But that power is by no means total. As noted earlier, democracies also have states, which impose some limits on what people can do.

### *Presidential and Parliamentary Systems*

The most important feature of any democratic state is the way it handles representation and the link between the government and the governed in general. To understand how representation occurs and how it is reflected in public policy, we start by considering the differences between presidential and parliamentary systems. Both are based on the critical democratic principle that free and competitive elections determine who governs; however, they lead to very different kinds of outcomes.

It was actually somewhat misleading to speak of presidential systems in the plural in the preceding paragraph, because there is really only one of them—in the United States. As we saw in chapter 2, the drafters of the U.S. Constitution set out to create a state in which it would be very difficult for rulers to abuse their power or to act quickly and coherently. Their system made compromise the norm and rapid decision making difficult.

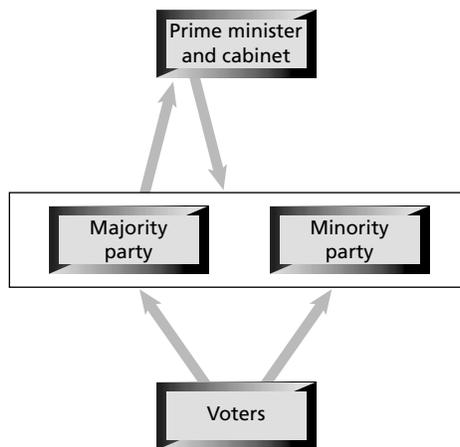
By contrast, in parliamentary systems with a secure majority party or coalition, the prime minister rarely has to compromise as much as an American president. That allows governments in parliamentary systems to act more quickly and decisively than any American administration.

The American president has to assume that if a bill he proposes actually is passed the final version will be very different from the one sent to Capitol Hill. This is because the president has little leverage over what individual senators or representatives do. Once a bill is submitted, it must pass over a number of hurdles—subcommittees, committees, floor debate, and a conference committee—before it is sent on to the White House for the president's signature or veto. (See figure 2.1.) At each of those points, the bill can be defeated once and for all. Even if it is not, it will almost certainly be drastically altered as members of Congress try to forge a compromise version of it that will get the votes of a majority in each house. As that happens, the bill is normally sapped of much of the coherence in the original version.

The process in a parliamentary system is almost exactly the opposite. A party that runs for election on the basis of its platform or program and wins a majority of the seats in parliament can take office and see its proposals passed virtually intact. Parliaments do have committees, debates, and votes. Unlike the American president, however, the prime minister has so much leverage over what happens at each of those stages that he or she can force proposed legislation through what is for all intents and purposes a compliant parliament. As figure 3.2 suggests, power in parliamentary systems is fused, not separated. After an election, the parliament selects the prime minister, who is normally the head of the majority party or coalition of parties. The prime minister has not been elected by the country as a whole and in most countries is merely an MP.

The prime minister appoints the rest of the cabinet. Unlike in the United States, most ministers (the exact proportion varies from country to country) are also members of parliament and retain their seats while they serve in the cabinet. Together, the prime minister and cabinet form what is known as the government.

The most important aspect of the parliamentary system is the doctrine of **cabinet responsibility** to parliament. The government remains in office until the next elections are due if and only if it retains the support of that majority on all major pieces of legislation. It also must keep its majority on special **votes of confidence**, in which the parliament is explicitly asked to affirm its support for the government. If the government loses either of these types of votes, it must resign. At that point, either



**FIGURE 3.2** The Parliamentary System

a new majority comes together within the existing parliament to form a government or the parliament is dissolved, leading to a new election within a matter of weeks.

In practice, when a prime minister has a clear majority, the government will not lose such a vote. Its members will stick together and support the government because the costs of not doing so are too high. The best a defeated government can look forward to is the uncertainty of an election. Breaking party discipline and bringing a government down can also destroy an individual member's career.

So, in a country like Great Britain, where the Labour Party won 413 out of 659 seats in the all-powerful House of Commons in 2001 (see table 3.4), Prime Minister Tony Blair can count on winning every key vote until the parliamentary term ends in 2006. Debates on the floor of the House of Commons are more heated than in the House of Representatives or Senate in the United States, but the legislative process rarely produces more than slight changes in the details of a bill, and then only if the government goes along.

The kind of protracted stalemate Washington endures at budget time each year rarely occurs in a parliamentary system with a firm majority. When Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown presented the Blair government's draft budget in July 1997, it contained a num-

ber of controversial proposals. Among other things, it would impose a £4-billion (\$6.5-billion) windfall profits tax on the recently privatized utilities and use the money for a training and employment program for chronically unemployed young people. Blair and Brown made those proposals knowing full well that, because the Labour majority had to keep the cabinet in office, the budget would pass. Amendments proposed by rank-and-file MPs would become law only if the government agreed to them ahead of time.

There had been a great deal of lobbying over the budget. But, unlike in the United States, most of it took place before the draft was unveiled. By the time Brown went before the House of Commons, all the important decisions had been made. In fact, the debate that day ended with the passage of a resolution that provisionally put the budget into effect.

In other words, politicians face plenty of pressure in a parliamentary system, but to make a difference, lobbyists have to make their influence felt before a bill is submitted to parliament. If they do not, it is normally too late to have much hope of influencing the bill as it wends its way through the formal legislative process. Thus, because the majority party will consistently vote for legislation the government proposes, it can act quickly and coherently.

However, if there is no clear majority in parliament, a very different situation arises. As table 3.5 shows, six parties plus a smaller group of independents split the seats in the French Chamber of Deputies after the 1951 election. The parties held sharply different views, and their leaders disliked one another personally. Therefore, not surprisingly, they did not cooperate easily. As a result, every nine months or so, a cabinet would lose a vote of confidence or resign knowing that the next issue it had to deal with would do it in. It was not possible to dissolve the chamber and hold new elections. Instead, a new majority had to be cobbled together from the existing MPs. That cabinet, in turn, would fall once it had to deal with its first controversial issue, and the process would start all over again.

**TABLE 3.4** The British General Election of 2001

	LABOUR	CONSERVATIVES	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS	OTHER
<b>Share of the Vote (percentage)</b>	40.8	31.8	18.3	9.1
<b>Number of Seats</b>	413	166	52	28

**TABLE 3.5** The French Chamber of Deputies, 1951

PARTY	NUMBER OF SEATS
Communists	101
Socialists	106
Christian Democrats	88
Radicals	76
Independents and Peasants	95
Gaullists	120
Others	40

Under such circumstances, parliamentary systems yield anything but effective government. As we will see in more detail in chapter 5, the Fourth Republic (1946–58) teetered from cabinet crisis to cabinet crisis and failed to meet any of the serious domestic or international challenges it faced. In the end, it lost most of its popular support and collapsed when a war of independence broke out in colonial Algeria.

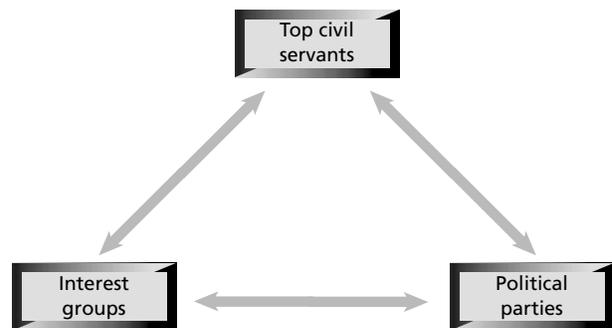
In recent years, however, few parliaments have come close to being this divided. More often than not, elections have produced either a single party with a majority of its own or a coalition of parties that are close enough to one another ideologically to stay together for the duration of a parliamentary term (Germany or France today). Of the countries we will be dealing with here, only Japan since the defeat of the long-dominant Liberal Democrats in 1993 will provide even a limited example of what parliamentary fragmentation can lead to. Readers interested in such systems are best advised to learn about Israel, where fragile coalitions have been the norm for a generation.

### *The Broader State*

Governments today have to deal with highly technical issues that often call for a degree of expertise rarely found among elected politicians. As a result, two sets of actors not included in figure 3.2 have come to play pivotal roles in most industrial states—high-level civil servants in the **bureaucracy** and leading interest group representatives.

As first described by Max Weber, modern civil services are supposed to be the epitome of efficiency. Recruited and promoted on the basis of merit, bureaucrats are objective, scientific, and expert. Their behavior is governed not by ideology or personal whim, but by rules clearly laid out in law. They are supposed to be *civil servants*, working dispassionately for their political masters in the cabinet, whatever party happens to control it at the moment.

The realities of bureaucratic life are more complicated. In most countries, the civil service is able to attract highly educated and talented people, especially in Japan and France, where a disproportionate number of the “best and brightest” begin their careers working for the state. The bureaucracies, however, have rarely been able to reach the dispassionate and apolitical Weberian ideal. To varying degrees, civil servants have become important policymakers in their own right. However important their expertise may be, the bureaucrats’ policymaking role is problematic from a democratic perspective because they are not elected officials and are



**FIGURE 3.3** Elite Integration: Iron Triangles

thus difficult to hold accountable. That is especially true in countries where the business, bureaucratic, and political elites are so close scholars speak of them as an **iron triangle**. (See figure 3.3.)

Japan and the United States represent the two extremes on this score. Americans are wary of any close cooperation among such groups. Federal bureaucrats, for example, cannot be employed by an organization that deals with the issues they worked on for two years after leaving government service. The doctrine of separation of powers often makes it difficult for members of Congress and their staffs to get information from civil servants. And almost everyone looks askance at close relationships between interest groups and politicians, given long-standing concerns about big government and the possibility of corruption.

In Japan, cooperation among business elites, politicians, and bureaucrats is actively encouraged. As we will see in chapter 8, there is nothing more prestigious in Japan than being a top civil servant. Once they reach their fifties, many bureaucrats leave the government through a process nicknamed *amakudari*, which literally means “descent from heaven.” At that point, they either become politicians in the Liberal Democratic Party or top corporate executives. In other words, all three groups are led by people with similar personal, educational, and professional backgrounds.

Although no one factor can explain all the variation in the ways democratic states act, there is a clear distinction to be made among them along these lines. Those with the most **integrated elite**, like Japan, have been among the most successful economically since the end of World War II. The countries that have resisted those trends toward interelite cooperation have had the most trouble.

Japan’s economic woes and the U.S. resurgence of the 1990s suggest that these trends may not continue. Nonetheless, they are such an important part of demo-

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## THE MISSING LINK

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Readers in the United States, in particular, may be surprised by the absence of one institution in these pages—the courts. In few countries do the courts have the sweeping powers they do in the United States to rule not simply on individual cases but on the constitutionality of laws as well.

In the most extreme case, British courts lack the authority to make constitutional law. This is not so in the other countries to be covered in part 2. As we will see in chapter 6, the German Constitutional Court has made a number of important decisions, including on the legal status of a woman's right to choose to abort a fetus. Similarly, its French equivalent has gained power over the last twenty years or so. However, nowhere else are the courts a coequal branch of government along with the legislature and the executive.

cratic political life over the past half-century that they will draw considerable attention in the chapters on individual countries.

## Public Policy

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### *The Interventionist State*

Orthodox economic theorists claim that the state should keep its hands off the economy. As they see it, properly functioning markets driven by the balancing effects of supply and demand provide the maximum possible wealth and efficiency at minimum cost.

Markets, however, have never worked that well in practice, because two critical assumptions in the theory have rarely been met. First, even the most ardent of laissez-faire capitalists acknowledges that markets cannot effectively provide collective or public goods, such as a clean environment, a national defense system, or a general education. These are services that society as a whole may want, but it is not in any individual's or firm's self-interest to provide them. Second, markets will work optimally only if a number of conditions are met, including competition and the absence of concentrated wealth and power on the part of either capitalists or workers.

To make a long, complicated story short, the social and economic changes spurred by the industrial revolution made it more and more difficult to meet those criteria. A host of problems emerged, from pollution in industrial areas, to failing firms, to widespread poverty.

## Challenges to the Democratic State

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**THERE ARE no serious challenges to the existence of any of the major liberal democratic states. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, some observers argued that many of them were in trouble in the light of violent protests and terrorists attacks and the economic slump following the OPEC oil embargo. All have managed to weather those and other political storms, and with the end of the cold war, there are no major international threats to their survival, either.**

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Once it became clear that no one in the private or charitable sectors could handle those problems, people turned to a more **interventionist state**.

All now offer a variety of social services, including these:

- Basic health care and education
- Heavily subsidized higher education
- Unemployment compensation
- Pensions and other programs for retirees

But there is considerable variation in what they actually do. The United States and Japan offer less, whereas the European states offer something approaching “cradle-to-grave” coverage.

The rightward drift during the past two decades has led many to question these programs. Britain and the United States, for instance, have recently passed welfare reform legislation that requires recipients to work or get job training. On balance, however, most of these programs remain extremely popular and have proved hard to cut back.

There is no such certainty with the rest of economic policy. The industrialized democracies all have essentially capitalist economies because most businesses are privately owned. That should not mask the fact that they have been going through their most wrenching transformation since the industrial revolution.

The economic center of gravity has shifted away from manufacturing to the tertiary or service sector. Despite the demise of so many dot-com enterprises since 2000, the computer and information technology industries in general are increasingly at the heart of what is often referred to as postindustrial society. In the process, millions of jobs in the traditional heavy industries, such as automobile or clothing manufacturing, have been lost to either automation or the third world.

This transition is part of the globalization of economic activity. Academics and other observers debate

One of France's *école maternelles*. Programs such as these, which guarantees day care for all children from the age of two, are currently threatened by cutbacks in funding for the welfare state and the general reduction in state activity throughout the democratic world.



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just how quickly and extensively globalization is occurring. But a quick glance at the products in the room you are sitting in will tell you that we increasingly buy products and consume services that originate in countries all around the world. Because so much of what we use is imported and exported, and because so many of the companies that make those products are multinational and can move their operations as market conditions warrant, no government is as able as it was a generation ago to enact and, especially, implement, its economic policies.

We will see this most clearly in chapter 7 when we consider the European Union (EU), by far the most prominent international organization in the world today. With the introduction of the euro as a full-fledged currency in January 2002, the EU has taken on even more of the trappings of a state and is probably more influential than any of its member governments as an economic policymaker.

At the domestic level, most governments have adopted more conservative, pro-market policies in recent years. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, and the consensus that social democrats in Europe and liberals in the United States enjoyed little success in eliminating poverty, has given “antistate” forces more clout. In particular, governments have **privatized** much of the publicly owned sector, which, in some cases, amounted to as much as 20 percent of total production at the height of what the British call the collectivist years.

## Foreign Policy

Important changes may be occurring in foreign policies as well. During the cold war, most leaders in the industrialized democracies followed the lead of the United States in making foreign policy. But there were exceptions to that rule. During Charles de Gaulle's presidency (1958–69), France charted an independent foreign policy course in response to his desire to restore France's grandeur as one of the world's great powers. He pulled French troops from NATO, created the French nuclear arsenal, tried to serve as a broker between the superpowers, and defended what he saw as the rights of new states in the third world. De Gaulle's successors have echoed some of his nationalist themes, but, rhetoric aside, they have been far closer to the United States.

The end of the cold war has ushered in a new era in international relations in which U.S. domination can no longer be taken for granted. To be sure, the United States is the world's only superpower. Moreover, almost all of the industrialized democracies have followed Washington's lead on the major issues of the past few years, including the Gulf War, the deployment of troops in Bosnia, the bombing of Serbia in response to human rights violations in Kosovo, and the response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

On other issues, however, they have charted a more autonomous policy. Again, the EU, which represents all of its member states in negotiating international economic agreements, is the best example of this. The EU

### Economic Liberalization

**GREAT BRITAIN** has led the way in privatizing state-owned industries. France and Japan have loosened their macro- and microeconomic coordination procedures. Everywhere, tariffs and other barriers to international trade have been lowered, if not eliminated.

There is one important caveat here: Do not assume that the free market now reigns. States remain the most powerful economic factor in all the industrialized democracies. Great Britain, for instance, still heavily regulates the newly privatized industries. The weakened iron triangles of France and Japan shock most American economists. And most provisions of the welfare state remain in place despite some changes in the way services are provided.

In short, free-market rhetoric has outpaced reality—at least so far.

and the United States have disagreed on a number of issues, including trade in agricultural products, such as genetically modified food, and environmental policy—most notably over whether the Kyoto Treaty limiting greenhouse gas emissions should be ratified. Just as importantly, many Americans viewed Japan as an economic threat, at least until its bubble economy burst in the early 1990s.

There is considerable uncertainty about which international issues will predominate in the future and how much cooperation or conflict they will lead to. In fact, only one thing is clear: As the twenty-first century unfolds, the most important trend in foreign policy will be the impact of global forces on states and societies.

### Feedback

**A**lthough the term never appears in the classic texts, feedback has always been a key element of democratic theory. In all models of democracy, citizens are called on to make decisions (informed, one hopes) about policies and politicians. To do so, they need information about what is happening. People may choose to ignore that information, to view it through their own mental lenses, or not to participate in the process at all. None of those very real possibilities, however, lessens the theoretical and real-world importance of feedback in any society that aspires to democracy.

Given the importance of feedback, it is surprising how little research has been done on it. Nonetheless, it

### Globalization and the Liberal Democracies

**THE LIBERAL** democracies are the strongest states in the world—especially the larger ones discussed in the chapters that follow. In this sense, the figure on the inside front cover could well have been drawn with arrows “out” from them to reflect the way that they can shape global forces, especially on geopolitical or military issues.

But these countries still are affected by global forces in at least three key respects. First, their strengths are as much a function of their wealth and the clout wielded by their corporations as of their states. Second, despite that strength, international forces limit their ability to set and, even more so, implement economic policy. This is especially true for the fifteen members of the EU, which is increasingly responsible for their economic policies. Third, because of their location and the consumption that accompanies their wealth, they are among the regions of the world most affected by environmental decay.

does seem safe to reach three conclusions on the issues raised in the preceding paragraph.

First, for some people, it's getting ever easier to find out about politics at home and abroad. The telecommunications revolution has brought the world's news to our homes and has done so instantaneously. Some people argue that the television networks and even venerable newspapers such as the *New York Times* or the *Times* of London are nowhere near as informative as they used to be. Nonetheless, people who are interested now have access to far more information. CNN is on twenty-four hours a day. You can buy the *New York Times* almost anyplace in the United States. Many people who spend a lot of time on-line now suffer from information overload because they can access most of the world's major newspapers, news services, and other material on the Internet.

Second, people view the world in their own terms, which may be quite different from those of either the politicians or the media moguls. For most people, one of those terms seems to be disinterest in what happens outside of their own country or region. It is no accident that American television news executives run longer local news programs than national news programs and include less and less international news on their evening broadcasts.

Third, more and more people are tuning the political world out altogether. To some degree, this reflects what many feel is the cynical coverage by the media themselves, which has turned off millions. It may also partially be the result of the fact that, with the cable and

satellite revolution, we can now watch reruns of *Seinfeld*, a soccer game from Spain, or the *Jerry Springer Show* instead of the news. But most of all, the declining interest has less to do with the media than with the general cynicism about and skepticism toward politics and politicians. In short, it probably isn't the messenger, but the message, that is the problem.

### Conclusion: The Worst Form of Government Except for All the Others?

Given what we have seen, it is hard not to agree with the first half of Winston Churchill's statement that begins the chapter. The industrialized democracies have obviously accomplished a lot. But, just as obviously, they face serious problems, some of which, at least, seem to be insurmountable.

The second half of the statement may be true as well, though you will have to take it as a leap of faith until you learn more about the countries covered in parts 3 and 4. From that perspective, however, serious as democracy's problems may be, they pale in comparison with those in the rest of the world.

In uneven and imperfect ways, democratic regimes achieve a series of balances better than any other type of government, at least over the long haul:

- Between the governors and the governed
- Between the political and the rest of society
- Between unbridled capitalism and the interests of those who do not benefit (much) from it
- Between personal freedoms and the need to maintain order and forge coherent public policy



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### Key Terms

Concepts		People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Bureaucracy	Legitimacy	Hobbes, Thomas	MP	Christian Democratic parties
Cabinet responsibility	Member of parliament	Locke, John		Communist parties
Catch-all	Nationalization			Greens
Civic culture	Political party			
Civil society	Postindustrial society			
Cleavage	Postmaterialism			
Democracy	Privatization			
Electoral system	Proportional representation			
Fascism	Radical			
First-past-the-post system	Realignment			
Integrated elite	Right			
Interest group	Rule of law			
Interventionist state	Single-member district			
Iron triangle	Social democracy			
Laissez-faire	Vote of confidence			
Left				

### ***Critical Thinking Exercises***

1. Much has changed in the democratic countries since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of democratic politics presented here still make sense? In what ways? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think the country is headed in the “right direction” or is “on the wrong track.” If you were asked such a question about politics in the democratic countries as a whole, what would your answer be? Why did you reach that conclusion?
3. What are the main differences between presidential and parliamentary versions of democracy? What implications do those differences have for both policy making and democracy itself?
4. How did the “great transformation” of Western history help shape democracy?
5. How are the social and economic changes in these countries and in the world as a whole affecting the nature of and prospects for democracy?
6. What is postmaterialism? How important do you think it is for democracy today? Why do you reach this conclusion?

### ***Further Reading***

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# GREAT BRITAIN

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The Blair Revolution?
- Thinking About Britain
- The Evolution of the British State
- British Political Culture
- Political Participation
- The British State: Enduring Myths and Changing Realities
- Public Policy: The Thatcher and Blair Revolutions
- Feedback
- Conclusion: Challenges to Democracy

0 100 200 Miles  
0 100 200 Kilometers



*The British happened to the rest of the world. Now the world happens to Britain.*

ANDREW MARR

## The Blair Revolution?

 On 7 June 2001, British voters gave Prime Minister **Tony Blair** and his **Labour Party** its second resounding victory in a row ([www.britainusa.com/election2001](http://www.britainusa.com/election2001)). Their win four years earlier had ended eighteen years of **Conservative Party (Tory)** rule. When the new prime minister moved into his official residence at 10 Downing Street on 2 May 1997, he was greeted by thousands of delighted supporters who expected the energetic young leader to live up to his chief campaign slogan—"Britain deserves better." Many expected him to join U.S. President Bill Clinton as leaders of a new wave of moderate politicians who would redefine what it meant to be on the left as the twentieth century drew to a close.

This time, however, the reaction to Labour's landslide was much more subdued. At first glance, the party had fared almost as well. It lost only a bit more than 2 percent of its vote and six MPs in the House of Commons, leaving it with an overwhelming majority of 413 out of 659 seats.

But when Blair arrived at Labour Party headquarters on 8 June, the crowd was much smaller. And it wasn't just the crowd. Only 58 percent of the British electorate had bothered to vote, down from over 71 percent in 1997, itself one of the lowest turnouts in the twentieth century. Indeed, the biggest story of election night was voter apathy, not Labour's triumph ([abcnews.go.com/reference/blair.html](http://abcnews.go.com/reference/blair.html)).

Observers drew parallels to President Clinton's overwhelming reelection in 1996. Both men won, in part, because their opposition was amazingly weak. And both were effective campaigners who used television well and ran their party organizations effectively. However, both faced a series of policy problems that defied solution. In Blair's case, this included helping Britain's poor, determining whether Britain should adopt the euro, and overcoming opposition in the rural parts of the country to everything from a proposed ban on foxhunting to the government's response to the 2001 outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease.

Blair's victory was unprecedented. No Labour prime minister has ever served two complete terms, but given the size of Blair's majority, there is every reason to be-

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## GREAT BRITAIN: THE BASICS

Size	244,820 sq. km (about the same size as California)
Climate	Mild, but over half the days are overcast or rainy
Population	59 million: 81.5% English; 9.6% Scottish; 2.4% Irish; 1.9% Welsh; 1.8% Northern Ireland; 2.8% West Indian, Indian, Pakistani and other
GNP per capita	\$22,640
Currency	£1 = \$1.44 (1 January 2002)
Ethnic composition	94.2% White, 5.8% other
Religion	Predominantly Anglican, but 9 million Roman Catholic, 1 million Muslim, 1.5 million other Protestant, 400,000 Sikh, 350,000 Hindu, 300,000 Jewish
Capital	London
Form of government	Constitutional monarchy
Head of state	Queen Elizabeth II
Head of government	Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997)

lieve that his government will survive until the next election. Nonetheless, the sense that Blair is anything more than a conventional politician is long gone.

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## Thinking About Britain

### Key Questions

Fifty years ago, Britain was included in books like this one for four related reasons. First, it was the incubator, if not the originator, of liberal democracy. Second, that democracy evolved over a number of centuries in a process scholars call **gradualism**, which resulted in the post-World War II **collectivist consensus** in favor of a mixed economy and welfare state. Third, Britain had been one of the world's great powers over the past five hundred years and was still strong enough to warrant a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. Fourth, its political system was similar in many ways to those in other English-speaking countries, which made it an easy country to start with for most readers.

In Tony Blair's Britain, only the first and last of those reasons still hold. As we will see time and again in this

chapter, Britain's ranking among the world's powers has been in gradual, but constant, decline for over a century. And in the 1970s, Britain's collectivist consensus evaporated in a wave of strikes and violence.

In short, if Britain belongs in a book like this today, it is not because it is so important in its own right. Rather, it is because of its historical role—in particular for what it can tell us about the ways democracies develop. And, because it does have some similarities to other English-speaking democracies, it is a good intellectual starting point for comparative analysis.

As a result, this chapter will revolve around four slightly different themes. The first is gradualism. It is perhaps too charitable a term to use in describing a history that stretches back to the signing of Magna Carta in 1215. Nonetheless, in comparative terms, Britain has suffered from less unrest and has had a more consensual history than almost any other country, which has helped smooth its transition to democracy over the past two hundred or so years. It did have to face the challenges of creating the nation-state, overcoming religious and class conflict, and undergoing democratization. However, unlike the countries on the Continent, it was able to spread these challenges out over a number of centuries and to largely resolve each of them before it had to meet the next.

Second, in some respects, Britain has had the most troubles of any of the major liberal democracies since the height of the collectivist period in the early 1960s. As table 4.1 shows, Britain's relative economic standing declined dramatically in the second half of the twentieth century. In 1939 it was the second-wealthiest country in the world, trailing only the United States. By the 1970s it had dropped out of the top ten, and in 2000 it ranked fourteenth.

Britain is by no means a poor country, as its per capita gross national product (GNP) of over \$22,000 a year attests. However, its economic growth has lagged behind that of its major competitors for decades, something British tourists see whenever they visit France or Germany, where people enjoy a noticeably higher standard of living.

More important for our purposes are the political implications of this economic decline. No matter how you measure such things, the British are less masters of their destiny than they were a half-century ago, something the BBC's Andrew Marr pithily sums up in the quote that begins this chapter. Britain's relative decline in the world economic and geopolitical standings has been one of the most important underlying causes of most of the discontent and other difficulties it has experienced since the 1950s.

**TABLE 4.1** Britain's Decline: International Rank in GNP per Capita

COUNTRY	1939	1960	1974	1995	2000
United States	1	1	3	5	3
Great Britain	2	6	14	18	14

Source: Data for 1939, 1960, and 1974 from Walter Dean Burnham, "Great Britain: The Collapse of the Collectivist Consensus," in Louis Maisel and Joseph Cooper, eds., *Political Parties: Development and Decay* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1978), 274; data for 1995 from World Bank, *World Development Report 1996* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 189; data for 2000 from www.worldbank.org, accessed 19 June 2001.

That brings us to the third trend—the way **Margaret Thatcher** (1925–) and her Conservative governments in the 1980s and early 1990s redefined British political life and spurred the renewal of support for free-market economics that has taken hold almost everywhere. Thatcher and her colleagues rejected most of the premises of collectivist politics and pushed the country in a dramatically different direction. Over the seventeen years that she and her successor, John Major, were in office, they privatized dozens of companies, reduced spending on social services, curbed the power of the unions, opposed further British involvement in Europe, and reasserted Britain's influence in global affairs.

To this day, the "iron lady" remains controversial. Her supporters are convinced that she saved the country from bankruptcy and social chaos. Her opponents claim equally vociferously that she took it to the brink of disaster and left it a far more heartless place, with a government that treats the disadvantaged with disinterest and even disdain.

The fourth theme of this chapter, of course, is the impact of Blair and "New Labour." During the Thatcher-Major years, Labour lost four consecutive elections in large part because it had veered too far to the left for most of the electorate. After the second of those defeats in 1987, the party began an agonizing reassessment of its goals and strategies that eventually led to the selection of the young Tony Blair as its leader in 1994.

Blair and his team embarked on a radical restructuring of the party organization and a redefinition of its goals to the point that it routinely came to be called "New Labour." Most notably, Blair shed the party's commitment to nationalized industry and state-based solutions to most of society's problems. Instead, he endorsed some of the Thatcherite commitment to a market economy, though tempered with a greater concern for equality and a desire to forge more cooperative "partnerships" linking business, labor, and the government.

## MARGARET THATCHER



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Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher addressing the Conservative Party Conference in October 1984. This photo was taken shortly after a terrorist bomb exploded and nearly killed Thatcher in her bed.

### *The Basics*

#### **What's in a Name?**

We have to start with something very basic indeed. What do all the different names used to describe this country actually stand for?

Technically, this chapter is about the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (U.K.). It is a title few people use other than in official communication. England is its historical core (see the map at beginning of the chapter) and is where the Crown gradually solidified its hold on power centuries ago. Only later did the English conquer the Celtic fringes of their island—Wales and Scotland. The three are popularly referred to as Britain.

The U.K. also includes the six heavily Protestant counties of Northern Ireland. Their leaders chose to remain part of the U.K. when the rest of Ireland gained its

**M**argaret Thatcher was not a typical politician.

Margaret Roberts was born in 1925 in Grantham, which has often been described as the most boring town in Britain. Her father owned a small corner grocery store and was a member of the town council. He imbued certain values on his daughter, including self-reliance, self-discipline, and a respect for tradition, all of which were reinforced by her experiences growing up during the Great Depression and World War II.

During the war, Roberts studied chemistry at Oxford, but she soon realized she was more interested in politics than science and so became a lawyer active in Conservative politics. Marriage to the wealthy banker Denis Thatcher allowed her to turn to politics full time. In 1959 she was first elected to a safe Tory seat in suburban London. In 1970 she was named minister of education, in which position she gained the nickname “Margaret Thatcher, milk snatcher” for eliminating free milk from school lunches.

After the Conservatives lost in 1974, she and a number of her colleagues abandoned their commitment to the collectivist consensus. Two years later, she was named leader of the Conservative Party and became prime minister when it won the 1979 election. Her eleven years in office made her the longest-serving prime minister in more than a hundred years. Her successor, John Major, named her to the House of Lords in 1993.

independence in 1922. The status of Ulster, of course, remains hotly contested, though many hope that the **Good Friday Agreement** of 1998 will pave the way toward political calm in the province.

It can get confusing. Scotland (but not Wales or Northern Ireland) has its own bank notes and legal system. England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland all have their own international soccer teams but play together in cricket and, sometimes, in rugby. It takes three years to get an undergraduate degree in England, but four in Scotland. To simplify things, I will follow conventional usage and use the terms Britain and U.K. interchangeably unless I am referring to a specific part.

#### **The People**

Barely the size of California, the U.K. has nearly 60 million people, which makes it one of the most crowded

countries in the world. The congestion is actually worse than the figures might indicate, because more than 70 percent of its people live in urban areas, the majority of which are located in a 200-mile-wide band stretching from London in the south to Newcastle in the north. Put in other terms, almost half the country is open pasture land and home to hundreds of millions of sheep.

There are significant minorities in Wales and Scotland who want more autonomy, if not complete independence, from the U.K., though virtually no one there condones the use of violence to achieve their goals. The Irish, by contrast, have not relied on nonviolent protest alone. Even with the 1998 peace agreement, some Catholic and Protestant extremists carry out bombings and drive-by shootings. In fact, the worst single incident during the thirty years of “the troubles” occurred when twenty-eight people were killed by a car bomb planted by a tiny Catholic terrorist group in Omagh in August 1998.

Regional differences also overlap with religious ones. About two-thirds of the people belong to the Church of England. As an official, or “established,” church, it receives funding and other support from the state. Twenty of its top leaders serve in the House of Lords. Other Protestant sects are strongest in the working class and in the Celtic minority regions. About 10 percent of the people are Catholic, most of whom either live in Northern Ireland or are residents of England, Scotland, and Wales with Irish roots.

Britain also is no longer an all-white country. At least 5 percent of the population is of African, Asian, or Caribbean origin. Racial issues have become politically significant over the past thirty years, especially among Conservative politicians, who call for an end to immigration and, at times, even the repatriation of Britain’s nonwhite residents. As we will see later in the chapter, immigration, per se, is no longer the issue. Few people have been able to gain entry into the United Kingdom since the early 1990s other than as asylum seekers. But many of them became highly controversial after September 11 when some were alleged to be collaborators of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Whether true or not, the reaction against those immigrants seems to have heightened the racism against nonwhites from a disturbingly large segment of the white population.

## Decline

The British decline of the last half-century has left it the poorest of the major liberal democracies. That said, few of its people are poor by any reasonable definition of the term.

Despite cuts since 1979, the welfare state is still strong enough to guarantee basic health care, education,

and pensions for everyone. There is very little homelessness. Education through the undergraduate degree was free until 1998–99, when a £1,000 (\$1,500) annual tuition fee was introduced, and even that will be collected only after students graduate and their income passes a certain level.

The late 1990s brought economically better times. The U.K.’s growth rate is among the highest and its unemployment among the lowest in Europe. Nonetheless, signs of the decline still exist. Most salaries are no more than two-thirds of what they would be in the United States, which is reflected in a noticeably lower standard of living. In the three years I lived in England, most of my British colleagues, for example, had fewer clothes, older cars, smaller personal libraries, and slower computers than their counterparts in the United States.

Perhaps the most important economic characteristic of British life is social class. More than in most countries, you can tell peoples’ backgrounds by their clothing, accents, and even the sports they follow (in England, rugby union is a middle- and upper-class sport; soccer traditionally appealed to the working class). Many in the upper and middle classes have a degree of self-assurance that borders on arrogance, bred by generations of wealth and the education they received at one of Britain’s prestigious private schools (to make things confusing for American students, the best of them are known as public schools).

## The Evolution of the British State

### *Evolution, Not Revolution*

Chapter 3 identified four great transformations that had a tremendous impact on political life in the industrial democracies over the past several centuries:

- Building the nation-state
- Defining the relationship between church and state
- Establishing liberal democracy
- Dealing with the impact of the industrial revolution

Each had a wrenching impact. As we will see in the next two chapters, most countries in Europe had to deal with two or more of them at the same time, never fully resolved any one of them, and ended up with deeply divided populations and political instability as a result.

By contrast, the British were basically able to deal with these crises separately. And, with the exception of the industrial revolution, Britain emerged from each with a rough consensus, avoiding the lasting divisions that left France and Germany with large numbers of antagonistic political parties. The one divisive issue that

was left unresolved—class—was not a deep one and thus did not pit workers demanding revolution against an upper class fearfully holding onto its property and privilege.

This evolution was all the more remarkable because it occurred without recourse to a written constitution. The U.K. has a constitution, but it consists of laws and customs that never made it onto the statute books, which just about everyone accepts.

Put simply, it was this relative gradualism leading to consensus that allowed the British to move from one potentially divisive issue to another without provoking the lasting antagonisms that were so common elsewhere. Before moving on, be sure to note the importance of the term “relative” here. Britain’s history has by no means been tranquil. But, as will be clearer after you read any of the remaining chapters, it has been calmer than most countries’. The relative ease with which it met these challenges was a major contributor to the consensus about institutions and practices that has marked the most divisive periods in its history.

### *The Broad Sweep of British History*

The origins of the British state date back at least as far as 1215, when a band of nobles forced King John to sign the Magna Carta. (See table 4.2.) That historic agreement established that the king was not an absolute monarch. He was to rule in parliament and would need the consent of the nobility before imposing taxes or spending money. The Great Council, consisting of leading nobles and churchmen—the precursor of the current House of Lords—was created. As the thirteenth century wore on, the kings found that they could not meet state expenses with their personal revenues and called on the council to do so. Meetings took place wherever the king happened to be. The king and his ministers sat in the front, the nobility sat on benches facing them, and the commoners knelt in the back. After they heard the king’s requests, the latter two groups met separately, which ultimately led to the two houses of the contemporary Parliament ([britishhistory.about.com](http://britishhistory.about.com)).

Over the next four centuries, a succession of kings brought most of England together in what was never more than a very loose and decentralized state. The English people did not have a sense of national identity, and the government institutions based in London lacked the power of a modern state. Still, there was an England, which was more than one could say for Italy, Germany, or, to some extent, France at the time.

In other words, when the events listed in table 4.2 hit in earnest during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the British already had made major strides toward

**TABLE 4.2** Key Events and Trends in British History

YEAR	EVENT
1215	Magna Carta signed
1532–36	Reformation; establishment of Church of England
1642–60	Civil war and Restoration
1688	Glorious Revolution
1701	Act of Settlement
Early 1700s	Emergence of prime minister
1832	Great Reform Act
1911	Reform of House of Lords
1928	Right to vote for all adults

meeting two of them. The broad contours of the state already were set, and there was a rough understanding that the king had to share power with Parliament.

The sixteenth century brought the Reformation and the split between Catholics and Protestants that tore the Continent apart. In Britain, the Reformation left nowhere near as deep a scar. In part because he wanted to divorce and remarry, King Henry VIII broke with Rome and established the Church of England. It would be centuries before the British state tolerated other religions, and the division between Anglicans and Puritans would be one of the causes of the English civil war of the 1640s. Nonetheless, Henry’s actions set in motion forces that would depoliticize the church and remove religion as a deeply divisive issue by the end of the seventeenth century.

England did experience two revolutions in the seventeenth century. They were, however, mild in comparison with what was happening on the Continent, and their resolution actually helped pave the way for parliamentary democracy.

During the civil war of the 1640s, Oliver Cromwell led a group of members of Parliament, businessmen, Puritans, and soldiers, who overthrew the monarchy and beheaded Charles I. In 1660 Charles II was restored to the throne on the condition that he accept an expanded role for Parliament. Charles and his successors tried to reassert royal power and even flirted with Catholicism, which led to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the firm understanding that the king would henceforth be both Anglican and accountable to Parliament.

Royal prerogatives continued to disappear. The new king and Parliament agreed to a Bill of Rights, which made the imposition of any taxes or the implementation of any law without the consent of Parliament illegal. In 1701 the Act of Settlement regularized procedures for succession to the throne and asserted that the king and queen had to govern Britain according to Parliament’s laws. In 1707 Queen Anne failed to give her royal assent to a bill passed by Parliament, the last time any British

monarch has done so. Shortly thereafter, King George I stopped attending cabinet meetings, a practice continued by his successors ever since. Later, people began to refer to Sir Robert Walpole as a prime minister, though it would be another two centuries before the title was mentioned in any laws. (There were less charitable terms used to describe him, including Man Mountain, the Norfolk Trickster, and Merlin the Wizard.)

When the American Revolution broke out, the king had become little more than the head of one parliamentary faction. He still appointed cabinet ministers, but they could not remain in office if they lost the confidence of Parliament. Although the king usually had the support of both houses, he could only be assured of it if a majority of the members of both houses felt he was ruling effectively and did not violate their *de facto* control over the budget.

In the nineteenth century, the rise of capitalism disrupted British life more than any of the other events discussed in this section. The industrial revolution and the imperialism that fed it brought untold wealth to the capitalists and to the country as a whole. But it was nowhere near as beneficial for the men and women who worked in the mills and mines.

Hundreds of thousands left the countryside to work in the unsafe factories and to live in the filthy, overcrowded cities so powerfully described in the novels of Charles Dickens. Trade unions were still illegal, but friendly societies, new denominations such as Methodism, and, most importantly, the great petition drives of the Chartist movement made it clear that the new working and middle classes spawned by the industrial revolution were forces to be reckoned with.

Despite these rumblings from below, political life remained the preserve of a tiny elite. No more than 1 percent of all adult males were wealthy enough to vote. Parliament overrepresented rural districts, many of which were known as “rotten boroughs” because they had so few constituents that a single lord could control who was elected. Even the growing capitalist class chafed at being excluded from political power.

A number of movements demanding political change sprang up during the first third of the nineteenth century. Bands of workers and artisans known as Luddites broke into factories and smashed the machines. By 1810 the term *working class* was commonly used—and feared. Eventually, dissatisfaction with the status quo grew strong enough to force passage of the **Great Reform Act** of 1832. Despite its name, the reform was not all that extensive. Only about 300,000 more men gained the vote, and the aristocracy continued to dominate political life.

The small number of men added to the rolls should not lead you to underestimate the act’s importance. Its passage showed that the British elite were willing to adapt to changing circumstances rather than cling to power and run the risk of widespread political disruption, if not revolution. It also gave the House of Commons new confidence in further curbing the power of the monarchy and aristocracy.

A second Reform Act in 1867 doubled the size of the electorate to nearly 3 million. In 1870 Parliament introduced the secret ballot. The Representation of the People Acts of 1884 and 1885 expanded the suffrage to the point that working-class men constituted the majority of the electorate. By the early twentieth century, all men had gained the right to vote. Most women won the suffrage in 1918, and the vote was extended to all women ten years later.

After the 1867 reforms, the first modern political parties were formed by parliamentary leaders, who needed to generate support from the newly enfranchised voters. The lead here was taken by the Conservative National Union, which did quite well among the working class, and the National Liberal Federation, which won disproportionate support among the middle class and in Ireland.

Members of Parliament (MPs) were soon dependent on the massive party machines that came to dominate electoral politics. Gradually, the party—that is, its leaders in Parliament—began to determine who would run for office and who would serve in cabinets. Strict party discipline was imposed on the MPs. In 1911 the House of Lords was stripped of its remaining power, marking the final step in the evolution of British parliamentary democracy.

A brief comparison with France should show just how much Britain had progressed. While Britain’s parliamentary system was getting ever stronger, French democracy remained shaky at best. France had just suffered through the Dreyfus scandal, in which false accusations of treason against a Jewish army officer unleashed such passionate protests that the Third Republic nearly collapsed. Significant divisions over the role of religion and the nature of the state spawned antiregime parties that typically won a third of the seats in parliament.

As noted earlier, only one of the four challenges was to have a lasting impact: the division of Great Britain into supporters of the Labour and the Conservative parties largely along class lines. And even that division paled in comparison with the class conflict taking place on the Continent. To cite but one example, in 1926 the **Trades Union Congress (TUC)** called for a general strike, and British workers walked off the job *en masse*. In France or

## DEMOCRATIZATION IN BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

Both Britain and the United States have had comparatively peaceful evolutions, and when crises did occur, they were typically resolved before the next major transformation loomed on the political horizon. Some were exceedingly wrenching, most notably the two civil wars. However, they were less divisive than conflicts on the Continent and, more importantly for our purposes here, were largely resolved in ways that led everyone to at least accept the outcome.

Germany, such a strike would have been accompanied by violent clashes between police and strikers. In Britain, instead of fighting, many of the policemen and strikers played soccer together to pass the time.

Workers' demands were by no means fully satisfied during the 1920s. However, their frustrations were increasingly channeled through the TUC and the Labour Party, which were both known for their moderation. By the 1920s, the Labour Party had surged past the Liberals and become the main competition for the Conservatives.

The Great Depression that began in 1929 hit Britain as hard as it did any European country except Germany and had both political and economic consequences. For most of the next decade, no party had a clear majority in Parliament, and a succession of weak Conservative and Labour governments failed to ease the country's economic woes or to do much to meet the dangers posed by an ever more aggressive Nazi Germany. Two changes that were to reshape British politics after the war did occur despite the uncertainty of the 1930s. First, Labour solidified itself as the major alternative to the Conservatives. Second, the liberal or free-market wing of the Conservative Party was discredited because of its failure to solve the economic crisis brought on by the depression. In its place rose a new generation of Tory politicians who were more willing to turn to the state in shaping the country's economic future and meeting the needs of the poor and unemployed.

### *The Collectivist Consensus*

The period from 1945 until the mid-1970s is often portrayed as the golden era of British politics. (See table 4.3.) Leaders from both parties agreed on a variety of policy goals, including full employment, the provision of social services that guaranteed at least subsistence-level living conditions for all, cooperation with labor unions, and

**TABLE 4.3** The Collectivist Years and Beyond

YEAR	EVENT
1942	Beveridge Report published
1945	Labour elected
1948	National Health Service created
1951	Conservatives return to power
1964	Labour returns to power
1972	Heath government forced into U-turn
1974	Labour wins two elections without a working majority
1979	Thatcher elected
1990	Thatcher resigns, replaced by John Major
1997	Blair elected

active government intervention to secure economic growth.

Although some steps toward creating a modern welfare state had been taken under the Liberal-Labour coalition government of 1906–11, the most important origins of the collectivist consensus lie in World War II. British fortunes had sagged during the first months of the war. Country after country fell to the Nazis. British troops were forced to withdraw from Europe. German planes by the thousands bombed London and the other major British cities. There were widespread fears of a German invasion, which would have been the first since 1066.

Finally, with defeat staring the U.K. in the face, Parliament called on Sir Winston Churchill to replace the ineffectual Neville Chamberlain as prime minister. Although his Conservative Party had a clear majority in the Commons, Churchill chose to head an all-party coalition. The opposition parties agreed to suspend normal politics—including elections—for the duration of the war. The Conservatives, in turn, agreed to establish a commission headed by the civil servant William Beveridge. Its task was to propose an overhaul of the social service system to be implemented after the Allied victory. When issued in 1942, the **Beveridge Report** called for a social insurance program in which every citizen would be eligible for health, unemployment, pension, and other benefits that would guarantee all Britons at least a subsistence income.

The elections of 1945, the first in ten years, were fought largely over the issue of social and economic reform. Both major parties endorsed the broad outlines of the Beveridge Report, although Labour was committed to going farther and faster in enacting its recommendations, as well as nationalizing a number of key industries.

Labour won a resounding victory, marking the first time it came to power with a parliamentary majority. Prime Minister Clement Attlee's government proceeded

to turn the party program into legislation, which the House of Commons passed with only slight modification.

By 1949 the surge of reform had come to an end. Throughout Europe, the cold war sapped socialist parties of their momentum. Furthermore, with recovery well under way, Labour decided to dismantle most of the planning boards that had brought government, the unions, and business together. Meanwhile, Labour's popular support began to wane. It barely won a majority in the 1950 elections, and when Attlee dissolved Parliament the following year, the Conservatives (Tories) returned to office.

One might have expected the party of capitalism to repeal Labour's reforms. In fact, it did little of the sort. The steel industry was privatized, and people had to pay a nominal fee for prescriptions and eyeglasses. Otherwise, the Conservatives retained the welfare state Labour had so greatly expanded in the first few years after the war.

In retrospect, the Conservatives' actions should not have come as much of a surprise. The party had supported most collectivist policies in 1945. During the election campaign that year, the debate between the parties had centered on the pace and extent of reform, not whether it should occur. In his first speech as leader of the opposition, Winston Churchill stated:

**It is evident that not only are we two parties in the house agreed on the main essentials of foreign policy and in our moral outlook on world affairs, but we also have an immense program, prepared by our joint exertions during the coalition, which requires to be brought into law and made an inherent part of the life of the people. Here and there, there may be differences of emphasis and view but, in the main, no Parliament has ever assembled with such a mass of agreed legislation as lies before us this afternoon.<sup>1</sup>**

Electurally, the British populace remained divided along class lines. Normally, about 70 percent of the working class voted Labour, and an even larger proportion of the middle class voted Conservative. But ideologically, those differences were not very significant. In their pathbreaking study of the British electorate in the 1950s, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba discovered that, although the British did tend to support the party of their class, this did not lead them to hate either the other class or the other major party.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Allen Sked and Chris Clark, *Post-War Britain: A Political History*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 24.

<sup>2</sup>David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976).

The two main parties routinely won over 90 percent of the popular vote and an even larger share of the seats in the House of Commons. It mattered little which party was in power. Each gradually expanded the role of the British state at almost exactly the same rate year in and year out. Elections were fought over slogans such as the Conservatives' "You Never Had It So Good" in 1959 or over Labour's claim that it would bring more modern management practices to government in 1964.

Many political scientists saw the collectivist years as the natural culmination of British political history, with its emphasis on class, consensus, and cooperation. Others saw them as providing a model of what modern liberal democracies could and should be like.

However, the collectivist consensus did not survive, because two conditions that made it possible did not themselves endure. The consensus had existed in part because steady economic growth allowed successive governments to meet popular policy demands. Also, British politics could be consensual only when there were not any deeply divisive issues. The decline of the collectivist consensus will be the focus of much of the rest of this chapter.

## British Political Culture

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### *The Civic Culture and the Collectivist Years*

At the height of the collectivist period in 1959, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba conducted about a thousand interviews in Britain, which they drew on in writing their landmark study *The Civic Culture*.<sup>3</sup> They painted a picture of a harmonious and trusting British public, and concluded that any effectively functioning democracy needed a culture much like the U.K.'s.

Critical analysis and subsequent events have led most political scientists to conclude that the British political culture is no longer as supportive as it once was and that a number of different types of cultures likely can sustain a democracy. (See, for instance, chapter 8 on Japan.) Nonetheless, the snapshot Almond and Verba took of Britain in the collectivist years goes a long way toward explaining why the British political regime and democracy were not put in jeopardy during the crisis years of the 1970s and 1980s.

The British people were not completely satisfied with their political lot. However, they probably were as

<sup>3</sup>Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962).

content as any society in the twentieth century. There was virtually unanimous agreement that the political system based on parliamentary sovereignty and cabinet rule was legitimate. There were protests, such as those by the marchers who crossed the country to oppose nuclear weapons each year at Easter time. But, except for a tiny handful of communists and fascists, all Brits acknowledged the government's right to govern.

The British were remarkably tolerant of each other and of the people who governed them. The quarter of the working class that regularly voted Conservative did so mostly out of a sense of deference toward people they believed to be their betters. Poll after poll revealed a public that trusted its politicians and institutions. Most British adults felt a sense of efficacy—that, as individuals, they could influence the political process. However, few people in Britain actually participated in ways that put demands on decisionmakers other than by voting, leading observers like Almond and Verba to conclude that democracies actually need a relatively inactive and uninvolved electorate!

The British also thought of themselves as patriotic, with flag-waving and national anthem-singing almost as widespread as in the United States. But even this patriotism was muted and did not lead to anything approaching jingoistic involvement abroad. This is most easily seen in the relative ease with which most people accepted the loss of Britain's colonial empire.

### *The Politics of Protest: Toward an Uncivic Culture?*

In the 1970s, all that changed. More and more people expressed serious reservations about the collectivist consensus. Though the overwhelming majority of the population stayed on the sidelines, popular participation took on a decidedly confrontational tone and left many with the impression that Britain was becoming ungovernable.

Signs of dissatisfaction came from all points on the political spectrum. Northern Ireland, which had been relatively quiet, became anything but that after the introduction of British troops into the province in 1969 and “bloody Sunday” in January 1972, when thirteen Catholics were killed by British troops. The IRA (Irish Republican Army) and various Protestant paramilitaries continued their campaigns of violence, including an attack that nearly killed Thatcher and the rest of the Conservative leadership at the party's annual conference in 1984.

Britain also had to come to grips with rather widespread racism. The Conservative and, later, Ulster Unionist (Protestant) politician Enoch Powell had built a

career exploiting the fear and antagonism many British men and women felt toward Asians, Africans, and Afro-Caribbeans. The National Front, whose racism was at best thinly veiled, did well in local elections in working-class white neighborhoods adjacent to others with large minority populations. White toughs repeatedly attacked Blacks and Asians, which periodically led to riots in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, and other major cities.

Here, we can concentrate on the single most important example of heightened unrest that led to worries about Britain's becoming ungovernable: the new militancy of the unions and of many of their members. It should come as no surprise that workers grew more dissatisfied during the crisis years. By the mid-1980s, unemployment had topped 3 million, six times what it had been during most of the 1950s and 1960s. Workers who still had their jobs saw their standard of living eroded by inflation that regularly outpaced their annual raises.

The radicalization of the unions had begun during the 1960s and contributed heavily to the defeat of the Wilson, Heath, and Callaghan governments. Strikes were larger and lasted longer. Often, workers struck without warning and without the authorization of union leaders. Workers also often called “secondary” strikes against other firms that their own company dealt with, thereby spreading the disruption caused by the initial dispute. There was even violence at factory gates and mine pits.

The respective rigidities of Thatcher and the union leaders put them on a collision course that reached a peak during her second term. The government provided the pretext for such a collision in 1984 by passing a new Industrial Relations Act that obliged union leaders to poll their members using secret ballots before calling a strike and held them financially responsible for any illegal walkouts. On 1 March the Coal Board said that the Cortonwood mine in Yorkshire would be shut. Less than a week later, it announced that up to twenty more mines would be closed, with the loss of about 20,000 jobs. The miners in the endangered pits put down their tools, and union leaders called for a nationwide strike without following the procedures outlined in the new legislation.

Both the striking miners and the government held firm for almost a year in a strike that was to cost the British economy about £3 billion. Finally, the miners gave up, and in March 1985 their local representatives narrowly approved a resolution to return to work.

The militancy of the unions was echoed in many other areas of political life. Many people felt that the Labour Party had been taken over by extreme radicals, called the “loony left” by the tabloid press. The peace movement actively opposed the deployment of U.S.

Environmental protesters opposing construction of a bypass around the city of Newbury in Berkshire.



© S. Freedman/Getty Images

cruise and Pershing missiles armed with nuclear warheads, which thousands of women tried to stop by blocking the entrance to the American base at Greenham Common for more than a year. More recently, environmental activists delayed construction of a bypass around the clogged nearby city of Newbury by living in the trees workers would have to cut down and building tunnels under the proposed path of the road.

Political scientists have discovered that all of the protests had a dual impact on British culture. On the one hand, the activists on the left and right helped create a far more polarized political system. The left believed that the capitalists were ruthlessly exploiting the working class. The right feared that the socialists, unions, feminists, and minorities were making Britain harder to govern and were undermining traditional values.

On the other hand, the vast majority of the populace did not take part in the protests and grew frustrated with the new confrontational politics, especially with the left. There was a general agreement that the left had gone too far in its demands on both domestic and foreign policy. Even Labour supporters came to doubt the new radicalism of the unions and their own party. As the 1980s wore on, there also was growing dissatisfaction with a right wing that was perceived to be too radical.

### ***The Civic Culture Holds***

The protests also illustrate just how much British political culture did not change during the crisis. Indeed, in at least two respects, the British culture “held.”

First, the dangers these protests posed proved rather fleeting, in large part because the Thatcher government met them head-on. To a large extent, it succeeded, which we can see by returning to the example of the trade unions. The Thatcher government viewed the 1984 coal miners strike as a showdown with the militant wing of the union. Unlike earlier prime ministers of both parties, Thatcher was able to play on the growing dissatisfaction with union demands and the growing split between radicals and moderates within the union movement itself to bring the miners to their knees.

The defeat of the miners turned the tide. Since then, union militancy and membership have declined, and most of the radical leaders have been replaced by moderates. The rhetoric and tactics of class war have largely disappeared.

The important point here is not that Thatcher was right or wrong. What matters is the impact her actions had on the British people. Together with the economic recovery of the mid-1980s, Thatcher’s strong stands against the left helped sharply reduce the political tensions that seemed to imperil traditional British institutions and practices.

Second, and even more importantly, the analysts who predicted the end of the civic culture overstated the dangers the protest movements posed. Despite what the far left may have said or wanted, revolution was never on the horizon. The British public was too committed to established parliamentary institutions for that.

A 1979 review of the original conclusions about the civic culture did uncover some erosion in some of the in-

dicators on which Almond and Verba had built their case twenty years earlier. In particular, given the common perception that the government had failed to solve many of the country's problems, the increased skepticism toward politicians and their motivations was hardly surprising.

But, if we concentrate on the more general level that most students of political culture focus on, there is much less evidence that values changed. Dissatisfaction with recent governments simply has not translated into dissatisfaction with the regime.

### *Will There Always Be a Britain?*

There may be one exception to the still stable civic culture. Since the late 1960s, identification with Britain as a whole has declined, especially among the Scots and the Welsh.

A 2000 poll asked people about the levels of authority they most identified with. Eighteen percent of the Scots said Britain, and 72 percent mentioned Scotland. The comparable figures for Wales were 27 percent for Britain and 81 percent for Wales. The English were split down the middle, with 43 percent mentioning Britain and 41 percent England. When asked about their lives twenty years in the future, 22 percent thought that the government in London would be the most important political institution in their lives—barely half the number that mentioned the EU.<sup>4</sup>

As we will see later in the chapter, there has been a resurgence of support for regional parties in Scotland and Wales, and the “British” parties have never fielded candidates in Northern Ireland. We will also see that, although the U.K. has long had one of the most centralized political systems in the democratic world, the first Blair government created powerful regional parliaments in Northern Ireland and Scotland along with a weaker one in Wales. And the government floated trial balloons about regional assemblies in England as well, following the first direct election of a mayor of London in 1999.

No one is suggesting that the U.K. is going to fall apart or that there will be a fully independent Scotland any time soon. But many of the symbols and institutions that have held British culture together are losing their influence. There is no better example of this than the monarchy. The reigning king or queen has not had any real political power for more than a century. Nonetheless, the monarchy has been an important symbol of British unity and pride. But much of that sense of unity

and pride has disappeared in the wake of scandals about the personal lives of many of the “royals,” which culminated in the tragic death of Princess Diana in 1997.

This “new” country is reflected in the changing physical face of Britain—and most of the other major European countries. Britain is increasingly a racially diverse nation. Between 6 and 8 percent of the population is nonwhite, though most were born in the U.K. Even though the minority population pales in comparison with that of the United States, curry is probably the most popular food in the country, and most fish-and-chips shops are run by Chinese immigrants who also sell egg rolls and fried rice—not to mention curry.

There are overt instances of racism, including the race riots that shook a number of grimy industrial cities in the north in 2001 and led to racist candidates there winning over 5 percent of the vote that June. As in the United States, young black men are more likely than their white contemporaries to be pulled over by the police “on sus” (racial profiling to Americans) and to be treated arbitrarily after an arrest. Perhaps most telling, a former cabinet member, Lord Norman Tebbit, gained a lot of positive publicity when he said that British citizens of Pakistani or Indian origin should not be considered truly British if they did not support the English cricket team when it played matches against their country of origin.

Last but by no means least, the British national identity is being undermined as a side effect of its involvement in the EU. Conservative **euroskeptics** ground their qualms about Europe as much in a feared loss of national identity as in doubts about the viability of the euro. They are probably fighting a losing battle as more and more Europeans come to work in the U.K. and more and more British spend time living and working on the Continent. Satellite and cable television services carry programming in multiple languages, and Brits can get any major European daily newspaper delivered to their door the next morning.

Again, there is little danger that the U.K. will collapse or even that the monarchy will disappear. Rather, for a growing number of people, the psychological ties that have bound the country together for generations are weakening, as they have been doing ever since the British Empire began to collapse at the end of World War II.

### **Political Participation**

Just as important in understanding both the long-term stability and short-term difficulties of any system are the ways in which people participate in political life.

<sup>4</sup>Cited in Andrew Marr, *The Day Britain Died* (London: Profile Books, 2000), x.



Rioting between white and Asian young people in Oldham, in 2001.

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Over the past century or so, most of that participation in Britain has been through political parties and interest groups that pursue moderate policies and concentrate on class and economic issues.

Before the 1970s, the Labour and Conservative parties were the linchpin in British political stability as the primary architects of the collectivist consensus. After the war, one or the other won each general election with a firm parliamentary majority, and the victorious party treated the result as a mandate to carry out the policies laid out in its **manifesto**, or electoral platform. (See table 4.4.)

With the onset of the economic crisis in the 1970s, however, the parties, too, began to change. Both Labour

and the Conservatives (Tories) ended up deeply divided, with the balance of power in each drifting out toward ideological extremes. Some polarization occurred in all of the liberal democracies, though it went farther and faster in Britain than in most of the others. However, as in all of them, the dramatic shifts toward extremism proved to be a passing phenomenon. By the end of the 1980s, Labour had joined the other social democratic parties in moderating its views, and Thatcher's retirement in 1990 and the defeat in 1997 have had the same effect on the Conservatives, although their "modernization" is still in its earliest phases.

In short, Labour and the Conservatives are now squarely catch-all parties whose primary motivation is winning elections. Their ideological positions still differ somewhat and remain important to the grassroots activists who attend the annual party conferences. However, the leaders have shown a willingness to sacrifice ideological purity for likely electoral gains. They are increasingly under the sway of media wizards and spin doctors who, like their American counterparts, seem more like advertising executives than committed partisans.

**TABLE 4.4** British Prime Ministers Since 1945

YEAR	PARTY	YEARS IN OFFICE
Clement Attlee	Labour	1945–51
Winston Churchill	Conservative	1951–55
Anthony Eden	Conservative	1955–56
Harold Macmillan	Conservative	1956–63
Alec Douglas Home	Conservative	1963–64
Harold Wilson	Labour	1964–70
Edward Heath	Conservative	1970–74
Harold Wilson	Labour	1974–76
James Callaghan	Labour	1976–79
Margaret Thatcher	Conservative	1979–90
John Major	Conservative	1990–97
Tony Blair	Labour	1997–

### *The Conservatives*

Though they are out of power as of this writing, we start with the Conservatives, because they were in charge for



so much of the past century and a half that they have often been seen as the “natural party of government” (www.conservatives.com). They have won a majority of the elections since the late 1880s and have been in office about two-thirds of the time since World War II. That said, their defeat in 1997 and the electoral reforms the Labour government may endorse could consign the Tories to an extended period in opposition.

The Conservatives were so successful for three main reasons, which began to evaporate during the Thatcher years. First, most Conservative leaders were pragmatic politicians who were flexible enough to change their policies when circumstances warranted. For example, the early-nineteenth-century Tories may well have wanted to maintain the elitist system in which only the wealthiest men could vote. But, by the time of the Chartist movement of the 1820s, they recognized that they would have to extend the suffrage. Similarly, it was the Conservative Party under Benjamin Disraeli that organized the first grassroots constituency organizations after the Reform Act of 1867 granted the vote to most working-class men.

Second, because their roots lay in the nobility, conservative politicians tended to embody the values of noblesse oblige, or the responsibility of the elite to the less fortunate. As a result, the Conservatives did not historically champion the free-market economy and unbridled capitalism. To be sure, the party always included people like Thatcher who believed market forces should be strengthened. However, the party’s most influential leaders stressed its responsibility for the poor and were willing to support a substantial welfare state, to use the government to maintain the health of a capitalist economy, and to accept the collectivist consensus after World War II.

Third, the Conservatives had a rather elitist but effective organization. The party maintained organizations in each constituency, most of which had a full-time paid “agent” who was in charge of efforts in that area. Real power, however, lay in London and, ultimately, with the leader, who was also prime minister when the party was in power. There were no formal provisions for selecting the leader, who normally was secretly chosen by senior MPs. The leader, in turn, dominated the parliamentary party and the central office, which had veto power over whom local constituency organizations nominated to run for Parliament.

By the mid-1970s, the Conservatives could no longer count on those traditional assets. A new generation of market-oriented leaders who were hostile to the welfare state used more open procedures in selecting Margaret Thatcher after Edward Heath led it to two defeats at the

polls in 1974. Thatcher and her colleagues preferred what they called the politics of commitment to the consensus building and pragmatism of earlier periods.

Thatcherism served the Tories extremely well through the 1980s. In large part because of its own difficulties, to be discussed shortly, Labour dumped the 1979 election into Thatcher’s lap, beginning her eleven years in office. At first, she was obliged to include most of the senior party leaders in her cabinet, including many who did not share her objections to collectivist politics. Over the next few years, however, she gained more and more control over the party, forcing most of the moderates onto the sidelines and replacing them with ideological conservatives who also were personally beholden to her.

When Thatcher’s popularity slipped and she was finally forced to resign in 1990, the challenge came not from the moderates, but from her erstwhile supporters who had come to see her as an electoral liability. They then chose her protégé, John Major (1943–). Though widely respected, Major proved to be a mediocre leader who neither appealed to the electorate nor bridged over the party’s deepening divisions, especially over Europe.

Major resigned as party leader the day after the 1997 election and was replaced by the young but experienced William Hague (1964–), who promised to revitalize the party. Despite his youth, however, he is not seen as particularly dynamic. Moreover, the pundits dubbed him “Hague the Vague,” because they find it impossible to determine where he stands on most key issues. He struggled against the more flamboyant Blair, and the party seems mired in the divisions that led to the 1997 debacle. Most observers were quickly convinced that Hague was not up to the job. Even though Blair’s government lost popularity, Hague and the Tories were never able to close the gap between the two parties, and the Conservatives suffered another crushing defeat in 2001, casting grave doubts about the party’s future—and not just Hague’s.

The key to the Tory future probably lies in the way the party handles its divisions over European integration. Although Thatcherism was initially defined by the prime minister’s pro-market and anti-welfare state positions, by the 1990s most of the Tory right came to be preoccupied with “Europe.” They saw such developments as the **Maastricht Treaty**, which created the EU, and the creation of a single currency as serious threats to British sovereignty. (See chapter 7.) Most of them objected to Major’s decision to defer any decision on monetary union until a decision had to be made and were convinced that the party lost the election because of its indecisiveness. All the polls, however, suggest that the Euroskepticism actually worsened the Tories’ defeat in 1997 and will continue to undermine their popularity for



© AFP/COBBIS

Iain Duncan-Smith, new leader of the Conservative Party.

the foreseeable future. Polls since the election have shown increasing public support for the Labour government's plan to join the single currency sometime during the life of the parliament elected in 2001.

The Tories may have consigned themselves to more poor showings at the polls by choosing Iain Duncan-Smith as the new party leader two days after the September 11 attacks. As expected, William Hague resigned as party leader following the June election, and the party used a new procedure to select its leader in which all party members chose between two finalists who had been determined by the Tory MPs. Because the membership base of the party is very conservative, they chose the ultra-right-wing Smith, who was so far to the right of center on Europe that he was frequently at odds with Prime Minister Major during the last months before Labour's 1997 victory.

## *Labour*

For most of the past quarter-century, it has been Labour, not the Conservatives, that has borne the criticism for being too extreme and out of touch with the electorate. But after four consecutive defeats and three leadership changes, the party has moved back toward the center and become among the more modern and innovative parties in the industrialized world.

The Labour Party ([www.labour.org.uk](http://www.labour.org.uk)) was formed at the beginning of the twentieth century as an alliance of trade unions, independent socialist groups, and cooperative associations. Unlike the socialist parties we

will encounter in subsequent chapters, the Marxists had little influence on the party in its early years. Clause 4 of the original party program adopted after World War I did call for the nationalization of the "commanding heights" of British industry. Still, most observers were convinced that, unlike many European socialist parties, Labour had accepted the parliamentary system and the democratic rules of the game by the early 1900s.

This was the case in large part because the unions dominated the party. TUC members automatically join Labour as well unless they sign a form informing the union not to send part of their dues to the party. Because the trade unionists were more concerned with improving the lives of their members than with any doctrine, they were able to keep the party close to the center throughout most of its history. After losing three consecutive elections in the 1950s, many Labour leaders came to the conclusion that the party could never win a majority again if Clause 4 stayed in the party program or if it kept the few radical stands it had on controversial issues such as unilateral disarmament. Although it did not formally repudiate Clause 4, the party conference in 1959 did make it clear that socialism was at most a long-term goal for the party, not something it would implement were it to win the next election, which it did in 1964. (See table 4.5.)

The Labour government of the 1964–70 period was dominated by moderates in the parliamentary party. That moderation, however, would not survive the onset of the economic crisis. As with the Tories, the party grew far more divided, and its center of gravity shifted dramatically away from the middle of the political spectrum. The new wave of union militancy pushed many in the party leftward, as did entry into the European Community (the predecessor to the EU) in 1972. Most importantly, the party's left wing gained support from activists first drawn to politics by the new left in the 1960s.

The shift leftward and the party's inability to control the newly radicalized unions led to its defeat in 1979. Rather than moderating its positions, the party moved even further to the left. It chose the radical Michael Foot to be its new leader. It also created an electoral college comprising members of Parliament, union officials, and rank-and-file activists who selected new leaders, thus stripping power from the relatively moderate MPs. Meanwhile, seventeen of its most conservative MPs quit in 1981 and created the new Social Democratic Party, which we will discuss in the next section.

The party seemed dominated by its left wing, epitomized by the enigmatic Anthony Wedgwood Benn. Though from an aristocratic family (the Wedgwoods make some of Britain's finest china), Benn had gradually

**TABLE 4.5** British General Election Results Since 1945

YEAR	CONSERVATIVES		LABOUR		LIBERAL DEMOCRATS		OTHER	
	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats
1945	39.8%	213	48.3%	393	9.1%	12	2.7%	22
1950	43.5	299	46.1	315	9.1	9	1.3	2
1951	48.0	321	46.8	295	2.5	6	0.7	3
1955	49.7	345	46.4	277	2.7	6	1.1	2
1959	49.4	365	43.8	258	5.9	6	1.0	1
1964	43.4	304	44.1	317	11.2	9	1.3	0
1966	41.9	253	47.9	363	8.5	12	1.6	2
1970	46.4	330	43.0	288	7.5	6	3.1	6
1974 (Feb.)	37.8	297	37.1	301	19.3	14	5.8	23
1974 (Oct.)	35.8	277	39.2	319	18.3	13	6.7	26
1979	43.9	339	37.0	269	13.8	11	5.3	16
1983	42.4	397	27.6	209	25.4	23	4.6	21
1987	42.3	376	30.8	229	22.6	22	4.3	23
1992	41.8	336	34.4	271	17.8	20	6.0	24
1997	30.6	165	43.2	419	16.7	45	9.7	30
2001	31.7	166	40.7	413	18.3	52	8.5	28

Note: Others consist almost exclusively of regional parties in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Liberals includes Liberals up to 1983, Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance in 1983–87, and Liberal Democrats in 1992. The total number of seats varies from election to election, with a low of 625 in 1950 and 1951 and a high of 659 in 1997.

moved to the left during the 1970s and was now advocating a radical break from capitalism. He, not Foot, was Labour's most visible leader during the 1983 campaign, and together they led the party to one of its worst defeats ever. The party did so poorly that many observers thought that the **Alliance**, formed between the Liberals and Social Democrats, might replace Labour as the country's second largest party.

Had Benn not lost his seat that year, he might well have been chosen to replace the ineffectual Foot. Instead, the party turned to Neil Kinnock. Though on the left of the party, Kinnock was willing to put its electoral success ahead of its ideological purity. The party made up some of its lost ground in 1987, but it still found itself 11.5 percent in votes and nearly 150 seats behind the Tories.

Over the next five years, Labour's moderation led to increased support in the polls. Nationalization of industry all but disappeared from the party program. Labour also abandoned its commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament, which had cost it dearly in 1983 and 1987.

Perhaps most importantly, like the American Democrats in 1992 or Labour itself in the early 1960s, party activists and leaders had grown tired of losing. As the next elections neared, Labour found new unity rooted in a common desire to defeat the Tories, which, in turn, reinforced the belief that it had to modify its stance. At the 1991 party conference, for instance, Clare Short, a left-wing MP and now a member of the cabinet, won ringing applause for the following statement: Thatcher "should have been a short-term leader of the opposition. And

that [she was not] is our fault. We have to be very grown-up, very serious and very honest about our politics. We all used to posture. This is deadly serious."

As election day neared, pollsters predicted either a Labour victory or, at least, a hung Parliament in which Labour would have the most seats but not an overall majority. When the votes were counted, Labour had lost an unprecedented fourth straight election.

This time, however, defeat did not splinter the party. Kinnock immediately announced that he would step down. Most party leaders were convinced that he had done a good job in creating a more credible image for the party and that it therefore had to continue with its more moderate policies. In any case, he was replaced by the widely respected and even more pragmatic John Smith.

The most dramatic shift in Labour politics came after Smith's sudden death in 1994. This time, Labour took a major risk by selecting the dynamic Tony Blair as his successor. Blair was only forty-one at the time he was chosen. And he and his colleagues made it abundantly clear that they were planning to strip away all vestiges of the old—and loony—Labour left. Within a year, Clause 4 was gone. The party announced that it would keep many of the reforms of the Thatcher-Major era, including most of the privatizations of companies and the changes in the social service system. Blair even acknowledged that he had personally respected Thatcher's style, if not her policies. The power of the unions to control the party leadership was reduced even further, and most of the leftists were shunted onto the sidelines. In their place were younger and more moderate politicians who,

## TONY BLAIR



AP/Wide World Photos (Owen Humphrey)

Tony Blair with his wife Cherie Booth. Booth is one of Britain's most prominent lawyers and the daughter of Anthony Booth who played the equivalent of "Meathead" in the British sitcom *Till Death Do Us Part*, which was the inspiration for the American *All in the Family*.

Anthony Charles Lynton Blair became the youngest twentieth-century prime minister when Labour won its landslide victory in 1997.

Blair is not a typical Labour politician. He was born to an upper-middle-class family—his father was a law professor and led the local Conservative Party in Durham where the Blairs lived. Tony was educated at public (that is, private, in American

like Blair, had few connections to the working class, let alone socialism.

The Blair government's actions will be discussed in depth in the section on public policy. Here, it is enough to note that under his leadership the party has steadfastly kept itself in the center of the political spectrum and that Blair has taken firm control of its organization, to the extent that he has occasionally irritated colleagues to his left.

### *The Liberal Democrats*

The newest major party is the **Liberal Democrats** ([www.libdems.org.uk](http://www.libdems.org.uk)). The party is a product of a merger of the

terms) schools, including Edinburgh's Fettes, the most prestigious school in Scotland.

At Oxford, Blair largely avoided the hedonistic student life of the mid-1970s, though he did play in a mediocre rock group, Ugly Rumours, which disbanded after three performances. After graduation, he moved to London, where he practiced law and joined the Labour Party. In 1982, he ran and lost in a by-election. The next year, he was chosen for the safe seat of Sedgefield, near Durham, which he has represented ever since. Blair cast his lot with John Smith and other pragmatic party reformers early in his career, but he also did not alienate colleagues on the left. So, when Smith died, he won the party leadership surprisingly easily.

In 1980 Blair married Cherie Booth, whose father was one of the stars of *Till Death Do Us Part*, a 1960s sitcom that was the model for the American *All in the Family*. Booth is one of England's leading queen's counselors, or trial attorneys. The Blairs have four children.

Though often compared with Bill Clinton, there has never been a whiff of scandal about Blair's personal life.

old Liberals and the **Social Democratic Party (SDP)**. Britain has never had a true two-party system, but in the postwar period, Labour and the Conservatives dominated political life. The Liberals were the largest of the other parties, but the party never won more than fourteen seats between 1945 and 1979.

During the 1960s, Liberal leaders struggled to define a reform strategy that would situate their party between the increasingly ideological Labour and Conservative parties and provide a haven for the growing number of dissatisfied voters. Popular support for the Liberals did grow during the 1970s, although they were still able to win only a handful of constituencies. Most of their new voters were not confirmed Liberals. Instead, they were



traditional Conservative or Labour supporters who felt that they could no longer vote for their traditional party but also could not bring themselves to vote for its main rival.

In 1981, four prominent leaders (known as the “gang of four”) quit Labour to form a new SDP. They assumed that millions of voters would follow them, and initial public opinion polls suggested they might be right. Quickly, however, it became clear that the SDP could not win on its own and would be consigned to a role much like that of the Liberals. At that point, Liberal and Social Democratic leaders decided to form the Alliance and run a single candidate in each district. The Alliance did well at the polls, winning about 26 percent of the vote in 1983, only two percentage points less than Labour.

But the new party fell victim to Britain’s **first-past-the-post**, or winner-take-all, electoral system. Any number of candidates can run, and whoever wins the most votes wins the constituency even if she or he ends up far short of a majority. In other words, a minor party can win an impressive share of the vote, but if that vote is spread evenly around the country, it can be all but shut out of Parliament. That is precisely what happened to the Alliance in 1983, when it only won twenty-three seats, or 3.5 percent of the total.

The Alliance itself proved difficult to maintain. The two parties had different traditions and different, but equally ambitious, leaders. Tensions mounted following its marginally worse results in 1987. The two leaderships decided to merge and create the Liberal Democratic Party. The merger was accepted by everyone except for a small faction headed by David Owen, who had been Labour’s foreign minister and who would later be one of the leading negotiators seeking a solution to the civil war in Bosnia. Owen kept the SDP alive until a by-election in 1990, when it barely topped 150 votes, not even a third of the number captured by Lord David Sutch of the Rav-ving Monster Loony Party. The SDP soon disbanded.

The new party and its leader, Paddy Ashdown, went into the 1992 election with high hopes. Unfortunately for them, it did even worse than the Alliance had, losing 20 percent of its vote and two of its twenty-two seats.

Since then, the party has turned its fortunes around in two key respects. First, it capitalized on dissatisfaction with the Conservatives to build a strong base in local government, where it has actually tumbled the Tories into third place. Then, in the run-up to the 1997 parliamentary election, it cast itself to Labour’s left on a number of issues by advocating stronger environmental policies and an income tax hike to fund increased spending on health and education. That, plus some tactical voting in which Labour supporters cast their votes for a Liberal Democrat who stood a good chance of win-

ning, led to a doubling of its representation in Parliament despite actually losing a few votes nationwide.

The Liberal Democrats’ expectations continued to mount in 1997 and 1998, when Blair’s government appointed party leaders to joint cabinet committees considering constitutional and electoral reform. But the party was dealt a serious blow in January 1999, when the highly popular Ashdown decided to retire. And many observers thought that the Liberal Democrats actually had peaked in 1997. There was little reason to believe that Labour would support tactical voting again in the next election, especially once it failed to move forward on key Liberal programs, most notably a shift to proportional representation in parliamentary elections. It also had to cope with the retirement of the highly popular Ashdown and the transition to its new leader, Scottish MP Charles Kennedy.

Indeed, the initial polls before the 2001 election anticipated a far weaker showing than four years earlier. However, as both major parties’ campaigns faltered, the Liberal Democrats picked up steam. Kennedy and other leaders proved to be excellent campaigners, and the party actually gained 1.6 percent of the vote and seven seats.

Nonetheless, it is hard to see the Liberal Democrats making the kind of breakthrough the Alliance leaders had hoped for in the mid-1980s. Even given the Tories’ terrible performance in the past two elections, they won almost twice as many votes as the Liberal Democrats, who are also still tremendously underrepresented in Parliament given their share of the poll.

### *Minor Parties*

The rise in Scottish, Welsh, and Irish nationalism has also led to a moderate growth in support for regional political parties. In the 1970s, Plaid Cymru (Wales) and the Scottish National Party (SNP) each won seats in the House of Commons. In 1974, the SNP leapt ahead of the Tories into second place in Scotland.

After the 1974 election, the Labour government proposed **devolution**, which would give Scotland and Wales limited self-government. Both proposals were put to referendum, and both were defeated.

The regional parties’ fortunes have ebbed and flowed ever since. In recent general elections, they have often come in second in their regions. They are strong enough to have shut the Conservatives out completely in Scotland and Wales in 1997 and to have limited them to a single seat in Scotland in 2001. However, the two parties combined won only ten seats in 1997 and nine in 2001.

Regional assemblies were created for Scotland and Wales after Labour’s return to power, and the two did



## USEFUL WEB SITES

There are dozens of good Internet gateways on aspects of British politics. The three below are among the best. The first is maintained by Politico's Bookstore, a charming book shop and restaurant near Parliament. The second is run by *UKPOL*, a print magazine. The third is managed by the British Politics Group, which is based in Cincinnati, Ohio.

[www.politicos.co.uk/bookstore/resources/links/](http://www.politicos.co.uk/bookstore/resources/links/)

[www.ukpol.org.uk](http://www.ukpol.org.uk)

[www.uc.edu/bpg](http://www.uc.edu/bpg)

The most complete public opinion data are found on the site of Britain's biggest polling firm, MORI.

[www.mori.com](http://www.mori.com)

All of the quality British newspapers are on-line. However, none of them are as useful for readers of this book as the BBC's site, which has every story it has run since it went on-line.

[news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk)

The prime minister's office has an excellent portal for government ministries, including the fascinating e-envoy's office, which is using the web to empower people. You can also watch the weekly debate when the prime minister goes to the House of Commons for Question Time from C-SPAN's web site.

[www.number-10.gov.uk](http://www.number-10.gov.uk)

[www.e-envoy.gov.uk](http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk)

[www.cspan.org/guide/international](http://www.cspan.org/guide/international)

somewhat better in the inaugural elections for their assemblies in May 1999. Both came in a strong second, with Plaid Cymru winning 17 of 60 seats and the SNP 35 of 129.

Regional parties have always dominated in Northern Ireland, because the "mainland" organizations never run candidates there. As a result, many analysts do not include the eighteen Northern Irish constituencies when covering a general election. Given the importance of the peace process, however, it is important to note, at least in passing, the fact that the balance of power swung in the direction of the province's more extreme parties in 2001. Sinn Fein (the political wing of the IRA) and the Democratic Unionist Party (led by Protestant clergyman Ian Paisley) gained six seats between them.

Britain also has a host of truly minor parties that do little more than make campaigns more enjoyable for

voters. Thus, the Natural Law Party based its 1997 and 2001 campaigns on the claim that the world's problems would be solved if we all learned to meditate and levitate. Similarly, independent cross-dresser Mrs. Monypenny pranced around the stage while the results of the most hotly contested race in 1997, between former BBC correspondent Martin Bell and the Conservative (and corrupt) Neil Hamilton, were being announced.

### *The British Electorate*

During the collectivist years, the British electorate was among the easiest to understand in the industrialized world. In those days, a single issue—social class—shaped the way most voters viewed the political world. When a sample of voters was polled in 1963, 1964, and 1966, two-thirds identified with the same party in each of the three interviews. By contrast, only 22 percent of the French electorate did so in similar surveys. When the interviewers probed, they found that people identified themselves with parties primarily because of the positive connection they saw between "their" party and class.

The issues of the day, conversely, played a relatively minor role in determining either those long-term loyalties or the way people voted in a given election. At most, 2 or 3 percent of the electorate had clearly defined and consistent belief systems. No more than 25 percent had anything approaching a firm understanding of such central political concepts as the difference between left and right. And 75 percent of the electorate saw these concepts in ways that were no more sophisticated (though perhaps less graphic) than those expressed by a lubricating engineer in 1963:

**Well, when I was in the army you had to put your right foot forward, but in fighting you lead with your left. So I always think that the Tories are the right party for me and that the Labour party are fighters. I know that this isn't right really, but I can't explain it properly, and it does for me.<sup>5</sup>**

In fact, people changed their opinions on such issues as British membership in the Common Market so frequently that pollsters wondered if most voters really had opinions at all on anything but the most visible and controversial matters.

That had begun to change in the decade before the 1979 election. At first, observers interpreted the Conservative victory as a vote against the radicalism and chaos of the Labour government rather than as a first stage in

<sup>5</sup>David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 232.

**TABLE 4.6** The Changing Role of Class and Gender in British Politics (percentage voting labour)

YEAR	WORKING CLASS	WOMEN
1974 (Oct.)	57	38
1979	50	35
1983	38	26
1987	42	32
1992	45	34
1997	58	49

Source: Adapted from Dennis Kavanaugh, *Thatcherism and British Politics: The End of Consensus*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 168; Philip Norton, *The British Polity*, 3rd ed. (New York: Longman, 1994), 91–92; and David Sanders, “The New Electoral Background,” in *New Labour Triumphs: Britain at the Polls*, ed. Anthony King et al. (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1997), 220.

a more lasting realignment. There was little apparent support for most of Thatcher’s policies in the polls, and certainly not the kind of support that could lead to a lasting shift in the way millions of people thought and acted.

Over the course of the next decade, a substantial number of workers and lower-middle-class voters did become loyal Tory voters. However, by the early 1990s, the more marked trend was a substantial dealignment as voters grew disillusioned with both major parties. Thatcher and her policies did evoke powerful emotions, but ultimately they were largely negative, leading people to want to vote against her party rather than necessarily supporting Labour or the Liberal Democrats.

In other words, Labour did not win in 1997 or again in 2001 primarily because there was a massive and lasting increase in Labour party identifiers. Rather, its two landslide victories can be explained more readily in terms of voters’ “fatigue” with the Conservatives after eighteen years in office in 1997 and the extremely weak campaign run by William Hague and his team four years later.

Labour has been able to regain some of the support it lost among manual workers (see table 4.6). However, do not read too much into that, because the size of the working class as a whole continues to decrease, and Labour cannot hope to win an election appealing primarily to it.

However, there is evidence that Labour has done a good job of reaching out to some of what Inglehart called the postmaterialist voters, reflected here in the second column of table 4.6. Perhaps because abortion has not been a serious issue in Britain (it has been legal since the 1960s, and few people want to see any change in the law), a “gender gap” has been slow to emerge. However, in 1997 and 2001, Labour worked hard to increase its support among women, especially in the middle class. That was clear not only in its manifesto but also in the number of young, professional women it nominated, the

106 of them who were elected, and the high profile a number of women have had since the government took office.

### *Interest Groups*

Britain has hundreds of interest groups, ranging from the unions discussed earlier to the world’s most organized group of backyard gardeners. Some of them are national, and others focus only on local concerns—such as the residents of Dover rallying protest against a threatened French purchase of their port should the government privatize it.

Because votes in the House of Commons are normally foreordained conclusions, there is little of the lobbying one finds in the United States. Groups try to maintain good relationships with members of the House of Commons, including “interested” MPs who are acknowledged agents of a union or other group. Not surprisingly, however, the groups focus their activity on the people who actually make the decisions: ministers, party leaders, and senior civil servants.

And, in a country in which the political parties have so concentrated their appeals on class lines, not all groups have had levels of influence roughly comparable to their membership or other resources. Two groups, in particular, wield disproportionate influence because of their close links to the major parties—the TUC with Labour and the **Confederation of British Industry (CBI)** with the Conservatives.

Britain actually has over three hundred trade unions that now enroll about 38 percent of the workforce, down from 53 percent in 1979. About 90 percent of all unionized workers are affiliated with the TUC.

The business sector is not as monolithic. As in the United States, there are trade associations for most industries. Chambers of commerce promote business interests in their communities. The CBI is the most important of these groups, with a membership that includes more than a quarter million companies and trade associations. Although most of the CBI’s members are small companies, the vast majority of its income comes from large firms with over a thousand employees, and these companies dominate it.

All governments increasingly have to consult with groups like these. They have information and expertise that civil servants have to draw on in making plans for future legislation. Even more importantly, the government needs their cooperation in implementing new laws, something the Heath administration learned to its regret when the TUC refused to comply with the Industrial Relations Act of 1971.

During the collectivist years, the government also included the TUC and CBI when developing most economic policy in what were known as tripartite or **corporatist** arrangements. They and other groups were officially made part of a number of agencies, including the National Economic Development Council (NEDC), Health and Safety Executive, and Commission for Racial Equality.

Relations between the state and interest groups have changed dramatically since then. The Thatcher government effectively froze the unions out of decision making. And, despite Labour's long-standing links to the TUC, it, too, has distanced itself from the unions and has sought, instead, to solidify its relationship with dynamic corporations, especially in the high-tech industries.

## The British State: Enduring Myths and Changing Realities

In 1867 Walter Bagehot (1826–77) published *The English Constitution*. Much like Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, Bagehot's book is still read not only as a classic historical document but also as a source of useful insights into politics today for two main reasons.

First is the very fact that he analyzed the British constitution. That may not seem like a big deal to people from other liberal democracies, but it is for Britain because it does not have a written constitution. What Bagehot pointed out was that Britain indeed had one composed of acts of Parliament, understandings, and traditional practices that everyone agreed to follow.

Second, Bagehot drew a distinction between what he called the “dignified” and the “real” parts of the British constitution. The dignified side included the monarchy and other institutions that no longer had much impact on day-to-day political life. Instead, he argued, the real power in the English constitutional system lay with the House of Commons. (See table 4.7.)

### The Monarchy and the Lords: Still Dignified?

The monarchy and the **House of Lords** have duties and responsibilities that give them quite a bit of visibility. But it is safe to say that they have no real impact on what the government does.

Officially, there are still three types of lords ([www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/ld/ldhome.htm](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/ld/ldhome.htm)). Hereditary peers come from the traditional nobility, whose ancestors were made lords for service—meritori-

**TABLE 4.7** The British and American States

FEATURE	UNITED KINGDOM	UNITED STATES
Basic constitutional arrangements	Unwritten	Written
	Unitary	Federal
	Fusion of powers	Separation of powers
Executive	Relatively strong	Relatively weak
	Dominant	Power to persuade
	Recruited from Parliament	Recruited everywhere
Legislature	Mostly debating	Making laws
	Party voting	Coalition-based voting

ous and otherwise—to the Crown. Sons inherit their seats from their fathers. Technically, the hereditary peers are still members of the House of Lords, but the first Blair government stripped them of their right to vote—and their little remaining political power.

The active members of the House of Lords today are all life peers. A 1958 law authorized the monarch (but, in practice, the prime minister) to elevate people to the Lords for exemplary service in politics, business, or other walks of life. Their peerages end with their deaths and are thus not inherited by their children. The five archbishops and about twenty other church officials are also lords.

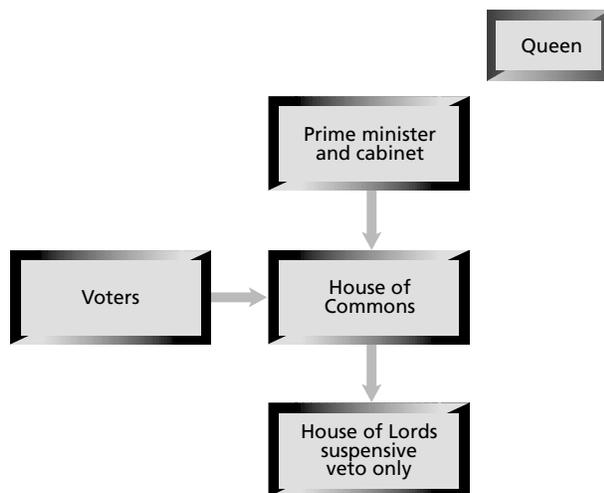
Finally, the law lords serve as Britain's highest court of appeals. However, unlike the U.S. Supreme Court, they cannot rule acts of Parliament unconstitutional.

At least two cabinet members must be lords. The House of Lords also has to approve all legislation. However, various agreements reached over the centuries have stripped it of the power to do anything more than delay enactment of a bill by a few months. It did use that power to effectively kill the government's plan to outlaw foxhunting in the last days of the first Blair government. But it cannot do even that on legislation included in the government's election manifesto. In late 2001 a royal commission outlined the government's plans for a new upper house with about 550 members that would be partially elected but largely appointed. It is not clear what will happen next, because most politically active people outside the Labour Party oppose the plan.

The monarchy is even less powerful. Theoretically, the monarch still rules “in Parliament.” (See figure 4.1.) This means that Queen Elizabeth II names the new prime minister and the rest of the cabinet. They all then have to kneel before her to take their oaths of office. She opens each session of Parliament by reading a speech from the throne outlining “her” policies for the upcoming term. Finally, a bill only becomes law when she gives her royal assent ([www.royal.gov.uk](http://www.royal.gov.uk)).

In practice, the monarch has no such powers. She does not determine who joins a cabinet or whether to





**FIGURE 4.1** Decision Making in Britain

agree to legislation. And her speech from the throne is written by the prime minister.

For many, the monarchy today is an embarrassment. The House of Windsor has been embroiled in scandals involving the failed marriages and highly publicized affairs of Prince Charles and his siblings. The tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in August 1997 and the tremendous outpouring of grief it engendered only added to the royal family's woes.

### *Parliamentary Sovereignty— Sort Of*



In Bagehot's eyes, the **House of Commons** ([www.parliament.gov.uk/commons/hsecom.htm](http://www.parliament.gov.uk/commons/hsecom.htm)) was sovereign because it was the body that determined who governed and which laws would be passed. Parliament officially retains those powers. However, as critics of the British state are quick to point out, the Commons as a whole is no longer a particularly powerful body. Instead, real influence lies with the leadership of the majority party and, increasingly, in the nonelected bodies that grew in importance during the more than a decade and a half of uninterrupted Tory rule.

To see that, however, we have to start with the House of Commons and the discussion of parliamentary systems presented in chapter 3. (See figure 4.1.) The Commons currently has 659 MPs. (The exact number changes slightly each time the country is redistricted.) Like members of the U.S. House of Representatives, MPs represent single-member districts and are elected in first-past-the-post elections. There, the similarity between the two systems ends. The MPs are not expected

to represent their constituencies' interests in the way members of Congress do. They do not even have to live in their districts, and the national party organization will frequently "parachute" leading politicians into safe seats (as with Blair in 1983), all but guaranteeing that they will be reelected time and time again.

From 1995 to 1998, I lived just outside of Henley-on-Thames, site of the world-famous regatta and one of the most solidly conservative regions in the country. The MP was Michael Heseltine, long one of the most prominent Tories, who served as deputy prime minister during the last two years of the Major government. Few of my British friends knew if Heseltine lived in the district. And even fewer of them cared, because they understood that MPs are not primarily elected to reflect the views and preferences of the "folks back home."

The key to British politics is the **parliamentary party**, as its delegation in the House of Commons is known. The leader of the majority party becomes prime minister and can almost always count on the support of his or her parliamentary colleagues. The head of the largest minority party becomes leader of the opposition and appoints the **shadow cabinet**, whose members monitor and criticize the actions of their equivalents in the government. The party leaders are senior politicians who enjoy the ideological and personal support of the other MPs in their party. As such, they are quite different from most recent American presidential candidates, who got that far because of their personal bases of support and careers built largely outside of Washington. In Britain there is only one road to the top—through the parliamentary party.

Thatcher's and Blair's careers are typical. Elected to parliament at age thirty-three in 1959, Thatcher spent her first decade on the **backbenches**, as the seats reserved for MPs who are not part of the leadership are known. She was appointed to her first cabinet post eleven years later. Only such a veteran could seriously aspire to the leadership of a party in reasonably good shape, a post that came six years later. Similarly, Blair was only thirty when he was first elected. Because Labour was in disarray, young politicians like Blair could rise through the ranks more quickly, and by the time his predecessor, John Smith, died in 1994, Blair had held a number of important positions in the shadow cabinet. Still, he had had eleven years experience in the House before he became party leader and fourteen before moving into 10 Downing Street.

The prime minister selects the rest of the cabinet (most of whom are officially called secretaries of state), along with about seventy other junior ministers. All are members of Parliament. Seventeen of the nineteen

The first televised session of the House of Commons in 1989. Many parliamentary debates and question periods are now televised on C-SPAN in the United States.



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members of Blair's initial cabinet were members of the House of Commons.

As in the United States, each cabinet minister is responsible for a department or portfolio, such as foreign affairs, the Exchequer (economics), or defense. Men and women are appointed to cabinet positions that roughly correspond to their positions in the party's power structure, which are not necessarily ones that reflect their interests or talents. Consequently, ministers are even less likely to be experts in the area they are responsible for than are their American counterparts. Each minister also has two or three other MPs who serve as junior ministers, usually coordinating relations with the permanent bureaucracy and Parliament.

Unlike in the United States, the cabinet is governed by the principle of **collective responsibility**, remaining in office as long as the entire government retains the support of its parliamentary majority. Moreover, individual ministers must publicly support all cabinet decisions, including those they disagree with. If not, they are expected to resign.

The cabinet introduces all major pieces of legislation. Once it proposes a bill, a highly charged adversarial process unfolds as the bill wends its way through Parliament. Debate in the House of Commons is among the most acrimonious in the world, which is reflected in the very architecture of its chamber in the Palace of Westminster. Most legislatures are laid out in a semicircle,

with the speaker's podium in the center. In Britain the government and opposition face each other on benches that, tradition has it, are separated by the distance of two drawn swords.

Members hurl political charges and personal insults at each other. They often shout so loud that the person who has the floor cannot be heard, while the speaker pounds a gavel and screams "order, order" to no avail. Sessions are especially heated when an important bill is being debated and when ministers appear to answer whatever questions opposition MPs and their own backbenchers ask of them.

The intensity of parliamentary debate, however, should not lead you to conclude that it actually matters very much. Because of the way parliamentary systems work, as discussed in chapter 3, as long as one party has a majority in Parliament, it is virtually assured of getting its bills passed.

Of the 213 bills proposed by the Thatcher and Major governments in the 1987–92 Parliament, 202 passed. And 6 of the remaining 11 probably would have been approved as well had the House of Commons had time to get to them before the 1992 election. Backbench pressure sometimes forces the government to modify or even withdraw a bill, but that almost never happens on what it considers to be major legislation.

There are "free votes" in which members can do as they choose, which governments sometimes use when

their own party is divided. For instance, in 1995 Prime Minister Major allowed a free vote on the recommendation of the Nolan Commission, which sought to force MPs to make public how much money they made as consultants to organizations with political interests. Sometimes, too, the government agrees to accept amendments from its backbenchers. However, all major legislation and even significant amendments to key bills are deemed votes of confidence, and the government wins because the majority's MPs have no real leeway in determining how to vote.

MPs are officially notified that such a vote will take place when they receive a **three-line whip**. Physically, this is a simple note from the party whips, underlined three times, stating that a vote will take place at a stated time. But the MPs know what it means. When it is time for the vote or a division (the MPs literally divide and go into two rooms, one for those in favor of a bill and the other for those against it), the prime minister can count on more than enough support for the bill to pass.

Backbenchers' influence is limited, too, by the way the House of Commons is organized. It does not have the kind of committee system in which members and their extensive staffs develop expertise in a given policy area. Members of the Commons have at most one or two full-time staffers, compared with an average of eighteen for members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Their office budgets are barely a fourth that of an American representative.

Despite their power, British governments rarely act rashly or irresponsibly. The decision to proceed with new legislation usually comes only after an extended period of study and debate. The discussions that culminated in the 1948 act that established the National Health Service began in the mid-1930s, when serious flaws in the old insurance system began to receive serious attention. It was another decade before the government **white paper** on the subject was issued, in 1944, and four more years elapsed before the bill was passed. More recently, Thatcher's program of privatizing nationalized industries and other assets did not appear out of thin air but had been under scrutiny by the Conservative Party and economists for years.

Furthermore, when governments do blunder, there are ways, however imperfect, in which disgruntled MPs can respond. For example, when British and French troops occupied the Suez Canal in 1956 after it had been taken over by the Egyptian government, Conservative MPs continued to support Anthony Eden's government, which easily survived a vote of confidence. It was clear, however, that Eden's actions had cost him the confidence of his own party in Parliament. Sensing that, he

resigned the following year, citing his declining health. In fact, he did not resign because of his health—he lived until 1977—but because enough Conservative MPs had exerted behind-the-scenes pressure that Eden realized he had to go. The same thing, of course, happened to Thatcher in 1990.

But, on balance, the government does get what it wants. As Andrew Marr put it:

**Government backbenchers can, at rare moments, exercise some leverage on the general drift of the executive policy which can, from time to time, help change the world beyond Westminster. But most of the time, frankly, it's more like children shouting at passing aircraft.<sup>6</sup>**

### *Cabinet Government?*

So far, this description of the British state closely follows the model of the parliamentary system developed in the preceding chapter. That should come as no surprise because the British developed it, and its version is still considered to be the norm by most political scientists.

However, as also noted in chapter 3, a smoothly functioning parliamentary system alone does not provide the kind of strong state that has been so central to the success enjoyed in Germany, Japan, and France over the past few decades. Britain falls short in two key respects. The first involves its cabinet and, more broadly, the political executive; the second includes problems with its civil service.

All important legislation does originate with the cabinet. Its plans and objectives are a constant source of rumor. Speeches by ministers (especially at the annual party conferences), their appearances before the House of Commons during question time, and the interviews they grant the early morning *Today* show on BBC radio or the late evening *Newsnight* on television are all moments of great political drama.

Despite all that, cabinet government is becoming something of a myth. As in most countries, cabinet meetings are held in secret, and only a brief official announcement of what had been decided is issued at the end of each week's session. Nonetheless, we have learned a good deal in recent years about how the cabinet operates through numerous leaks (at which British politicians seem particularly adept) and the often revealing memoirs of former ministers, most notably Richard Crossman. He also was a political scientist and

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<sup>6</sup>Andrew Marr, *Ruling Britannia: The Failure and Future of British Democracy* (London: Michael Joseph, 1995), 115.

journalist who held a number of offices in the 1964–70 Labour governments.

Crossman was one of the party's leading theoreticians and hoped to get one of the major ministries. However, because of his relatively low position in the party hierarchy, he ended up becoming minister of housing, a position he was neither particularly interested in nor qualified for. Nonetheless, Crossman came to office with a strong commitment to fulfilling the goal for his ministry as it was laid out in the party's manifesto: constructing up to 500,000 new housing units during its term in office. He assumed, too, that he would simply inform his civil servants of that goal, and they would say, "Yes, minister," and begin drawing up the legislation and plans to implement it. But, as the sitcom of the same name shows, "yes, minister" often means exactly the opposite. Officially, the civil servants are there to do what their title suggests—serve their minister. In reality, they possess so much more experience and have so much more leverage over the bureaucracy than the minister does that they often have a lot more to say about what happens in their ministry. In this case, they told Crossman it was impossible to build that many new homes so quickly. Despite everything Crossman tried, he could not get them to change.

More importantly for Crossman, instead of experiencing the excitement and power that would come with making the "big decisions" about his country's future, he found himself preoccupied with the constant public relations functions and the never-ending paperwork. Meanwhile, important decisions were being made by Prime Minister Wilson and the handful of ministers closest to him and then presented to the cabinet as a whole as *faits accomplis*. Other ministers who, like Crossman, were outside that inner circle, had a say only on issues that affected their own ministries, not on the broader issues of national policy that had drawn them into public service in the first place. If anything, that trend has accelerated with Blair, who has relied heavily on personal advisers rather than on his cabinet.

### *The Rest of the State*

The rest of the British state is nowhere near as important. Nonetheless, there are three areas that deserve at least mention here.

First is the weakness of the British bureaucracy compared to its equivalents on the Continent and in Japan. There, top civil servants believe that it is their role to help forge cooperative arrangements that allow the state to coordinate much of economic policy making for the public and private sectors alike.

Most British senior civil servants do not see their role as formulator of policy. Instead, they think of themselves primarily as administrators and believe that the cabinet should determine public policy. At most, their job is to flesh out the details of proposed legislation, keep the politicians from committing major mistakes, and ensure that the policy gets carried out once passed by Parliament.

There was some reform of the civil service in the 1990s. Seventy-five government agencies have been freed from most central controls, and some services are now performed by private contractors chosen through competitive bidding. But one area in which the bureaucracy has not changed is the unequal status of women. Of the seventy-five agencies that have been given more autonomy, only six were headed by women in 1992. Similarly, whereas 42 percent of male civil servants earned some sort of extra "merit" pay, only 24 percent of their female colleagues did.

Second, during their eighteen years in office, the Tories also diluted cabinet and parliamentary sovereignty by assigning more and more responsibilities to two types of nonelected bodies. First are regulatory agencies, which are supposed to oversee the newly privatized companies, most of whose names begin with "Of." Thus, OfTel deals with telecommunications, Ofwat with water, and Ofsted with standards in education.

In addition, there are now more than 7,700 QUANGOs, or quasi-autonomous nongovernmental organizations, which are roughly equivalent to independent U.S. agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency. During the 1960s and 1970s, Conservative and Labour governments alike decided to "hive off" many regulatory, commercial, and cultural functions to these bodies. QUANGOs were set up, for example, to coordinate the development of new towns, to regulate health and safety at the workplace, and to develop human resources. Some of them, like the British Mint, were not very important politically. Others, like the Consultative Panel on Badgers and Tuberculosis or the Welsh Office Place Names Advisory Board, rarely raise a political eyebrow. But some, like the Commission for Racial Equality or the University Grants Committee (which funds universities), have had some of the most controversial assignments in British politics.

Third, the courts have never had a policy-making role. The settlement ending the Glorious Revolution of 1688 forbade judges from going beyond the merits of a particular case to rule on the constitutionality of an act of Parliament. Although that is still technically the case, a new generation of more activist judges is stretching that centuries-old policy to its limits. In 1991 a judge

overturned the law that did not allow men to be tried for raping their wives. Two years later, another ruled that doctors do not have to keep brain-dead patients alive if their condition is irreversible. And in 1995 the country's most powerful judge publicly criticized Home Secretary Michael Howard's plans to require stiffer sentences for repeat offenders.

### *Labour and Constitutional Reform*

Labour came to power committed to opening up British government. Indeed, in the minds of many, its proposals for constitutional reform were the most radical part of its manifesto. It moved in four main directions during its first term in office, at times working together with the Liberal Democrats—the first time since World War II that there was even a hint of coalition politics in the U.K.

First, as already noted, regional assemblies were created in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. In addition, London now has a directly elected mayor for the first time. The Scottish Parliament can both pass legislation and raise some of its own revenue. The Welsh Assembly, by contrast, is responsible only for the implementation of national legislation. As part of the Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland got a parliament of its own that will also share some of its power with the British and Irish governments.

Second, all those bodies are elected using **proportional representation (PR)**. A cabinet committee, appointed by Blair but chaired by the Liberal Democrat (and former Labour minister) Lord Jenkins, issued a report calling for use of a version of proportional representation in parliamentary elections. However, to date, the government has not committed itself to drafting legislation on the proposal.

Third, as also noted earlier, hereditary peers have lost the right to vote in the House of Lords. The government has hinted at the need for broader reform of the upper house in ways that would make it more democratic and influential. So far, no concrete plans for such reforms have been presented.

Finally, Parliament passed a Freedom of Information Act in 2000 that will go into full effect in 2002. Prior to then, the Official Secrets Act and other legislation had left Britain with one of the most closed political systems in the world. Although some critics have attacked the new law for its exemptions (for example, covering ongoing criminal investigations), civil servants, ministers, and QUANGO officials will no longer be able to routinely keep information on their activities and reasoning from the public.

### **Public Policy: The Thatcher and Blair Revolutions**

Their British supporters often call Margaret Thatcher's and Tony Blair's public policies revolutions. By the standards we will see in later chapters, this is an overstatement. However, Thatcher used her "politics of conviction" to produce dramatic change, most notably in British economic life. It is too early to determine how much Blair's government can or will accomplish. Nonetheless, the fact that the Labour Party has accepted **privatization**—the selling off of state-owned companies—and much of the rest of the core of Thatcherism while trying to give it a more humane and egalitarian face marks at least a revolutionary break with its past.

### *The Retreat from the Commanding Heights*

In 1919 the Labour Party committed itself to **nationalization**, or state ownership, of the "commanding heights" of the economy. In addition, it planned to place much of the rest of the economy under government control through economic planning and to pass the benefits on to the working class and others, thereby creating a more equal and just society. This pledge made little difference in terms of public policy because Labour never had a majority in parliament until after World War II. After it won the 1945 election, Labour set up planning boards with wide-ranging authority and nationalized dozens of key industries, especially those that provided public services but that were not themselves profitable.

As we saw earlier, the Labour Party backed away from more extreme versions of the goals outlined in its Clause 4, and most Tories came to accept the basic principles of the welfare state and the rest of the collectivist consensus. However, in the 1960s, most of the nationalized industries performed poorly and required massive subsidies. Attempts by successive Labour governments to plan the economy or even just its key industrial sectors were deemed abject failures that left the greedy and disruptive unions more powerful than ever. The welfare state was proving increasingly expensive, especially the National Health Service (NHS), which provided free health care to all but was still terribly underfunded. Overall government spending grew to over 40 percent of GNP in the late 1970s.

Therefore, it is hardly surprising that Thatcher wanted to sharply reduce the role of the state and privatize as many of the nationalized industries as possible.

In Thatcher's first term, eight major firms were sold, including British Petroleum (BP), British Aerospace, Cable and Wireless (Telecommunications), long-distance trucking and sugar refining businesses, and even the ports. She also allowed most council (public) housing tenants to purchase their homes. During the rest of her years in power, shares in British Leyland, British Gas, British Airways, British Telecom, the jet engine division of Rolls Royce, and the Jaguar and Rover automobile companies were sold. Under Major, water, the buses, electricity generation, and even parts of the NHS and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) were sold to private owners.

Privatization proved extremely popular in the short term. As the council houses were gobbled up, home ownership soared to 60 percent of the total population during Thatcher's first term alone. Though most of the shares in the privatized firms were bought by institutional investors, 2.2 million citizens bought into British Telecom and 4 million did the same with British Gas. In the short run, privatization gave the government a needed infusion of capital, adding £70 billion (well over \$100 billion) to the British treasury by the end of 1988.

More generally, the Thatcher governments tried to strengthen the role of market forces in shaping the economy. Government subsidies to industry were cut. Firms were encouraged to modernize and to reduce "redundant" labor, even though that meant the number of unemployed rose to over 3 million. Income and other taxes that hit the wealthy the hardest were slashed to generate more money for investment. In their place, taxes on cigarettes, alcohol, and gasoline that disproportionately affect the poor were raised.

Thatcher's and Major's policies remain highly controversial. Even the Conservatives' severest critics, however, agree that they used the levers of state power quite effectively in producing one of the most dramatic policy changes in modern British history.

This is less clear for the other centerpiece of Thatcherite economic policy—rolling back the welfare state. As the critics saw it, the income support and other policies put in place, usually with the support of earlier Tory governments, wastefully handed out money without giving people the ability to pull themselves out of poverty.

Unlike the nationalized industries, most of the social services programs were quite popular, and attempts to reduce them met with stiff resistance. Still, the government cut back on programs to help single parents, university students, and the unemployed. The delivery of many social services has been privatized, including the hiring of prison guards.

## Economic Liberalization in Britain

**NOT SURPRISINGLY, Britain is usually held up as the model of economic liberalization among the industrial democracies. When Thatcher came to power, the government owned or controlled a large part of the economy. By 1997 it had sold off more than fifty major businesses with well over a million employees. In short, the U.K. went further and faster toward privatization than any of its major competitors.**

**It also went further in adopting liberal (in the European sense) values. Sir Keith Joseph, who was the intellectual architect of the privatization, once said that trying to get a state-owned firm to act like a private one was like trying to "make a mule into a zebra by painting stripes on its back."<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>a</sup>Quoted in Daniel Yergin with Joseph Stanislaw, *The Commanding Heights: The Battle Between Government and the Marketplace That Is Remaking the Modern World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 122–123.

More than a decade has passed since Thatcher was forced out of office, but her policies and legacy remain controversial. To her supporters, she saved the British economy by bringing both inflation and unemployment under control and by creating a more dynamic private sector. To her detractors, she created new problems and exacerbated existing ones by widening the gap between rich and poor and by allowing public services to deteriorate.

## Blair and the Third Way

Blair's policies are no less controversial. To his supporters, he is charting a **third way** that combines the best aspects of traditional socialist goals and a market economy. To his detractors, he is a flashy politician who has sold out the left and created something they sneeringly refer to as "Thatcher lite."

On the rhetorical level, Blair joined Bill Clinton in the United States and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in Germany in offering a new kind of progressive public policy that is on neither the right nor the left as those terms have been defined for several generations. In theory, these policies retain the social democratic goals of a more just and egalitarian society but do so in a way that fits the realities of a postindustrial society in an interdependent world. In so doing, they draw on a number of sources, including traditional social democratic thought, Green values, aspects of management theory, and, in Blair's case, Christian ideals.

It is on the practical level that the controversy emerges.

Blair and his colleagues have no plans to roll back Thatcher's and Major's reforms. Indeed, in some ways, they have out-Thatchered Thatcher. For example, they came to office with a pledge not to raise taxes for the life of the parliament or to increase spending above the levels set by the Conservatives for two years. They have actually privatized some more services, including failing local education authorities. There are rumors that the second Blair government plans to privatize part of the London Underground to raise much-needed revenue and allow more private enterprise in the NHS to improve the quality of care. In one of its first acts, it gave the Bank of England the power to set interest rates without consulting the government. Perhaps most telling of all, government spending as a percentage of GNP actually shrank.

The Blair government has also taken some less significant steps to transform the welfare state from a system that merely provides benefits to a system that gives recipients skills to find meaningful jobs and, thus, places some responsibility on them. In one of its most controversial actions, the government agreed to retain a Conservative policy that reduces grants to lone parents (mostly single mothers) who refuse to take jobs. Its most sweeping reform does the same to long-unemployed people under age twenty-five who do not get either a job or job training.

Curiously, the statistics tell a very different story from Labour's frankly Thatcherite rhetoric. The first Blair government actually was able to redirect quite a bit of money to the poor and to public services. In part, that reflected the booming economy, which generated more tax revenues than the government had expected. But, as the following examples suggest, the government made some important policy changes.

The most impressive accomplishment involved the welfare-to-work scheme, now known as the New Deal. Of the 250,000 chronically unemployed young people, three-quarters found and kept jobs for at least three months after they finished their training. The program was then expanded to serve single mothers and older people. All in all, it cost the government about \$7,000 for each job created, less than it spent for a year on the dole.

The poorest retirees saw their incomes grow by at least 3 percent per year. The overall impact of fiscal reform was to increase the income of the bottom two-fifths of the population by 8 percent (the rich saw next to no change). Especially after the self-imposed spending limit ended, the government was able to devote significantly more money to education and the NHS, and those figures seem certain to go up further during Blair's second term.

The Blair government has pledged to continue reforms aimed at helping the poor and improving public services in its second term. It campaigned on a promise to add 10,000 teachers, 20,000 nurses, and 10,000 doctors. It also plans to increase the minimum wage to £4.20, or slightly more than \$7.00 an hour. The assumption is, however, that at least some of its efforts to improve the quality of health care and other social service programs will involve extensions of public-private partnerships and perhaps even the complete privatization of some services in some areas.

## *Europe*

As is the case in much of the world, the parameters and priorities of British foreign policy have changed dramatically since the end of the cold war. From the end of World War II until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.K. was the United States' strongest ally in Europe. That was especially the case during the Thatcher years, which coincided with the Reagan and first Bush administrations in the United States. Thus, the U.K. was willing to accept the basing of intermediate-range nuclear missiles on its soil and supported all major American initiatives, including the Gulf War against Iraq in 1991.

The Blair government has been no less friendly toward the United States and no less appreciative of the "special relationship" between Washington and London. Even following the transition from the Clinton to the Bush administration, Blair was the least critical major European leader of the shifts in American positions on key issues such as the Kyoto Treaty on greenhouse gases and the American proposal for a missile defense system. Most importantly, Britain has been the United States' most loyal ally in the campaign against terrorism following the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

But in the minds of most British citizens and politicians alike, the critical foreign policy issue facing the country has little to do with geopolitics. Rather, it concerns what stance Britain should take toward further European integration in general and whether it should adopt the euro, the single European currency, which entered into circulation on 1 January 2002.

The European debate is important in its own right and will reappear in one form or another in the next three chapters because it is one of the few issues that deeply divides European electorates. It is at least as important, however, to see it as our first concrete example of how states are less and less masters of their own political and economic destinies. In fact, the debate over

British entry into the European Monetary Union (EMU) has as much to do with national sovereignty and pride as it does with the economic rationale—or lack thereof—for British adoption of the euro.

The British government decided not to join the Common Market when it was established in 1957. When it tried to get in in the 1960s, its application was vetoed twice by France's President Charles de Gaulle. Georges Pompidou, de Gaulle's successor, was less hostile toward the British, and the country was allowed to join in 1972. British membership was always controversial with many Conservatives, and most Labour activists opposed it from the start. A referendum in 1975 determined that the U.K. would stay in, and virtually all politicians came to accept that position.

But that was all they accepted. Thatcher's wing of the Conservative Party consistently opposed any further expansion of the European Community's (as it was then known) powers. The British government reached compromises that allowed it to agree to the Single European Act (1986) and Maastricht Treaty (1991). However, the party's rhetoric grew ever more Euroskeptical whenever European decisions or initiatives seemed to threaten British sovereignty.

The most controversial issue has been the European single currency. The Maastricht Treaty laid out a timetable that would bring qualifying countries into a single monetary system (EMU) in 1999 and replace their own currencies with the euro in 2002. But the Major government negotiated an "opt-out" clause, which meant that Britain would not have to join if the government of the day did not want to.

The EMU divided the Conservative Party right down the middle. Michael Heseltine, the deputy prime minister, and Kenneth Clarke, chancellor of the Exchequer, were both in favor of joining. However, most Tory leaders were not, including its most dynamic leader at the time, Defense Secretary Michael Portillo.

Anti-European sentiment grew each time the EU did something that limited what the government could do. For instance, the EU ruled that the British violated the human rights of IRA terrorists killed in Gibraltar, and it banned the worldwide export of British beef as a result of "mad cow disease."

For critics of the Euroskeptics, the Tories are fighting a rearguard battle against the politically inevitable. As much as they might want to restore British decision-making power and maintain the prestige that comes from having one's own currency, the global trend is toward greater economic interdependence. Even more importantly in the short run, more and more of the economic decisions that matter in Britain and the other EU

member states are being made in Brussels, not in London and the other national capitals.

Most British voters opposed joining the EMU in both 1997 and 2001. Nonetheless, Conservative intransigence on European issues in general and internal party divisions contributed heavily to its two drubbings at the polls. Given Iain Duncan-Smith's selection as Tory leader in September 2001, the party will remain resolutely opposed to joining the EMU; it may, however, be a decision that consigns the Conservatives to opposition status for decades to come.

By contrast, Labour is a strong supporter of almost everything about the EU. Initially, the party was more hostile to Europe than were the Conservatives. In the 1975 referendum, most prominent Labour officials opposed British membership and campaigned on the "no" side. Gradually, however, the vast majority of Labour leaders and members made their peace with the European Community and then the EU. By the time Blair became leader, almost everyone enthusiastically supported both adding new countries and giving new powers to the EU.

The one notable exception involved the single currency. In part because of the uncertainties about the economic logic of joining the EMU and in part because of the state of public opinion, Labour campaigned in 1997 on a pledge not to join during the life of the parliament elected that year. By 1999, however, Blair and his colleagues confirmed most observers' suspicions by announcing that they would make a decision during the first two years of the next parliament. If five economic conditions were met, the government would then recommend entering the EMU and hold a referendum on it. As the new cabinet was sworn in, in June 2001, the best guess was that the government would try to "soften" public opinion on the euro. And if there was significant support for entry, it would push for a referendum toward the end of 2003. There are technical economic reasons the British government might decide against entry. However, most analysts are convinced that the decision will be made primarily on political grounds. At the very least, the government is not likely to propose a vote on a referendum it seems certain to lose.

Whichever way the decision goes, there is no denying that the EU matters more and more for Britain—and the other member states. On everything from the ban on exports of British beef during the "mad cow disease" outbreak in the 1990s to the extent to which the EU determines taxation policy, decisions made in Brussels concerning the British economy are at least as important as those made in London.

## Northern Ireland

Labour also proved a more effective negotiator than the Conservatives on an issue that can just as easily be seen as a domestic one—the conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. “The troubles” have claimed well over 3,000 lives in the province and on the mainland since the late 1960s.

Labour cannot take all the credit for the Good Friday Agreement of April 1998. The Major government had made some progress, starting negotiations with both the Irish government and the parties in Ulster. Most notably, the IRA declared a cease-fire that lasted for almost two years before a bomb rocked the new business development in the Canary Wharf neighborhood of London in January 1996. The Clinton administration gave the various parties a push on several occasions and offered the services of retired senator George Mitchell as a mediator for negotiations.

Still, it took the new government in London to break the deadlock in two respects. To begin with, simply having a new team in office that did not have as strong a tradition of links to the Protestant Unionist community made a difference. More importantly, Blair and the secretary of state for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, worked doggedly, especially at those moments when it looked as if the negotiations would collapse.

In the end, they achieved a breakthrough that few thought possible prior to the election. The province would get its own assembly and de facto regional government, in which all parties would be represented on a proportional basis. In addition, there would be “cross-border” bodies in which members of both the British and Irish governments would play a role in determining the region’s future. No one claimed that the agreement was perfect. It did, however, at least offer a strong hope for prospects of ending the strife in a way that allowed the Nationalist Catholics to claim they were closer to uniting Ireland through the cross-border bodies and the Unionists to argue that the links with Britain remained intact.

The three years following the signing of the Good Friday agreement did not go smoothly. Some hardliners on both sides refused to accept the settlement and continued engaging in sporadic violence. More importantly, the IRA refused to hand in its weapons which led the British to suspend the Northern Ireland government for a brief period.

September 11, however, sparked a major change in the province. The dramatic shift in public opinion in opposition to terrorism in the United Kingdom as a whole finally convinced the IRA that it had to abandon the armed struggle once and for all. Later that fall, it began decommissioning its weapons.

## Globalization and Britain

**BRITAIN PROBABLY provides the best illustration of the impact of globalization on an industrialized democracy.**

**In most ways, the quote from Andrew Marr that begins this chapter tells it all. Britain, which once “ruled the waves,” finds itself increasingly buffeted by forces from beyond its shoreline. The most obvious is the EU, which has had a direct impact on so many areas of Britain’s life, from economic policy to the composition of its sports teams. Perhaps most important—although harder to pin down—is the role of economic forces in other countries. Thus, 99 percent of British automobile production is by companies not headquartered there. The U.K. is a major site for direct foreign investment, in large part because the wages of its industrial workers are so low. And, with the spread of satellite and cable technologies, the British increasingly watch television networks that are owned by foreigners and that run programs mostly made abroad.**

## Feedback

**A**s in all the industrialized democracies, most people get most of their information about political life from the mass media. Britain’s television and radio networks and printed media, however, are quite different from those found in the United States.

To begin with, they are far more centralized, with most political information coming from national newspapers and television and radio stations. And the newspapers do little or nothing to hide their political viewpoints.

England has eleven main daily newspapers, all of which are edited in London and distributed nationally. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have their own papers as well, but the London dailies are available there as well.

Five are “quality” newspapers known as broadsheets. The *Guardian* and *Independent* usually support Labour, *The Times* and *Telegraph* almost always endorse the Tories, and the *Financial Times* is aimed at the business community. Each has the kind of high-quality and in-depth coverage American readers find in the *Washington Post* or *New York Times*. Together, the broadsheets sell about 2 million copies a day.

The rest are tabloids whose political coverage is much more superficial and whose tone is often scandalous and even racist. *The Mirror* normally supports Labour, and the others are traditionally Conservative. In 1997, however, *The Sun*, which is the most widely read



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paper in Britain, switched camps and endorsed Labour. In all, they sell about 10 million copies a day.

There are local daily papers, most of which are published in the afternoon. They do not, however, cover much national news, and their political influence is largely limited to local issues.

British television news is also rather different from its American equivalent. To begin with, there is very little local news on television—at most half an hour a day. Conversely, the five networks carry their national news programs at different times, so you can watch it at 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, and 10:30 every evening. BBC Radio 4's news programs are also widely listened to and have a greater impact than their equivalents on National Public Radio in the United States. Although British networks tend to be impartial, that is not necessarily true of individual journalists. Interviewers are known for the grillings they give politicians, especially those thought to be arrogant or to be withholding information. Some interviewers, including John Snow, the most popular anchor, openly display their political views from time to time.

## Conclusion: Challenges to Democracy

Democracy in Britain is as secure as it is anywhere in the world. Nonetheless, this chapter has raised three broad challenges all democracies face in one form or another, each of which we will return to in the pages that follow.

First, what domestic policies should it be pursuing? Blair's third way has its echoes in the United States, Germany, and France. However, as its critics point out, there is more rhetoric than substance to it so far. In particular, it is by no means clear how democratic societies lacking strong socialist movements will deal with inequality and poverty.

Second, how is Britain going to deal with the European Union, which is the world's strongest, but by no means its only, regional international organization. In early 2002 it seemed likely that Blair would propose adopting the euro during the life of this parliament. Whether it does or not, there is little doubt that decisions made by the EU and Europe-wide corporations will increasingly shape what British governments can and cannot do.

September 11 brought us the third question. How are countries like Britain going to deal with global challenges like terrorism? In this case, the answer seemed simple at first. Britain was the United States' first and most loyal ally in the war on terrorism. However, it quickly became clear that this was a far more complex problem for the British. It has a large and increasingly frustrated Muslim population, which includes one of the alleged leaders of al-Qaeda who had been granted political asylum years earlier and was beyond the reach of British law. At least three of the first fifty detainees taken to Guantanamo Bay for detention and trial were British citizens.

## Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Backbenchers	Blair, Tony	CBI	Alliance
Collective responsibility	Thatcher, Margaret	SDP	Beveridge Report
Collectivist consensus		TUC	Confederation of British Industry
Corporatism			Conservative Party
Devolution			Good Friday Agreement
Euroskeptic			Great Reform Act
First-past-the-post			House of Commons
Gradualism			House of Lords

**Concepts**

Manifesto  
 Nationalization  
 Parliamentary party  
 Privatization  
 Proportional representation  
 Shadow cabinet  
 Third way  
 Three-line whip  
 White paper

**People****Acronyms****Organizations,  
Places, and Events**

Labour Party  
 Liberal Democratic Party  
 Maastricht Treaty  
 Social Democratic Party  
 Tories  
 Trades Union Congress

**Critical Thinking Exercises**

1. Much has happened since this book was finished in early 2002. Go to the library or the Internet and catch up on recent events in Britain. Does the argument made in this chapter still hold? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think the country is headed in the “right direction” or is “on the wrong track.” If you were asked such a question about Great Britain, what would your answer be? Why did you reach that conclusion?
3. Of all the countries we consider, Great Britain is the only one without a written constitution. Yet most scholars agree that the British constitutional system is among the strongest in the world. How can that be?
4. British political development is often described in terms of gradualism. Why did that occur? How is it reflected in British political life today?
5. Many people argue that social class is less important in British political life than it was a generation or more ago. Do you agree? Why (not)?
6. How does the parliamentary system enable British governments to act quickly and decisively?
7. The British economy is often said to be in decline and the country has had more than its share of protests in recent years. Yet, there has been little or no pressure for fundamental political change. How can that be?
8. The Conservatives under Thatcher and Major and now Labour under Blair have scaled back the state’s economic role. Why has that happened? What impact has it had?

**Further Reading**

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make up their minds in Britain, focusing, in particular, on the relationship between class, party, and the vote.

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Marr, Andrew. *The Day Britain Died*. London: Profile Books, 2000. Based on a television series by the BBC’s chief political correspondent, an exploration of the centrifugal tendencies in British political, cultural, and social life.

Norton, Philip. *The British Polity*, 3rd ed. New York: Longman, 1994. The best of the book-length texts on British politics, by one of the country’s leading experts on Parliament, who was named to the House of Lords in 1998.

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Solomos, John. *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain*, 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1995. The most comprehensive of the many books on racism in the U.K., and one of the few available in the United States.

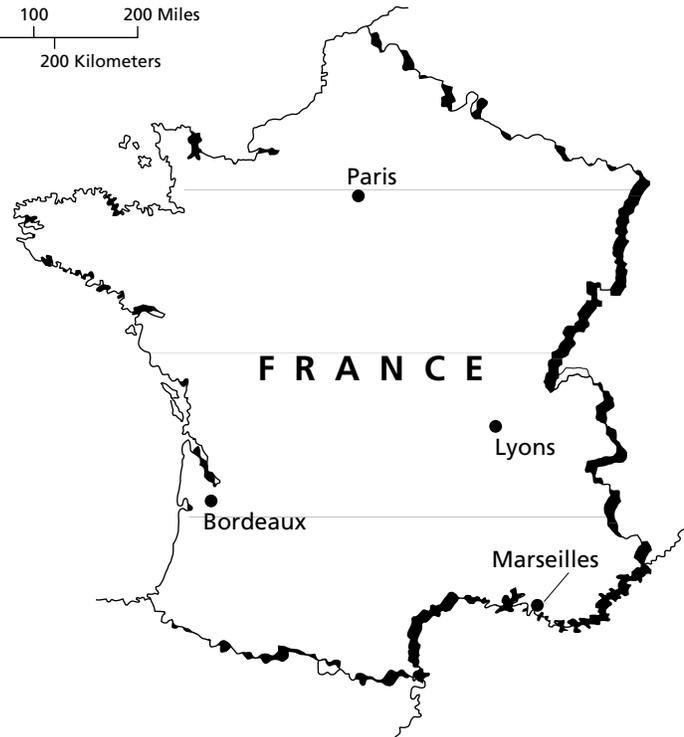
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# FRANCE

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Not a Contradiction in Terms
- Thinking About France
- The Evolution of the French State: Centuries of Turmoil
- French Political Culture: From Alienation to Consensus
- Political Participation
- The French State
- Public Policy: The Pursuit of Grandeur
- Feedback
- Conclusion: A Remarkable Turnaround

0 100 200 Miles  
0 200 Kilometers



*My roommate's father was visiting last weekend and asked what my major was. When I said French and government, he told me that was a contradiction in terms.*

COLLEGE STUDENT

### Not a Contradiction in Terms

All the other chapters in this book begin with a statement by an eminent politician, political scientist, or journalist. This one starts with one by an undergraduate who came to my office one day to talk about a conversation she had had with her friend's father.

When he went to college in the 1950s, his statement made sense. The average French government lasted nine months and accomplished little. The Fourth Republic, which had only been created in 1946, teetered on the brink of collapse. Indeed, it would not survive the decade.

However, it is hard to make the case that "French" and "government" are a contradiction in terms today. In fact, since the late 1950s, France has gone through two remarkable transitions. The first shook the world; the second has occurred so quietly that we academics are only now beginning to take it seriously.

As we will see later in the chapter, the Fourth Republic collapsed in 1958 when its leadership could not put down two revolutions in colonial Algeria. The politicians reluctantly turned to **Charles de Gaulle**, who had been the leader of French resistance against the Nazis in World War II, who led the interim government, and who then resigned in protest against the adoption of the ineffective new republic. De Gaulle agreed to take over only if he were given the authority to revise the constitution, which he did by creating the Fifth Republic.

For the next decade, de Gaulle served as president and ruled as what Harvard's Stanley Hoffman called a heroic leader whose personality and past accomplishments enabled him to do largely as he wished. De Gaulle resigned in 1969, and his first three successors—Georges Pompidou, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and François Mitterrand—tried to retain the strong presidency even though they by no means had the general's heroic stature.

Consider two examples. The Fifth Republic survived nearly two months of massive demonstrations and crippling strikes in May and June 1968, which almost certainly would have brought down an earlier regime. Between the end of World War I and the beginning of World

### FRANCE: THE BASICS

Size	547,030 sq. km (more than two times the size of the U.K.)
Climate	Mild, but much warmer along the Mediterranean coast
Population	59,000,000
GNP per capita	\$23,480
Currency	1 € = \$0.88
Ethnic composition	Over 90% white, but with substantial minorities of African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Caribbean origins
Religion	90% Catholics, with small minorities of Protestants, Jews, Muslims, and atheists
Capital	Paris
Form of government	Fifth Republic (1958)
Head of state	President Jacques Chirac (1995)
Head of government	Prime Minister Lionel Jospin (1997)

War II, the French economy grew by a *total* of 5 percent. Between the late 1940s and the early 1970s, growth *averaged* about 5 percent per year, giving France the fourth most powerful economy in the world.

By the end of Mitterrand's second seven-year presidency in 1995, French political life had gone through a second transformation that left it with a political system similar to those of the other countries covered in part 2. Despite the scandals touched on at the beginning of chapter 3, France has a sufficiently stable political system that it no longer needs—and its people no longer want—an all-powerful president.

This was made abundantly clear as campaigns for parliamentary and presidential elections began within weeks of each other in 2002. (Results and analysis of these elections can be found on the book's web site; <http://politicalscience.wadsworth.com/hauss>.) This was a political coincidence. Never before had the seven-year term of the president and the five-year term of the National Assembly ended within days of each other. And, because the right-wing **Rally for the Republic (RPR)** controlled the presidency, and the **Socialists** and their allies had a majority in the parliament and thus named the prime minister, the dual election might have been a time of trauma or even crisis when my student's roommate's father was an undergraduate.

Prime Minister Jospin (left) and President Chirac (right) consulting with each other at a European Communities summit meeting in October 1998.



AP/Wide-World Photos (Michael Euler)

There are no indications that that could happen this time. There was considerable political jockeying over which election would be held first. But all observers expected these to be elections very similar to the others we cover in part 2. Much revolved around the personalities and styles of outgoing President **Jacques Chirac** and Prime Minister **Lionel Jospin**, the same two candidates who had squared off seven years earlier. The two men differed on many issues. But they were also contemporaries who had similar educations and backgrounds, which included graduating from the prestigious **École nationale d'administration (ENA)**, where as much as half of the French political elite are educated. What's more, the two men and their parties debated the kinds of issues we see throughout western Europe—how to lower unemployment, cope with an increasingly diverse population, and adapt to an ever more integrated European economy.

Put simply, the second transition had solidified one of the most important, if hard to measure, attributes of an effectively functioning liberal democracy. The French populace overwhelmingly accepted the regime de Gaulle created with the Fifth Republic. They still heatedly debated issues and personalities, but there was virtually no discussion about the need for a sixth republic, let alone a return to a monarchy or any other nondemocratic form of government.

## Thinking About France

### Key Questions

The key questions about France should already be clear from this brief discussion of the two transformations. (See table 5.1.) Because the two countries have had quite different histories, these are not the same questions we asked about Great Britain. However, in answering them, we will discover why, today, the two have regimes—if not governments—that enjoy broad and durable support.

- Why did the development of a stable democratic regime take so much longer in France?
- Why did de Gaulle and his successors opt for institutions that combine elements of the presidential and parliamentary systems?
- What is the impact of the influential elite whose roots lie in the bureaucracy?
- Why has the French economy proven more resistant to reform over the past ten to fifteen years than that of the British?

### The Basics

By European standards, France is a large country. It has almost 60 million people, about 100,000 more than

**TABLE 5.1** Key Events in French Politics Since 1958

YEAR	EVENT
1958	Creation of the Fifth Republic
1961	End of Algerian War
1962	Referendum on direct election of president First parliamentary majority elected
1965	De Gaulle reelected
1968	"Events" of May and June
1969	De Gaulle's resignation
1970	De Gaulle's death
1973–74	OPEC oil embargo
1981	Mitterrand and Socialists elected
1986	First period of cohabitation
1988	Mitterrand reelected
1993	Second period of cohabitation
1995	Chirac elected
1997	Socialists' return to power
2002	First simultaneous election of parliament and president

Britain. But France has about 550,000 square miles of territory, almost two-and-a-half times that of Britain. As a result, France has more open spaces and less congested cities.

France is also relatively homogeneous. Almost everyone speaks the same language. There are still noticeable local accents, and some older people speak Breton, Occitan, or some other regional dialect. The spread of radio and television, however, has made standard Parisian French as widely used and understood as English is in Great Britain.

More than 90 percent of the population is at least nominally Catholic, leaving France with no sizable religious minorities. Roughly 2 percent of the country is Protestant and 1 percent Jewish. Perhaps as much as 5 percent of the population—mostly recent immigrants from former French colonies and their children—are Muslim.

The other important factor contributing to France's homogeneity is the way Paris dominates this highly centralized country. Depending on exactly where one draws the boundaries, the Paris region contains between a quarter and a third of the total population.

Paris is the cultural, political, economic, and communications center of the country. Almost all corporations and government agencies have their headquarters there. Road and rail systems were built with Paris as their hub. Paris has long been a thriving metropolis, whereas, the major provincial cities were dull and drab, leading one observer to call them the "French desert." Even now, there are plenty of "turboprofs" who teach at provincial universities but refuse to move from Paris and commute as much as eight hours each way on France's high-speed trains.

Throughout this chapter, we will encounter examples of that centralization of French life. Here, it is enough to consider two remarkable examples.

France is one of the few countries in the world with an official agency that determines which new words can be included in its language. In recent years, it has struggled to keep foreign—mostly English—words out. People may well want to refer to a one-man show, disc jockey, or hit parade, but the High Commission for the French Language insists on *spectacle solo*, *animateur*, and *palmares*. The commission has fined American Airlines for issuing English-language boarding passes at Charles de Gaulle Airport and has hauled a furniture store owner into court for advertising his showroom rather than his *salle d'exposition*.

The same holds for a tradition that has only recently been abandoned. Until early in the 1990s, the government insisted that children be given the name of a saint or a figure from classical history in order to receive the extensive benefits it offers families. Breton, Occitan, and German names were forbidden. Richard Bernstein of the *New York Times* tells of a friend whose first and middle names were Mignon Florence, which was double trouble. Not only was Mignon not on the list of approved names, but the people at the registry office were convinced that, as a girl, she should have been Mignonne. Later, her teachers insisted that she spell her name that way. Officially, she had to be Florence, which she remained until the rules were relaxed when she was an adult.<sup>1</sup>

France is also no longer a homogeneous country. Since the 1950s there has been substantial immigration, mostly from former French colonies in Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia. That has led to a racial problem that is, in many ways, worse than Britain's, largely reflected in the 10–15 percent of the vote the all-but-openly racist **National Front (FN)** frequently won until it split in two in the late 1990s. Racial tensions were eased somewhat with France's surprising victory in the 1998 World Cup, when half of its twenty-two-man team was of immigrant stock, including most of its star players.

Despite its long-standing reputation as an economic backwater, France is an affluent country. Most French families enjoy a standard of living roughly equivalent to that in the United States. American salaries are a bit higher, but the French make up for that with guaranteed health care, university tuition that still runs under \$200 a year, and a day-care system integrated into the public schools and open to all children over the age of two.

<sup>1</sup>Richard Bernstein, *Fragile Glory: A Portrait of France and the French*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 110ff.

France is a leading technological and economic power. There are more French than German firms in the world's top twenty. The French make the world's fastest trains, the TGV (*Trains à grandes vitesses*), which can travel comfortably at more than two hundred miles an hour. The French play a leading role in Airbus, which makes state-of-the-art jumbo jets, and Arianespace, which now surpasses NASA in most commercial space ventures.

Not everyone has benefited equally from what the journalist John Ardagh called the “new French revolution.” Three relatively disadvantaged groups, in particular, stand out. First are those mostly older people who are too poor to move out of their isolated villages or dingy urban apartments. Second are women, who have yet to make as much political or professional progress their counterparts have in the United States. Third are members of minority groups, who still are largely stuck with the jobs Whites are no longer willing to take and who are discriminated against in ways reminiscent of the American South before the civil rights movement.

## The Evolution of the French State: Centuries of Turmoil

### *Transformation and Division*

Comparativists typically cite Great Britain as the model of a state that evolved relatively smoothly and gradually over several centuries. They turn to France to illustrate a rather different, but far more common, historical pattern—that state building can be a long and wrenching process.

To see why that is the case, it makes sense to do the same thing we did for Britain and use the top row of the table on the inside front cover to explore how France was affected by the great transformations that shaped modern European history. In France, the conflicts generated by those transformations were largely left unresolved, leaving deep scars that continue to affect French politics even today. France did not continually have to confront the specter of revolution. Nonetheless, in comparative terms, it had far more trouble than Great Britain did in dealing with the challenges it faced over the past few centuries ([europeanhistory.about.com/cs/France/](http://europeanhistory.about.com/cs/France/)).

The first transformation led to the formation of France itself. It did not leave France with a deep ideological split, but it did give rise to one of its most powerful political traditions—centralization. As in Britain, there was something in France that we could call a French state in 1500. It had a government headed by a king, but

**TABLE 5.2** French Regimes Since 1789

YEAR	REGIME
Until 1792	Bourbon Monarchy
1792–1804	First Republic
1804–15	First Empire
1815–30	Bourbon Restoration
1815–48	July Monarchy
1848–51	Second Republic
1851–70	Second Empire
1875–1940	Third Republic
1940–44	Vichy Regime
1944–46	Liberation Government
1946–58	Fourth Republic
1958–	Fifth Republic

its power was limited, especially the farther one went from Paris.

France was not, however, as isolated as the British Isles were, and it could not avoid the wars of religion and national expansion that ravaged Europe. One French response was to create a strong and centralized state, which many historians date from the reign of the “Sun King,” Louis XIV (1643–1715).

The revolution of 1789 cemented this tradition of centralized government in Paris. Some of the revolutionary groups wanted to drastically scale back Paris's power. By 1792 they had lost out to the Jacobins, who were, if anything, greater centralizers than the Bourbon monarchs they replaced and who strengthened the state beyond the monarchs' wildest expectations (see table 5.2). The country was divided into departments, each controlled from Paris, which made France the most uniformly and effectively administered country in early-nineteenth-century Europe. But it also led many Frenchmen and -women to view the state as a distant and arbitrary geopolitical stone wall that frustrated them everywhere they turned.

The other three transformations did leave France deeply divided and also added to the alienation caused by centralization.

Historically, the dispute over the role of religion and the relationship between church and state has had the most disruptive impact. Even though the overwhelming majority of French people are Catholic, this does not mean that they have the same views about their church.

The church traditionally was closely allied with the monarchy. Many of the best-known leaders of the *ancien régime*, such as Richelieu, Mazarin, and Colbert, were cardinals as well as ministers to the king. The revolution of 1789, then, not only overturned the monarchy but also made the official political role of the church a controversial issue indeed.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the religious question divided France into an **anticlerical** left that advocated the total separation of church and state and a proclerical right which believed that the church should play a leading role in a restored monarchy. In the 1890s and early 1900s, anticlerical policies that separated church and state and that undermined ecclesiastical wealth and power provoked such resistance from proclerical groups that the Third Republic was nearly toppled.

Debates over the role of the church no longer jeopardize the regime. Nonetheless, they remain important. To this day, practicing Catholics are the social group most likely to vote for the parties of the center and right.

Disputes about the nature of the regime overlapped those about the role of the church. France does have one of the oldest and strongest democratic traditions in the world. It was in France in 1789 that a declaration of the rights of man was first included in an official government document. Subsequent constitutions expanded the definition of human rights beyond the minimum political rights to include such “social” ones as the right to a job and social security. France was also the first country to extend the right to vote to all men, following the revolution of 1848.

But, unlike Britain, France was unable to adopt democracy one step at a time with the acquiescence, let alone the support, of the traditional elite. Instead, it came in lurches, many of which did not last. Prior to 1958 France always had major political groups that opposed democracy in any form. Moreover, the democratic regimes it did adopt were not very effective for reasons that will become clear shortly. It has only been with the widespread acceptance of the Fifth Republic in the late 1960s and early 1970s that we can speak of the definitive victory of democracy in France.

The final transformation—the industrial revolution and the class conflict it spawned—also affected France in more complex and divisive ways than it did Britain. As with democracy and religion, social class provoked deep and lasting conflict. Many workers supported the social democrats who, like Labour in Britain, believed that fundamental change in social and economic life could be achieved by working through the parliamentary system. Others preferred more radical socialists, who argued, instead, that meaningful change could only occur through revolution. After 1920 that division was reflected in the split between a reformist **Socialist Party (PS)** (SFIO until 1969 and PS since) and a **Communist Party (PCF)**, initially inspired by the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

Also unlike Britain, the procapitalist forces were divided. Most small manufacturers, merchants, and farm-

ers had qualms about the industrial revolution. They used free-market rhetoric to help protect the traditional economic system. Because these business-oriented groups that resisted change often were in power, capitalists who wanted to modernize and industrialize did not endorse a laissez-faire approach. Rather, they argued that concerted state action was needed to overcome the market’s biases toward stability, a point of view that would not prevail until after World War II, when it became the cornerstone of economic policy making under the Gaullists.

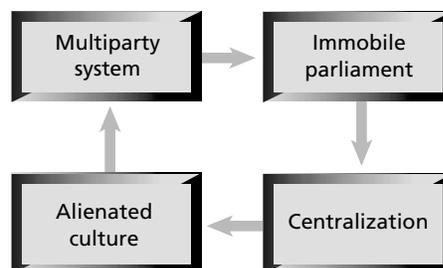
### *Traditional Republican Politics: A Vicious Circle*

In trying to understand the obviously complicated evolution of French politics, we can limit our attention to the Third and Fourth Republics and concentrate on key themes rather than historical details. Political life during those years can best be seen as a political vicious circle of four interlocking problems, as summarized in figure 5.1.

The ideological divisions left by the four transformations spawned six major “political families” of roughly equal size. The 1951 election, summarized in table 5.3, was typical and allows us to see how the many parties reflected the conflicting points of view found in French society.

As noted earlier, the Socialists and Communists, which represented the two halves of the socialist tradition, had been bitter rivals ever since the PCF split from the SFIO. Much like the SFIO, the Catholic Popular Republican Movement (MRP) supported the welfare state and European integration, but the two found it hard to work together given their sharp disagreement over church-related issues.

The **Radicals** were really nineteenth-century radicals, which meant that they believed in liberal democracy, anticlericalism, and free-market capitalism. The Independents and Peasants shared many of the Radicals’



**FIGURE 5.1** Traditional Republican Politics in France

**TABLE 5.3** Seats in the French Chamber of Deputies, 1951

PARTY	SEATS
PCF	101
SFIO	106
MRP	88
Radicals	76
UDSR	23
IOM	17
Independents and Peasants	95
Gaullists	120

economic views but were staunchly proclerical. Finally, the **Gaullists** were the most recent manifestation of a strand of public opinion that demanded strong leadership. Although such beliefs had their roots in monarchism and Bonapartism, the Gaullists claimed to be solid republicans. They simply wanted to replace the Fourth Republic with a better one!

The existence of so many antagonistic parties made the second component of the vicious circle—a deadlocked parliament—all but inevitable. As in all traditional parliamentary systems, the president was little more than a figurehead. Real power was shared by the parliament and cabinet, which, as in Britain, was drawn from the ranks of parliament and had to retain its confidence.

Unfortunately, the French were never able to achieve anything like the party government we saw in Britain. Because the French parties were so divided, elections never produced a majority. Instead, cabinets had to include members of three or four parties that had little or nothing in common. Often, tiny parties like the Independents from Overseas (IOM—independent MPs from French colonies) held the balance of power. Virtually any issue of any consequence would split the coalition so that every nine months or so the government would lose its majority and be forced to resign. The ensuing cabinet crisis would last until the parties could resolve their differences on the issues that brought the old government down and form a new one. That cabinet, in turn, would survive until it had to confront the next difficult issue, and it would not be able to accomplish much on anything else. As a result, most of France's pressing problems remained unsolved.

The president and prime minister were denied the one constitutional device that might have broken the deadlock—dissolving parliament and calling for new elections. In 1877 Marshall Macmahon, the first president of the Third Republic, had called for elections hoping they would yield a monarchist majority. Instead, the various republican parties won a resounding victory and forced Macmahon to resign. From then on, the unwrit-

ten rule was that neither the president nor the prime minister could dissolve parliament before its term ended.

The Macmahon fiasco and other episodes convinced politicians that people with lofty goals were dangerous. Reform-minded leaders were routinely passed over when it came to forming cabinets and coalitions. The kingmakers preferred the politicians whom they could count on, which meant those who were happy with the deadlocked system.

The effects of the ideological divisions were compounded by yet another problem—politicians' willingness to sacrifice just about everything else to advance their own careers. According to most political scientists, they used ideological rhetoric as little more than a veneer to hide the self-serving behavior and corruption that dominated political life. Many current and potential ministers were willing to sabotage any cabinet—including those they served in—and to destroy any politician's reputation to enhance their own prestige and power.

Last but by no means least, there was what amounted to a negative consensus on what social and economic policy should be like, which Stanley Hoffmann called the republican synthesis that sustained a stalemate society. The dominant centrist politicians represented the most traditional elements of the population—the peasantry and the petite bourgeoisie of the small towns. Although these politicians could rarely agree on what to do about the "big issues," they had little trouble seeing eye-to-eye on what France should *not* do. They accepted society as it was and rejected the idea that government should be used to foster modernization.

In the absence of effective parliamentary government, what power there was devolved onto the third cog of traditional republican politics—the highly centralized bureaucracy. The effects of extreme centralization and inflexibility in the bureaucratic system as a whole rippled throughout society. Educational standards, for example, were set entirely in Paris. A uniform curriculum was used by all schools to prepare students for national examinations that determined whether they passed. Individual teachers, students, and parents had little or nothing to say about what happened in the schools.

Centralization had much to do with the final component of the vicious circle—an alienated political culture rooted in revolutionary tradition. Political scientists did not gather systematic evidence on French cultural values until the 1960s. Nonetheless, everything we know suggests that the French were as alienated and ideologically divided as any mass public in the industrialized world.

Unlike the British, the French frequently questioned the regime's basic structures and practices. Many were "defensive individualists," convinced that they had to protect themselves from government officials and all other outsiders—who, they "knew," were out to do them in. Few people believed they could redress their grievances by working through the parties or parliament. Similarly, the bureaucracy seemed closed to input from below. So, the French suppressed their anger and hostility until something triggered an explosion.

This was not merely a feature of national politics. The "bureaucratic phenomenon" was the defining characteristic of an entire society that was built around centralized, insensitive institutions. Students, for instance, chafed under the rigid rules of the national education system, but they grudgingly accepted a classroom experience they disliked as long as they felt that the teacher was doing a good job preparing them for the exams. If, however, the students felt that a teacher was not doing a good job, it was a different story. Then, the students might suddenly break out into a wild demonstration or *chahut* (from the words for "screaming cat"), which William Schonfeld graphically described:

Students might constantly talk with one another, get up and walk around the room whenever they feel like it, and if the teacher should call on them to respond to a question, they would answer disrespectfully—e.g., Teacher: "When you mix two atoms of hydrogen with one atom of oxygen, what do you get?" Pupil: "It rains," or "merde." Or the students might jeer at the teacher in unison, call him nasty names and run around the classroom. In certain classes, wet wads of paper will be thrown across the room, landing and then sticking on the wall behind the teacher's desk. Or there might be a fistfight, with the winner ejecting the loser from the room, while the other pupils stand around cheering for one or the other of the pugilists. With some teachers, the students might bring small glass sulfur bombs into class, which would be simultaneously broken, creating such a stench that the teacher is usually driven into the hall while the pupils stay in class, happily suffering the odor. Finally, students might bring a tent, camping equipment, and food into their class and, during the lesson, set up the tent, prepare lunch for each other, and then eat it—the teacher being powerless to help.<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately, that alienation fed back into the party and parliamentary morass to complete the vicious circle. The political psychologist Nathan Leites titled one of

his books about parliament under the Fourth Republic *The House Without Windows*. The main section of the parliament building actually is windowless, but he chose the image to reflect the widespread conviction that politicians didn't care about the country, its problems, or its people.

The windowlessness went in both directions. As far as we can tell, the French people did not try to look in all that often, either. Even though they complained about the irresponsible politicians and their ideological squabbles, they consistently reelected the politicians who got the pork barrel legislation through and could get the bureaucracy to move on an individual's or a community's problems. In so doing, they made it impossible for the government to govern effectively.

### *From the Fourth to the Fifth Republic*

Though characterized by deadlock and inertia, the traditional republican system had its share of accomplishments. The church-state issue receded from center stage. Even though governments came and went with mind-boggling speed, there was more governmental stability than one might expect at first glance. Cabinets were, after all, variations on the same theme, because most of the same parties and politicians appeared in government after government.

None of this should obscure the basic point: Successive governments could not meet France's pressing policy problems, which came to a head after World War II.

Following its liberation from German occupation in 1944, France did have one brief flirtation with effective government. The old political guard had been discredited by the depression in the 1930s, the defeat by Germany, and collaboration with the Nazis. Few people, thus, wanted to go back to the status quo ante. The provisional government headed by de Gaulle nationalized major industrial and financial firms, and established a planning commission to supervise economic recovery from the war. Even the bureaucracy changed with the establishment of the ENA to train civil servants committed to democracy and modernization.

Unfortunately, it was to be a very brief flirtation. When the politicians finally agreed on a constitution for the **Fourth Republic**, it proved to be virtually a carbon copy of the one for the Third.

The history of the Fourth Republic was a sorry one indeed. The mismatch between an unchanging, ineffective government and a society with mounting unsolved problems proved to be even more serious than it had been before the war. At home, successive governments

<sup>2</sup>William Schonfeld, *Obedience and Revolt* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1976), 30–31.

## Democratization in France

**FRANCE'S DIFFICULTIES in building any kind of legitimate state, let alone a democratic one, illustrate just how fortunate the United States and Great Britain have been.**

**By 1900 both countries had states with broadly based support. The basic contours of democracy were established as well, although it would be a generation before women could vote in either country and sixty years before most American Blacks could do so.**

**In France the Third Republic was teetering on the brink of collapse. Though it weathered the crises of the moment, the Third Republic survived only because, as Georges Clémenceau put it, it was the form of government that divided the French the least. And, although it survived, it accomplished very little, which is one of the reasons France developed the reputation epitomized by the statement that begins this chapter.**

could do little to build the social infrastructure needed for a rapidly urbanizing population. Abroad, the pressures were even worse, especially from the colonies, which were beginning to clamor for their independence.

Even under the best of circumstances, few systems could have handled the domestic and international problems the French faced in the 1950s. The inability to act decisively was the underlying cause of the final collapse of traditional republican government in France in 1958.

By the mid-1950s, support for politicians was at an all-time low. Young people were so turned off that they did not even bother to learn who their leaders were. Thus, one public opinion poll showed that 95 percent of the men drafted into the army in 1956 knew who had won the Tour de France bicycle race that year, but only 17 percent could identify the prime minister.

Although domestic problems received the most attention, it was a foreign policy crisis that brought the Fourth Republic's short life to an end. Throughout the postwar period, France had struggled vainly to hold onto its empire. In 1954 the most recent in a series of revolutions broke out in Algeria, where the majority Arab population demanded independence. By 1958 many of the minority French settlers were in revolt as well, blaming the Parisian government for failing to put down the Arab insurgency.

In spring 1958 the Fourth Republic's seventeenth prime minister in less than twelve years resigned. It soon became clear that the next man to hold the job would be the little-known Pierre Pflimlin, who was expected to begin negotiations with the Algerian Arabs.

That proved to be the last straw for the occupying French army and the white colonists. On the night of 12–13 May, soldiers seized power in Algiers. Rumors quickly spread that the military was preparing to invade the mainland and topple the Fourth Republic. Finally, on 1 June, the politicians turned to de Gaulle, who agreed to become the Fourth Republic's final prime minister on the condition that he be given extraordinary powers not only to deal with the rebellion but also to revise the constitution.

Despite their agreement, most politicians expected de Gaulle to be a typical heroic leader. On several other occasions, the parliament had turned to exceptional leaders to deal with crises and then had gotten rid of them as soon as the immediate danger passed. And they had every reason to expect the same would happen with de Gaulle. He was already sixty-eight years old. Even after the 1958 elections, he had at most reluctant support from the politicians in parliament, most of whom were waiting for him to leave so they could return to business as usual.

De Gaulle proved them very, very wrong. When he left office in 1969, a wholly new republic had been put in place, one that was strong and stable enough to confound the skeptics and survive the departure of its charismatic leader. The details of this republic will be the subject of the rest of this chapter.

## French Political Culture: From Alienation to Consensus

**S**tereotypes about the link between French culture and politics abound. The French are arrogant and rude. They love to argue. Their erratic and deadly driving habits are indicative of a broader unwillingness to accept discipline and order. Somehow all that leads to the massive waves of strikes and demonstrations that have occurred on and off throughout French history.

In any event, there is no question that the French were more divided and less "civic" than the British or Americans until the 1970s. The past twenty to thirty years, however, have brought a dramatic lessening of the ideological tensions that had been so divisive and damaging. Widespread protests do still occur. New divisions also seem to be emerging over race, Europe, and other issues related to the ill-understood postmaterial cleavage. But, on balance, we can safely say that the success French governments have had since 1958 are now mirrored in popular attitudes and beliefs.

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 CHARLES DE GAULLE
 

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Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970) was one of the most prominent and influential leaders of the twentieth century. He began his career in the army, where he built a reputation as an irritating visionary who urged his superiors to modernize their armaments to meet the growing challenge from Nazi Germany.

Despite the fact that he was largely unknown outside of military circles, de Gaulle led the resistance against Nazi occupation during World War II and headed the Liberation government from 1944 to 1946. He then retired because the politicians refused to heed his calls for a strong executive.

Brought back to power during the Algerian crisis in 1958, de Gaulle created the Fifth Republic. He led France for the next eleven years, until he resigned following a defeat in a referendum on minor constitutional reforms. De Gaulle died the following year, but his new regime was firmly in place as the first stable and popular democracy in France's long and troubled history.

The Charles de Gaulle Institute and Foundation maintains an excellent web site on the general and his legacy. Unfortunately, it is currently only in French, which some would argue is to be expected ([www.charles-de-gaulle.org](http://www.charles-de-gaulle.org)).



President Charles de Gaulle casting his ballot in the 1962 parliamentary elections at Colombey-les-deux-églises, where he lived during the Fourth Republic and where he died after resigning as the Fifth Republic's first president.

It is worth underscoring that point. France faces some serious social and economic problems that, in the past, would have put the regime in jeopardy. It is, however, a testimony to the success of the **Fifth Republic** that virtually no one now talks about moving on to a Sixth Republic, let alone another monarchy or empire. The alienation that remains is no worse than the dissatisfaction one encounters in the most stable of democracies.

### *Taming Political Protest*

Return for a moment to the distinction between the government of the day and the regime as a whole, which was drawn in earlier chapters. Public opinion polls conducted in the United States and Great Britain since the 1950s suggest that, however intense opposition might be to a Thatcher or a Clinton, it stops there. No more than a handful of British or American citizens would be willing to overturn the regime and the constitutional order.

By the mid-1970s, the French had come to resemble the British and Americans in that respect. Two-thirds of

the population claimed to have confidence in the president's judgment, and a similar number believed that elections make politicians pay attention to what average citizens are thinking. Trust in government has fluctuated a good bit since then and was a bit lower in the 1990s. Still, the French public does seem to be as willing to trust its politicians and institutions as are the people in any other industrialized democracy.

The turning point as far as support for the regime is concerned probably occurred in the late 1960s. In May 1968 a massive wave of strikes and demonstrations paralyzed the country. Many observers (including this writer) interpreted the **events of May** as evidence of a new kind of alienation, potentially leading to rougher times down the road. We may have been right about the anger of the moment, but not about its enduring implications.

The movement started innocently enough. Facilities at the suburban branch of the University of Paris in Nanterre were not very good. Students also chafed under strict rules regarding dormitory life at what had been billed as France's first American-style campus.

Their first significant protest occurred at the dedication of the campus swimming pool on 22 March. There was nothing unusual about the demonstration—(other than the fact that the students threw the dean into the water)—or the university’s summoning them to a disciplinary hearing on 3 May. But, because the university administration was so centralized, the hearing took place not in Nanterre, but at the Sorbonne in the Latin Quarter. While it was going on, a small group of students staged a support demonstration in the courtyard for what was now known as the 22 March movement. For the first time in centuries, the police entered the Sorbonne to break up a demonstration. Their action provoked nightly demonstrations, which were violently repressed by other police services. As the police continued to overreact (at least in the eyes of most middle-class people), support for the students continued to grow.

On the night of 10–11 May, students erected barricades reminiscent of earlier revolutions. The police responded ever more violently. By the end of the night, leaders of the major trade unions and other left-leaning interest groups had realized that they had the same adversary as the students—the Gaullist state. Finally, the unions and the left-wing parties decided to join in by staging a march on 13 May.

After the rally, students took over the Sorbonne and other buildings in the Latin Quarter. That night, acting without the authorization of union leaders, workers began occupying factories around the country. Within days, France was at a standstill. By the middle of the month, approximately 8 million people were out on strike, and more than 2 million had already taken part in at least one demonstration.

The protesters were concerned about the centralization of power under the Gaullists. Along with their personal attacks on de Gaulle (*Dix ans, ça suffit!*—Ten years, that’s enough!) came demands for increased participation, freedom of speech, decentralization, labor reform, and improved quality of life. **Autogestion**, or a participatory, decentralized form of self-managed socialism, became a rallying cry for much of the noncommunist left.

The government and the regime held, however. At the end of the month, de Gaulle used one of his new powers (see the section on the state) to dissolve the National Assembly. The Gaullists, playing on growing public fear of disorder, won by a landslide in the legislative elections that finally put an end to the crisis in late June.

To some degree, the “events” were typical of traditional forms of protest in France. However, they were qualitatively different in many key respects that point to

changes in the political culture that were probably already well under way.

The diverse groups came together in that massive movement because they could see that they had a common adversary in the state, against which they had to struggle to solve any of their problems. The spontaneity and size of the protests reflect the breadth and depth of dissatisfaction that was anything but trivial or traditional. It had taken a decade, but now the “losers” had finally come to realize that the effective new regime required a new form of opposition that included criticism not just of the issues of the day but of the overall centralization of power under the Gaullists.

Conversely, it is just as important to notice that virtually no one questioned the legitimacy of a republican form of government in general or the Fifth Republic in particular. Even the most outspoken advocates of autogestion saw it as part and parcel of a democratic regime. Most of the veterans of the movement I interviewed in 1972 simply assumed that the sweeping policy changes they wanted could be realized without altering the institutional arrangements of the Fifth Republic in any appreciable manner.

After 1968 alienation itself began to abate for a number of reasons. **François Mitterrand** took over and rejuvenated the PS (Socialist Party) in 1971. The PS began to champion many of the themes the students and workers had raised in 1968, including autogestion, women’s rights, the plight of immigrant workers, and the environment. In the process, it became one of the world’s most dynamic political parties, attracting many of the people who had been in the streets in 1968 and, in essence, channeling the conflicts growing out of the protests into conventional political life.

Meanwhile, the Gaullists learned many of the lessons of 1968. Parliament passed reforms in the wake of the electoral victory in June that gave universities a degree of autonomy, raised the minimum wage by 35 percent, and expanded workers’ benefits by, for instance, giving them a fifth week of guaranteed, paid vacation.

Perhaps most important of all was the continued rapid economic growth that contributed to a visible improvement in the standard of living of almost all French families. The improvements continued during **Valéry Giscard d’Estaing’s** presidency (1974–81), even though the rate of economic growth slowed considerably as a result of the OPEC oil embargo and the recession it sparked.

In the 1980s, the most important factor in the erosion of alienation undoubtedly was the election of Mitterrand and his Socialist parliamentary majority in 1981.

**TABLE 5.4** Support for the Fifth Republic

Question: "The Constitution of the Fifth Republic went into effect in 1958. If you had to render a judgment on how its institutions have functioned since then, would you say that they have functioned well or not functioned well?"

YEAR	FUNCTIONED WELL	NOT FUNCTIONED WELL
1978	56%	27%
1983	57	25
1992	61	32
2000	71	21

Note: Nonresponses excluded.

Source: Adapted from Olivier Duhamel, "Confiance institutionnelle et défiance politique: la démocratie française," in *L'état de l'opinion 2001*, ed. Olivier Duhamel and Philippe Méchet. (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2001), 75.

It marked the first time that there had been a real shift in who governed France since the foundation of the Fifth Republic (an important turning point in the history of any regime). Right-wingers had worried that a PS-PCF coalition would be dangerous. Yet the smooth transition to Socialist rule further established the legitimacy of the regime. The sense that the political stakes were no longer all that high was reinforced after the 1986, 1993, and 1997 elections, when left and right had to cohabit and govern together, and did so surprisingly effectively.

By that time, doubts about the Fifth Republic had largely evaporated. As table 5.4 shows, most Frenchmen and -women thought that the institutions of the Fifth Republic were working well by the end of the 1970s, a belief that has only strengthened since then as the traditional divisions between left and right and between working class and petite bourgeoisie have declined in significance.

### *New Divisions*

This does not mean that French politics lacks ideological divisions and the protest movements they can spawn. Although it may not put the existence of the Fifth Republic in jeopardy, France is divided on two overlapping issues that tap the postmaterialist values discussed in chapter 3—race and Europe.

Like Britain, France has a significant minority population, drawn mostly from its former colonies in Africa and Asia. Until the economic downturn of the 1970s, few people objected to their presence. Rather, many welcomed these immigrants, who gladly took low-paying or unpleasant jobs the French no longer were interested in.

That is not the case today. Many of the immigrants and their French-born children have not assimilated, sparking the resentment of many traditionalists and na-

## Conflict in France

**THE EVOLUTION of conflict in France demonstrates the importance of the difference between the government and the regime more clearly than anything we have seen so far. Before 1968 protest against the government, its leaders, and its practices easily spilled over into opposition to the regime as well. As a result, French politics had a degree of instability and fragility rarely seen in the United States or Great Britain.**

**Since then, however, the stakes of political life have lowered appreciably. As in most stable and effective democracies, just about everyone takes the regime for granted and accepts its legitimate right to govern.**

**Given the countries we have covered so far, this may not seem like a very important or surprising point. However, in parts 3 and 4, we will see that such support and legitimacy are very much the exception rather than the rule.**

tionalists. Although there is less immigration than there was a generation ago, many who are now entering France are doing so as political refugees at a time when, long before September 11, terrorism led many Frenchmen and -women to equate immigration with violence. More importantly, there is resentment against non-Whites who hold jobs or receive funds from France's ample social service programs at a time when unemployment and the budget deficit have both been at near record levels for more than a decade.

The manifestations of these trends extend far beyond the 10–15 percent of the vote the National Front (discussed later) won in most elections during the 1980s and 1990s. There is, for instance, widespread popular support for officials who have banned Muslim girls from attending school if they insist on wearing a head scarf.

But we should not make too much of the new French racism. There are probably as many people who oppose all forms of racism and some who welcome a more multicultural and diverse France. Many people, too, hope that the continued success of France's multi-racial soccer team since the 1998 World Cup victory will help ease tensions. Still, such people have been far less visible and influential both on the streets and at the ballot box.

European integration became a divisive issue for the first time with the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. As with racism, the fault lines cut across the traditional ideological camps. Similarly, opposition to further integration is concentrated in the same social and economic

The multiracial and multicultural French soccer team celebrating its victory in the 1998 World Cup. Many hope that the victory will help ease race relations in France.



AP/Wide World Photos (Luca Bruno)

groups that see themselves as most threatened by competition from “foreign” workers.

These two new divisions have emerged at a time when support for mainstream politicians is low. This is also the case in other industrialized democracies, but it may be more pronounced in France for two reasons.

To begin with, France is led by politicians who have been in influential positions for a quarter-century without, as many people see it, accomplishing very much. Mitterrand first rose to prominence right after World War II. Chirac, Jospin, and most of the other mainstream leaders have been around since the 1960s. Even Jean-Marie Le Pen, who has been a fixture on the electoral scene since the 1981 presidential race, began his political career as a member of parliament in 1956. Add to that the string of scandals discussed in chapter 3, and it becomes easy to see why many French voters have serious qualms about their leaders.

## Political Participation

A generation ago, political scientists also drew a sharp contrast between political participation in France and that in Britain or the United States. The widespread moderation and lack of intense involvement in the latter countries were believed to be impor-

tant sources of political stability. With France’s more turbulent history, the often extremist participation made stable and effective democracy difficult.

Since 1958, however, much has changed. Again, as we have already seen, Britain and the United States have had to face more protracted protests and more deeply rooted alienation. More importantly for our purposes here, French participation has become more like that across the English Channel and the Atlantic in ways that parallel how its culture has evolved.

### *Renewing the Party System*

For the past thirty years or so, analysts have been bemoaning what they see as the decline of political parties in the industrial democracies. Many parties have taken more extreme positions. Others have lost touch with the grass roots as they have come under the sway of spin doctors and other media tacticians. In most countries, levels of party identification or the long-term attachments people can develop toward a party have been declining, in some cases precipitously.

Until the past few years, the French political parties bucked that trend. To be sure, French political parties depend on their media handlers as much as do their counterparts in any country. But most French parties transformed themselves in the years after 1958. In the

**TABLE 5.5** Parliamentary Elections, 1958–97: Major Parties Only

YEAR	PCF <sup>d</sup>		PS <sup>a</sup>		CENTER <sup>b</sup>		GAULLISTS <sup>c</sup> AND ALLIES		NATIONAL FRONT	
	Votes <sup>d</sup>	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats
1958	19.1%	10	15.5%	47	41.0%	215	17.6%	212	–	–
1962	21.8	41	12.5	66	26.5	84	36.4	269	–	–
1967	22.5	73	19.0	121	12.6	41	37.7	242	–	–
1968	20.0	34	16.5	49	10.3	33	43.7	354	–	–
1973	21.2	73	20.4	101	12.4	31	34.5	261	–	–
1978	20.5	86	24.7	117	–	–	43.9	274	–	–
1981	16.2	44	37.6	281	–	–	40.0	150	–	–
1986	9.7	35	31.85	210	–	–	42.0	274	9.9%	35
1988	11.3	27	35.9	276	–	–	37.7	258	9.8	1
1993	9.2	23	20.3	70	–	–	39.5	460	12.4	0
1997	9.9	37	28.6	282	–	–	39.5	257	15.1	1

Note: Different sources provide somewhat different figures, especially for the earlier elections, when it was often difficult to tell which party an individual candidate represented, especially when it came to second-ballot alliances.

<sup>a</sup>SFIO before 1971. Includes parties allied with the Socialists, usually the left wing of the radicals.

<sup>b</sup>Includes MRP, Moderates, Radicals not allied with the SFIO, and other centrists not part of the Gaullist coalition.

<sup>c</sup>Includes both the Gaullist Party and, after the 1962 election, Giscard's Party, both of which kept changing their name from election to election.

<sup>d</sup>First-ballot vote only.

words of Frank L. Wilson, French political parties “refused to fail,” at least until the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> And without their strength, the Fifth Republic and its governments could not have produced the stability discussed earlier.

Any analysis of the party system obviously has to start with the Gaullists ([www.rpr.org](http://www.rpr.org)). The generic term *Gaullist* is used here because the party changed its actual name at each election until it permanently (as much as such things ever are permanent in France) became the RPR (Rally for the Republic) when Chirac became its leader after the 1974 presidential election.

Before 1958 there had not been a real Gaullist party. The general disliked parties and dissociated himself from them after the failure of the first Gaullist organization to win the 1951 legislative elections. In 1958 it was hard to tell what being a Gaullist meant, because a wide variety of politicians ran in the election, claiming to be an ally of the new republic's architect. (Legislative and presidential election results since 1958 are summarized in tables 5.5 and 5.6.)

By the mid-1960s, the Gaullists had created the first disciplined conservative party in French history. Since then, the Gaullists have regularly won about a quarter of the vote, distributed fairly evenly among all segments of French society.

The second member of the conservative coalition that dominated the Fifth Republic during its first twenty-three years got its start when the minister of finance,

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, split with most moderate politicians and supported a 1962 referendum on the direct election of the president. Giscard then formed his own small party, the Independent Republicans (RI), which did well enough to provide the Gaullists with the first stable parliamentary majority in the legislative elections that followed later that fall. Since then, the RI has changed its name to the Republican Party (PR) and joined with other politicians with roots in the traditional center-right to form a loose coalition known as the **Union for French Democracy (UDF)**, which became the Gaullists' electoral equal by the mid-1970s ([www.udf.org](http://www.udf.org)).

The third of the parties is probably the most surprising. The old SFIO had been one of France's strongest political parties during the first half of the twentieth century. However, it went into a prolonged decline after World War II, which left it with barely 5 percent of the vote in 1969 ([www.parti-socialiste.fr](http://www.parti-socialiste.fr)).

When Mitterrand took it over and renamed the party the PS two years later, it underwent a remarkable recovery. It began to champion autogestion and the other issues first raised in 1968 in a way that appealed to a broad cross-section of the electorate, and not simply to the vocal minorities that had taken to the streets and occupied factories.

Meanwhile, Mitterrand continued to pursue an electoral strategy based on an alliance with the PCF. In 1972, the two parties signed a Common Program of Government that they pledged to enact if they won the next legislative elections. Although they fell just short of victory the next year, the left did regain all the ground it lost

<sup>3</sup>Frank L. Wilson, “When Parties Refuse to Fail: The Case of France,” in *The Future of Political Parties*, ed. Kay Lawson (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 503–532.

**TABLE 5.6** Presidential Elections, 1965–95: Major Candidates Only (in percentages)

YEAR	COMMUNISTS <sup>a</sup>	SOCIALISTS <sup>b</sup>	CENTER <sup>c</sup>	GISCARDIEN <sup>d</sup>	GAULLIST <sup>e</sup>	NATIONAL FRONT <sup>f</sup>
1965						
First ballot	–	32.2	15.8	–	43.7	–
Second ballot	–	45.5	–	–	54.5	–
1969						
First ballot	21.5	5.1	23.4	–	43.8	–
Second ballot	–	–	42.4	–	57.6	–
1974						
First ballot	–	43.2	–	32.6	15.1	–
Second ballot	–	49.2	–	50.8	–	–
1981						
First ballot	15.3	25.8	–	28.3	17.9	–
Second ballot	–	51.8	–	48.2	–	–
1988						
First ballot	6.7	34.1	–	16.5	19.9	14.4
Second ballot	–	54.0	–	–	45.9	–
1995						
First ballot	8.5	23.5	–	19.0 <sup>g</sup>	20.8	15.2
Second ballot	–	47.4	–	–	52.6	–

<sup>a</sup>Jacques Duclos in 1969, Georges Marchais in 1981, André Lajoinie in 1988, and Robert Hue in 1995.

<sup>b</sup>François Mitterrand at all elections except 1969, when it was Gaston Defferre, and Lionel Jospin in 1995.

<sup>c</sup>Jean Lecanuet in 1965, Alain Poher in 1969.

<sup>d</sup>Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in 1974 and 1981, Raymond Barre in 1988.

<sup>e</sup>Charles de Gaulle in 1965, Georges Pompidou in 1969, Jacques Chaban-Delmas in 1974, and Jacques Chirac in 1981 and 1988.

<sup>f</sup>Jean-Marie Le Pen.

<sup>g</sup>Raymond Balladur was actually a second Gaullist candidate.

in 1968 and clearly established itself as a viable alternative to the Gaullists and Giscardiens.

Mitterrand also nearly defeated Giscard in 1974. However, the Communist-Socialist coalition foundered afterward. In 1977 the parties failed in their attempt to update the Common Program. The next year, their squabbling cost them what had at first seemed a sure victory in the legislative elections.

Largely because of the economic difficulties facing the Giscard government, Mitterrand did finally win the presidency in 1981. The PS also won a massive majority in the National Assembly in the elections held after Mitterrand dissolved parliament. But the economic difficulties did not go away, which forced the government to abandon its leftist goals (see the public policy section), and its standing in the country dropped dramatically. The PS went into the 1986 election knowing it was going to lose its majority. Still, it remained France's strongest party, with almost 32 percent of the vote.

During the first **cohabitation** period that followed, in which one party controls the presidency and the other controls parliament, Mitterrand was able to portray himself as a national leader above the partisan fray. He then capitalized on this in his surprisingly easy reelection in 1988. As in 1981, he immediately dissolved the National Assembly, and the PS came within a few thousand votes of again winning an outright majority.

At that point, the Socialists' fortunes began to plummet once again. The party had no clear policy agenda to offer voters, and nothing it tried seemed to work, especially in reducing the skyrocketing unemployment rate.

Moreover, the party now had a serious leadership problem. Mitterrand, old and ill, was a lame duck. His prime minister, Michel Rocard, was rather ineffectual, but, in retrospect, he was far more dynamic than Edith Cresson and Pierre Bérégovoy, who replaced him before the 1993 elections.

The party did quite badly that year, losing close to half its vote and three-quarters of its seats. All the signs indicated that it would do poorly in the 1995 presidential race, since it had trouble even finding a candidate. Jospin, however, proved to be a more successful campaigner than anyone expected, and the party began yet another recovery.

The recovery continued with the surprising victory by the PS in the snap election of 1997. However, the party has not gone through anything like the kind of renewal we saw in Blair's Labour Party in Britain. The PS itself is divided into a number of factions. More importantly, barring some unimaginable change in the country as a whole, the PS will not be able to win a majority of the vote on its own. Therefore, it will continue to have to rely on Greens, communists, and other small leftist groups to have a chance of forming a parliamentary majority.

The final established party, the PCF, is the only one that existed in anything like its current form before 1958 (www.pcf.fr). It was born on Christmas night 1920, when a group of socialists who supported the Bolshevik revolution in Russia split from the SFIO. The PCF struggled until the depression, when its willingness to cooperate with the SFIO and the Radicals in the Popular Front of the mid-1930s helped swell its ranks. It gained support as well during World War II, when it spearheaded the domestic resistance against the Nazis.

From then until the late 1970s, the PCF prospered, normally winning between 20 and 25 percent of the vote. But few of its voters were committed Marxists. Rather, the PCF thrived because it gained a disproportionate share of the country's large protest vote and had a well-organized subculture within the working class.

Despite the prosperity of the postwar years, the party stuck with its traditional demands for revolution, nationalization of industry, and a sweeping redistribution of wealth—none of which were particularly popular. It was able to get away with its dated positions because the SFIO was in even worse shape. But when the PS began to change and the PCF did not, the party found itself in deep trouble. Its leader from 1968 until the early 1990s, Georges Marchais, typified the party's problem. Marchais was never an innovative leader. In his quarter-century as general secretary of the PCF, he did little to update its vision of Marxism, which dated back to Stalin's time. Of the major nonruling communist parties, it remained the most loyal to Moscow and to traditional communist notions about governing. Its vote slipped below 10 percent in most local and national elections in the late 1980s, and its membership declined by as much as half. The collapse of communism in Europe only made matters worse, and by the 1990s, its very survival was in question. At this point, however, the party seems likely to hang on, though more as a party of working-class protest than as one committed to Marxism-Leninism.

Only one wholly new party has gained a lasting place for itself under the Fifth Republic—the FN (National Front), mentioned several times earlier (www.front-national.com). The Front is, in some ways, only the most recent incarnation of an antidemocratic, far-right tradition in French politics that dates back to 1789. But, in most respects, it is a new party whose appeal is based largely on fears of immigration, the “dilution” of French nationality and culture, and, now, European integration.

The party was founded in the 1970s as an outgrowth of one of France's small neofascist organizations. Later in the decade, it was taken over by **Jean-Marie Le Pen** (1928–), who had briefly been a deputy in the 1950s.

Le Pen transformed the FN from an extremist and often violent irritant on the fringes of French politics into a full-fledged party that could appeal to millions of voters.

Le Pen himself is a colorful character who has been known to make outrageous statements, including one challenging whether the Holocaust ever happened. But, on balance, the party has done a good job of presenting its racist ideas with a more acceptable profamily and patriotic veneer. As a result, it has been able to make inroads with most socioeconomic groups, but especially those whose security is most threatened by the changes sweeping the Western world. Typical are the views of an unemployed twenty-five-year-old man:

**When I go abroad I have no problem at all with foreigners. I respect their differences and their rules. But not all foreigners here have respect for our rules! It's a problem of integration. There should be special places for them to live—ghettos in the city which will offer everything so people can live in a community with others who speak their own language.<sup>4</sup>**

The FN did poorly at the polls until 1983, when it won control of the town hall in Dreux, a city about sixty miles west of Paris with a large immigrant population. The next year, the FN won 11 percent of the vote in the elections for the European parliament. After that, it won between 8 and 15 percent of the vote in most elections for the rest of the century. Its share of the vote is volatile because France conducts elections in different ways. As we will see, the electoral system used in parliamentary elections discriminates against new, small, and extremist parties like the FN. That does not happen in European and presidential elections, in which the Front has done consistently well, scoring about 15 percent throughout the 1990s.

The National Front may have dealt itself a fatal blow in 1999 when it was still near the peak of its popularity. For some time, Le Pen and his chief deputy, Bruno Mégret, had been at odds over whether the party should forge electoral alliances with the mainstream right-wing parties. The two were also rivals for control of the party, with attention focused on what would happen once Le Pen (born in 1928) finally stepped down. The last straw came with preparations for the elections to the European parliament in 1999. Le Pen was initially banned from running as punishment for having earlier struck a rival candidate. He insisted first that his wife, not Mégret, head the Front's list of candidates and then

<sup>4</sup>Mary Dejevsky, “Les événements,” *Independent Magazine*, 4 November 1995, 14.



Jean-Marie Le Pen, head of the National Front, addressing a press conference during the 1993 election campaign.

AP/Wide World Photos

that Charles de Gaulle, the general's grandson, be placed ahead of Mégret. Early in 1999, Mégret forced a schism and led his forces out of the party and formed a rival organization.

The party has not done well since then. It only won less than 6 percent of the vote in the 2001 European election, down 10 points from its showing in most presidential and European ballots. It did not fare any better in the 2001 municipal elections, though it should be pointed out that it did not mount a major campaign. Finally, together, Le Pen and Mégret were running at about 8 percent in the polls for president during the summer of 2001, roughly half what the party won in 1988 and 1995.

France also has a number of small parties of little political significance. For instance, it has two main groups of Greens and three small parties to the left of the communists that regularly compete for a combined 5 or 6 percent of the vote. There are also "flash" parties that burst onto the scene for an election or two and then fade away. Exploring these groups in any detail would not add much to your understanding of French politics.

### ***Why These Changes Happened: The French Electoral System***

There are many reasons the French party system changed so dramatically in the 1960s. In all likelihood, the unusual electoral system used in all post-1958 elections except 1986 was the most important.

Under the Fourth Republic, France used a form of **proportional representation** that gave each party the same share of seats in parliament that it won at the polls. As a result, it was easy for small parties to win seats, which reinforced the fragmentation and division among the parties.

The Fifth Republic has used a **single-member district, two-ballot system** (*scrutin uninominal à deux tours*) in every parliamentary election other than the one in 1986. The country is divided into districts as in Britain or the United States. Any number of candidates can run on a first ballot, and if one of them wins a majority, she or he wins the seat. If not (which is usually the case), a second ballot is held one week later. Any candidate winning at least 12.5 percent of the vote on the first ballot can run on the second. A candidate who does well enough to continue can decide to withdraw and support another candidate she or he thinks has a better chance of winning.

Therein lies the impact of this unusual electoral system. In 1958 a single candidate represented pro-Gaullist forces on the second ballot in most districts. Because Communist and Socialist candidates often remained in the race, the Gaullists won a much higher share of the seats than their number of votes would otherwise have indicated. In 1962 the Communists, Socialists, and other left-wing parties realized that, by competing with each other on the second ballot, they were making Gaullist victories that much easier. So they, too, began to cut

deals on a district-by-district basis whereby only the candidate who had the best chance of winning remained on the second ballot.

By 1967 both the left and the right had reached such agreements nationwide. Since then, almost all second-ballot races have pitted a single leftist and a single conservative candidate against each other.

Early on, that put the squeeze on the centrist parties, like the MRP and the Radicals, that had dominated the Fourth Republic. These parties' voters realized that they would have to choose between left and right on the second ballot, and so, as early as 1962 began voting for one or the other of them in the first round as well. The centrist parties vainly tried to stem the tide, but by 1974 they had disappeared as a viable political force. Today, the same system hurts the National Front and, to a lesser degree, the more radical of the Greens. The shift toward two coalitions was reinforced by the similar system used for presidential elections. Anyone who gets a mere handful of nominations from local officials can run on the first ballot. If a candidate wins a majority of the vote on the first ballot, the election is over. However, no candidate has ever come close to winning half the vote, and so a second ballot has always been required. Unlike in legislative elections, *only* two candidates can stay in the race, thereby magnifying the trend toward a more bipolar and consolidated party system.

### *Uncertainties at the Dawn of a New Century*

Most French political parties did quite well for extended periods during the thirty years after the creation of the Fifth Republic. It is difficult to make that case for any of them today. All have become catch-all parties that have a hard time taking definitive stands on issues at a time of change and uncertainty in French political life. All have aging leaderships. All have been touched by scandal. All have lost popular support in a country in which the traditional left-right alignment makes less and less sense to the electorate. Perhaps the most telling indicator of all is the number of people who don't bother to vote, which rose from 19 percent in 1978 to 35 percent in 1997.

### *Parity: A Victory for Feminism?*

The French municipal elections of 2001 were the first contested following passage of a constitutional amendment that requires parties to run slates of candidates with equal numbers of men and women—the so-called **parity law**. For some, passage of the constitutional amendment in 1999 and enabling legislation in the two

years afterward amounted to a major victory for women in politics and for feminism in general. For others, it was a sign of weakness because, without it, women would never gain any meaningful political impact.

France's track record on women and politics is mixed. It was the first country to grant the vote to all men (1848) but one of the last to give it to any women (1946). In the 1993 National Assembly election, fewer women were elected than in 1946. Even after a small surge in 1997, only 10.9 percent of Assembly members were women, which left France next to last in Europe and in fifty-ninth place worldwide, between Tunisia and India.

Passage of the parity law, however, does reflect a number of changes in the role of women and in French culture in general. This reinforces the overall argument being made in this chapter—that France is no longer all that different from the other industrialized democracies. In particular, it reflects the growing importance of post-materialist issues, in which traditional divisions between left and right matter less than they did even a generation ago.

The movement for parity began slowly and only received significant public attention in 1997 when 577 activists issued the Manifesto of 577 calling for a parity democracy. The National Assembly has 577 members; 289 of the signatories were women and 288 were men. Eventually, over 90 percent of the population supported the idea in principle.

The role of women in politics increased in 1995 when the new prime minister, Alain Juppé, appointed twelve women to his cabinet. But, as a sign of lingering sexism, they were immediately dubbed the *juppettes*—French for “miniskirt”. Then, in an attempt to solidify his right-wing support, Juppé dismissed half of them (apparently referring to them as “old biddies”), in so doing inadvertently generating even more support for the movement for parity.

Then the Socialists and their allies won the 1997 Assembly election. They already included more women in their parliamentary delegation than the right ever had. Prime Minister Jospin appointed a number of women to key positions, including Martine Aubry, who headed a superministry on employment, social security, and health. The government also quickly introduced the constitutional amendment on parity that went into effect two years later, after some attempts to block it by the more conservative Senate failed.

### *Interest Groups*

It is hard to reach firm conclusions about French interest groups. France was long known as a country in which people did not join them, although the evidence now



AP/Wide World Photos (Laurent Hebours)

Labour Minister Martine Aubry was the second most powerful member of the first Jospin cabinet.

suggests that they were as likely to do so as their counterparts in Britain or the United States. This misperception, however, kept political scientists from doing serious research on most French interest groups other than the trade unions. The scanty available evidence does indicate that most interest groups are not doing as well as they did twenty or thirty years ago.

Despite the legacy of 1968, only about 10 percent of the population belongs to an environmental group, and an even smaller percentage belongs to the antinuclear or the peace movement. These rates and those for similar postmaterialist organizations are all smaller than the European average.

France's organized women's movement is also among the weakest in Europe. This is the case even though France has long had relatively progressive policies on a number of issues that women have traditionally been interested in. For example, the country has an extensive preschool program, much of which dates back to the nineteenth century. Similarly, Prime Minister Léon Blum appointed a woman to his cabinet in 1936 even though it would be another decade before women won the right to vote.

Racial minorities are also poorly represented in the interest group arena. Given their often uncertain legal status, immigrants have been understandably reluctant to organize. On top of that, few mainstream parties or unions have sought to organize minorities or to defend their interests except when particularly outrageous abuses have led to massive rallies. But even these have not been followed by serious attempts to build large and lasting organizations.

Political scientists do pay considerable attention to the trade unions even though they, too, are not all that strong. The unions assert that about 25 percent of all nonagricultural workers belong to one or another of them, but most observers think that the true figure is closer to 10 percent. Moreover, there is no equivalent to the British TUC, which brings together most individual unions into a single peak association.

Instead, French unions are fragmented. Three unions compete for members in most factories and offices. The **CGT** (Confédération Générale du Travail), the largest union for most of the twentieth century, is affiliated with the Communist Party. Since the mid-1960s, however, its position has been challenged by the **CFDT** (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail). The CFDT began as a Catholic union but dropped its links to the church and moved dramatically to the left during the 1970s. It now has close ties to the PS, though it is not as radical as it was a generation ago. **Force ouvrière** (Workers' Force) broke away from the CGT at the beginning of the cold war. It was the most moderate of the three, but it has become more aggressive in recent years. It, too, has reasonably close ties with the PS.

Separate unions exist for teachers and most professional groups, including business managers. Even students have unions. France also has large and active groups representing small business owners, employers, farmers, and almost any commercial group one can imagine.

Until the 1980s, the unions were one of the most radical forces in French political life. In the 1960s, for instance, the CGT demanded the nationalization of all major industrial firms, a ban on layoffs without retraining for the workers involved, and a reduction in the work week without a cut in salaries. In the early 1970s, the CFDT added support for autogestion to its similar list of demands. That was not mere rhetorical militancy: From 1963 through 1973 (even excluding 1968), an average of 2.5 to 3 million workdays were lost to strikes each year.

Since the economic downturn of the mid-1970s, levels of union membership and militancy have both sagged. The CGT has dropped its demands for more nationalization and mandatory retraining. For the CFDT, autogestion has become a slogan with little or no mean-

## JOSE BOVE



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The best symbol of the French tradition of outside-the-system protest today is Jose Bove. A veteran of the “events” of 1968, Bove abandoned the bourgeois professional career that awaited him and moved to a farm in southern France where he raises goats and makes Roquefort cheese.

In the 1970s he was part of a successful protest to keep the French army from taking over the stark but beautiful Larzac plateau. In the 1980s he participated in Greenpeace’s campaign to stop French nuclear testing and led a group of his fellow farmers who plowed up part of the land near the Eiffel Tower in opposition to EU farm pricing policies. In the 1990s he became one of France’s leading critics of globalization. That led him to the activities that got him the most notice and notoriety—vandalism at McDonald’s restaurants. He labeled them symbols of American cultural imperialism, not to mention sellers of food that offended French culinary traditions.

Jose Bove (at the back), outside one of the many McDonald’s restaurants where he has led protests.

ing. From 1982 through 1988, the number of workdays lost to strikes never topped 1.4 million.

Since 1995 the unions have been more active. That year, a massive wave of strikes and demonstrations forced the government to roll back some of its plans to cut social services and raise taxes. In 1997 unions occupied some offices in opposition to the Socialist government’s failure to move fast enough in creating jobs for the eighth of the workforce that was unemployed. From time to time, truck drivers engaged in wildcat strikes that brought parts of the country’s commercial life to a halt for as long as a week or two. However, on balance, the unions are struggling to protect the gains made for their members over the years and are, at most, a disruptive force rather than a potentially revolutionary one.

There is one exception to this picture of divided and weakening interest groups—big business. As we will see in the next section, business leaders have had such easy access to the upper levels of the civil service and to elected officials that it has often been hard to tell where

the influence of one ended and that of the other began. However, as we will also see in the next section, it is an exception that proves the rule that policymakers and civil servants pay little attention to interest groups—they simply didn’t consider business leaders to be part of one!

## The French State

As we saw in the historical section of this chapter, France is the home of the modern state, though it fell on hard times after the revolution of 1789. De Gaulle’s return to power marked a return to the older tradition of a strong French state. The regime he created has turned out to be both more ambitious and more effective than anything we saw in Great Britain or the United States. In part, this reflected the adoption of a constitution that gave new powers to the president and prime minister while limiting those of the parliament. In part, it also reflected something that will become clearer

in the chapters on Germany and Japan—the emergence of informal but extremely close relationships between the public and private sectors in ways not spelled out in the constitution.

That said, at the end of this section and in the one on public policy to follow, we will also see that the French state in the first years of the twenty-first century is not as strong as it was under the Fifth Republic's first presidents for three reasons. First, although French voters have turned away from politics, just like their counterparts throughout the industrialized world, there is more pressure from below that limits the ability of policymakers to act with the freedom (and, some would say, arrogance) of a generation ago. Second, French political life has become more routine, and there is widespread agreement across the political spectrum that the country does not need the active, guiding state of the Gaullist years. Finally, the growing power of the EU in economic and, now, other policy-making arenas has stripped the French state of much of its authority.

### *A New Constitution for a New State*

Recall that the twin revolts in Algeria left the Fourth Republic's political leaders with a tough choice—either succumb to a likely military coup or bring de Gaulle back to office. Because he understood that the politicians really had little choice in the matter, de Gaulle was able to strike a tough bargain.

He demanded emergency powers that allowed him to rule with minimal interference from parliament for six months while revising the constitution. He appointed noted lawyer **Michel Debré** (1912–96) to head the commission to revise the constitution. Debré's group quickly decided not to amend the existing document but to start from scratch with a new Fifth Republic.

Debré had long been an admirer of British party government, which enables prime ministers to see their policy initiatives enacted because the government has a disciplined majority in parliament. Debré assumed, however, that the French were too divided to ever elect a British-style majority. Therefore, the drafting committee set out to write a constitution creating institutions that would give the executive the same leverage the British cabinet gets through the election of a majority in the House of Commons. Those provisions fell into two main categories ([uni-wuerzberg.de/law/fr00000\\_.html](http://uni-wuerzberg.de/law/fr00000_.html)).

First, the president would be a lot stronger. He (so far, they have all been men) could use emergency powers to rule as a de facto dictator for up to six months (Article 16) and to call a referendum (Article 11) on certain

**TABLE 5.7** French Presidents and Prime Ministers Since 1958

YEAR TOOK OFFICE	PRESIDENT	PRIME MINISTER
1959	Charles de Gaulle	Michel Debré
1962		Georges Pompidou
1968		Maurice Couve de Murville
1969	Georges Pompidou	Jacques Chaban-Delmas
1972		Pierre Messmer
1974	Valéry Giscard d'Estaing	Jacques Chirac
1976		Raymond Barre
1981	François Mitterand	Pierre Mauroy
1984		Laurent Fabius
1986		Jacques Chirac
1988		Michel Rocard
1991		Edith Cresson
1992		Pierre Bérégovoy
1993		Edouard Balladur
1995	Jacques Chirac	Alain Juppé
1997		Lionel Jospin

matters related to the “organization of governmental authority.” The constitution also listed the powers of the president first, ahead of those of the cabinet and parliament, thereby signaling that the office was to take on new importance and could even exercise the most draconian of all measures—dissolving parliament and calling for new elections. (See table 5.7.)

The stronger presidency was also evident in the way elections for the office were to be held. Under the Third and Fourth Republics, the two houses of parliament met together to choose the president for a seven-year term. The president was not subject to the votes of confidence that both houses used to hamstring cabinets. Fearing a potentially strong president, the parliament routinely chose elderly, incompetent, and/or unambitious men to hold what was, at most, a ceremonial position ([www.elysee.fr/ang/index.shtm](http://www.elysee.fr/ang/index.shtm)).

Now, the president was to be elected by an electoral college of more than 80,000 voters. The members of both houses of parliament were included in the college. Their influence, however, was dwarfed by that of representatives of local and departmental councils, who made up nearly 98 percent of its membership. But this system was used only once. Following an assassination attempt on de Gaulle's life in 1962, the voters approved a referendum that made the president directly elected by the people.

The second set of changes was designed to strengthen the government as a whole while weakening the lower house of parliament, now called the **National Assembly**. The framers retained the central feature of any parliamentary system—the prime minister being responsible

to the parliament. But, to reduce the likelihood that France would lapse back into “revolving-door prime ministers,” the constitution included a number of new provisions that strengthened the government’s hand in legislative-executive relations ([www.assemblee-nat.fr/english/index.asp](http://www.assemblee-nat.fr/english/index.asp)).

For example, the new cabinet no longer had to submit to a vote of investiture, giving it the parliament’s formal endorsement before it took office. Similarly, it could not be defeated in a vote of confidence unless the opposition won an absolute majority of all MPs, not the simple majority of those present and voting, as had been the case since 1875. These may seem like minor differences at first glance, but under the Fourth Republic, several potential cabinets lost those initial investiture votes, and almost half were defeated by relative, not absolute, majorities.

The **incompatibility clause** (Article 23) required members of parliament to give up their seats once appointed to a cabinet. No longer could cabinet members undermine a government they served in, knowing they had their seats in the legislature to fall back on.

The National Assembly was not allowed to either raise the expenditures or lower the tax rates proposed in the government’s budget. The government also could demand a **bloc vote** in which the Assembly was not allowed to offer any amendments to a bill but had to vote for or against the government’s draft as a whole. The government could even determine when the parliament met and what its agenda would be. Much economic and foreign policy was placed in a “domain of regulation,” which meant that the government could rule by decree, without parliamentary approval.

Although the constitution sought to shift the balance of power from the parliament to the executive, it really did not make clear whether the president or prime minister would dominate. That question was resolved with de Gaulle’s first act as president—appointing Debré as prime minister. Debré was neither a popular politician nor a member of the elite that had guided France for three-quarters of a century. He was clearly de Gaulle’s lieutenant, always doing what the president wanted, including resigning when the general thought the time had come in 1962. De Gaulle and Debré appointed a number of bureaucrats and other people from outside parliament to the first cabinet, yet another action the established politicians took as an insult.

In those first years, de Gaulle used all the new powers the constitution gave him. Presidential power and autonomy from parliament were strengthened in two referenda on Algerian independence through which de Gaulle gained popular approval for a policy he could never have gotten through the Assembly. He invoked

emergency powers after the failed coup attempt. As mentioned earlier, the general went to the people in 1962 with a legally questionable referendum that made the president directly elected by the people, truly making his mandate far broader than that of any party or other politician.

The constitution mentioned a “reserved domain” in which the president would predominate without specifying what it included. Within the first few years, de Gaulle made it clear that the reserved domain involved anything he thought was important, as he intervened in just about every policy-making area—domestic and international. From the beginning, the system functioned as de Gaulle and Debré intended, with the executive dominating a National Assembly that was normally as compliant as the British House of Commons. The president’s and prime minister’s tasks were made much easier when the unexpected began happening in 1962 and the electorate regularly supported a clear majority.

Undoubtedly, most of the president’s real power rests on the fact that he is directly elected. The president can also draw on a much larger personal staff than the British prime minister. Currently, the Elysée staff numbers over seven hundred and includes the president’s closest advisers, many of whom are drawn from France’s remarkable civil service, which we will encounter shortly. Indeed, as in the United States, those unofficial advisers on the presidential staff often have more influence than do cabinet members.

Throughout the Fifth Republic, about a third of all cabinet members have been recruited from the bureaucracy. Chirac’s case is representative. He began his career as a civil servant and worked on the staff of a number of ministers in the early 1960s before being appointed agriculture minister in one of Pompidou’s first governments. Only later, in 1967, did he run for electoral office. A smaller number of ministers are recruited from outside government altogether. Pompidou, for instance, became prime minister after a career as an investment banker. Similarly, Bernard Kouchner joined one of the later Mitterrand governments after building a worldwide reputation as head of Médecins sans frontières, a group of physicians that provides humanitarian aid in war-torn areas.

All presidents and prime ministers have availed themselves of the ability to rule by decree and otherwise avoid dealing with parliament. The decisions to build the first atomic bomb, as well as the one to test such bombs in 1995, were made without consulting parliament.

When parliament has been involved, it has normally voted as routinely along party lines as the House of Commons. As in Britain, backbench revolts have

occasionally stymied governmental initiatives. These incidents are rare, however, as the president and prime minister have almost always been able to prevail. Indeed, the best book on economic planning through the 1970s devotes only a two-page chapter to parliament's role because it has had so little influence over one of the most important aspects of policy making in Fifth Republic France.

The machinery has worked a bit less smoothly during the three periods of cohabitation. There were some fears that the system might fall into a Fifth Republic version of parliamentary gridlock when Mitterrand first faced a Gaullist parliament in 1986. However, the two sides quickly worked out a reasonably effective *modus vivendi*, through which the parliamentary majority controlled most domestic policy, which has been the norm under cohabitation ever since.

Finally, the **Senate** is slightly more influential than the British House of Lords, though that is not saying much. Its members are indirectly chosen by electoral colleges composed overwhelmingly of local elected officials. Its districts are based on the state's cantons (counties) and give small towns and rural areas a disproportionate number of seats, which means that conservatives have an overwhelming majority.

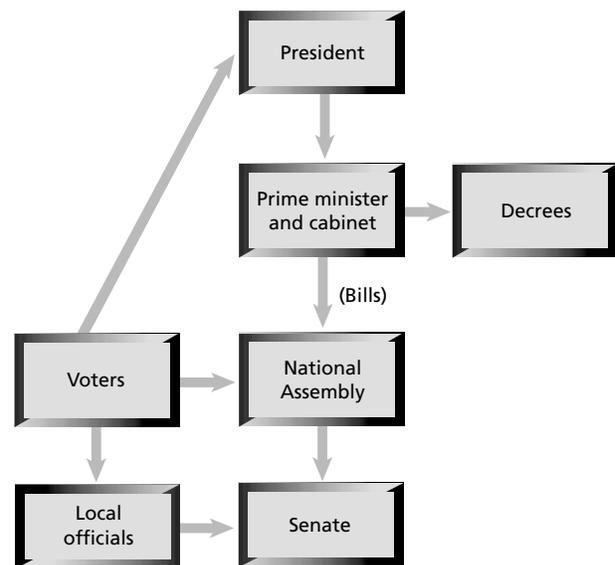
The Senate frequently objects to government proposals, especially those that conflict with the interests of the members' largely rural constituents. However, the Senate has not been, and cannot be, a serious obstacle to any government. If the National Assembly and Senate do not agree on a bill, a joint committee is established, and if no agreement is reached, the government determines which body's version of the bill will prevail. (See figure 5.2.)

### *The Integrated Elite*

There is an obvious question to ask given what we have seen so far: If its legislative-executive mechanisms work in much the same way as Britain's, how can the French state be stronger or more effective?

The answer lies in the distinction between the government and the state drawn in chapter 1. Recall that the state involves all the people involved in making key decisions, not all of whom are formally governmental officials.

For France, that means extending our analysis to the bureaucracy, which has been the linchpin of the strong state since 1958. In chapter 4, we saw that the British civil service plays a limited role in coordinating economic and other policy making. In France and Japan, however, not only are civil servants themselves power-



**FIGURE 5.2** The Legislative Process in France

ful, but former bureaucrats dominate the political parties and big business, and serve as the glue holding a remarkably integrated elite together.

Their influence begins with their education at the ENA and other **grandes écoles**. These are specialized and highly selective institutions of higher education whose mission is to train high-level civil servants. Young men and women from France's most privileged families tend to do best on the exams that determine who is admitted to them because of the educational and other privileges they enjoy throughout their lives. In fact, in most years, a majority of the ENA's students are graduates of a half-dozen leading Parisian *lycées* (schools), and as many as a third come from families in which their fathers (but rarely their mothers) were themselves top-level civil servants.

The sway of the ENArques extends far beyond the civil service. Grandes écoles graduates owe the state only ten years of service. After that, they can resign and move into big business or politics. Thousands of them have done so in a process known as **pantouflage**—literally, “putting on soft and cushy slippers.” As noted earlier, most prominent French politicians are ENA graduates. The ENArques play at least as important a role in French business. Well over half of the chief executive officers of the largest French firms in both the public and private sectors are former civil servants. Because so many of them share the same background, training, and values, this integration of the elite facilitated coherent decision making throughout the quarter-century the Gaullists and their allies were in power.

## FRANCE'S DUAL EXECUTIVE

France is the only major liberal democracy in which the two top executive offices are powerful *and* can be occupied by members of different parties. Following the 1997 legislative elections, that happened for the third time. The Gaullist president Jacques Chirac (1932–) had no choice but to appoint the Socialist Lionel Jospin (1937–) as prime minister, because his party had just won the largest block of seats in the National Assembly. Together, they illustrate both the similarities and differences between left- and right-wing politicians in France.

Born in Paris, Chirac attended both the prestigious *Institut d'études politiques* and the even more prestigious ENA. After graduation, he served on the personal staff of Prime Minister Georges Pompidou, and he was appointed to his first ministerial position in the mid-1960s. Only in 1967 did he begin his own elective political career, winning a parliamentary seat in the region his family had originally come from. In the 1970s he became leader of the Gaullist Party and was elected prime minister (1974–76) and mayor of Paris (1977–95). He ran unsuccessfully against François Mitterrand in 1981 and 1988 before winning the presidency in 1995. Though he often uses free-market rhetoric, he is a Gaullist and thus expects the state to play a major role in sustaining French political, military, and diplomatic power.

Jospin was also born to a middle-class Parisian family and attended the ENA. He started out in the foreign service but quit the diplomatic corps after four years, finding the Gaullist influence there to be too strong. He then became a teacher and joined Mitterrand in re-creating the Socialist Party in 1971. He was an influential leader in it thereafter, though he held only one ministerial post (education) during Mitterrand's two terms in office. A series of personal and political setbacks led him to abandon politics in the early 1990s, but he leaped into the PS's leadership vacuum in 1995, assumed leadership of the party the following year, and swept into office in 1997. As a Socialist, he favors more redistribution of wealth and general policies that help the poor and disadvantaged than does Chirac. However, the fact that they are both ENArques means that he, too, is more predisposed toward a strong state than, say, his counterparts on the British or German left.

The connections survived when the left came to power. There is no question that the government-business links were stronger under the Gaullists and their allies. Nonetheless, the Socialists attract more than their share of ENArques as well, including three of the six prime ministers. The Socialists also drew heavily on former ENArques to head the industries they nationalized in 1981, and many of them have moved on to key positions in the private sector.

## THE ENA

There is no other school in the world comparable to the *École nationale d'administration* (National School of Administration) ([www.ena.fr/E/](http://www.ena.fr/E/)).

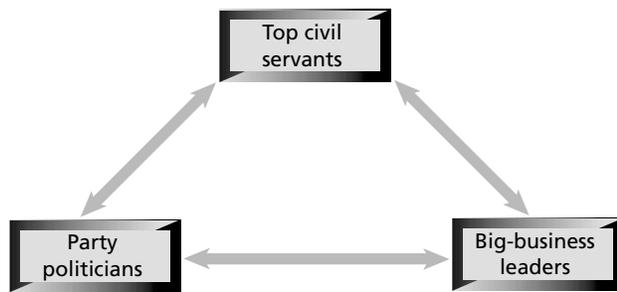
Created after World War II, the ENA was designed to train a new generation of civil servants committed both in democracy and the use of the state to spur economic growth. Although it is a small institution that admits about 100 new students per year and has fewer than 5,000 living graduates, it has cast its net over all areas of French life.

The first generation of ENArques reached the peaks of their careers at about the time de Gaulle returned to power. They thus began dominating the key branches of the civil service, orienting them toward goals of grandeur and growth—goals they shared with the Gaullists. Then they started moving out of the bureaucracy and into key positions in politics and business. Although the ENArques gained more fame—and criticism—under the Gaullists, they actually have made up a larger share of officials in most Socialist governments. In any case, they form a larger proportion of top business executives than political leaders.

In the United States, observers often talk about an **iron triangle** of interest group lobbyists, bureaucrats, and members of Congress who dominate policy making in a given area. (See figure 5.3.) The French and Japanese versions of those iron triangles are far stronger.

With the new institutions and Gaullist control of them, the Fifth Republic was able to engage in far more systematic planning. Paris, for example, underwent massive gentrification. Real estate speculators bought up old buildings that housed workers, small shopkeepers, and artisans, and replaced them with expensive office and apartment complexes. Businesses and families were displaced by the thousands and forced into dreary, working-class suburbs that one urban activist referred to as “people silos.” Some suburban public housing complexes were so cheaply constructed that interior walls only went about three-quarters of the way to the ceiling. New suburbs with tens of thousands of inhabitants had few cafés or other public places for people to gather.

The same story was repeated for other policy areas. Immigrant workers, small merchants, farmers, students at regular universities, and the elderly fared poorly under the Gaullists. The winners did do a remarkable job of turning French political and economic life around, but the way they “won” left France an even more unequal society than it had been in 1958.



**FIGURE 5.3** The Iron Triangle

The shift toward more centralized, bureaucratic, and elitist decision making is by no means unique to France. As all industrialized societies have grown more complex and more dependent on expertise, more and more decision-making power has moved to the upper reaches of the bureaucracy. What is unique to France is the speed with which that process occurred and the way in which it limited the power of those outside the integrated elite.

In interviews with Ezra Suleiman of Princeton, bureaucrat after bureaucrat tried to put their power in the best possible light. Most claimed that they did not have this kind of relationship with any interest groups. As three of them put it:

**The contact with groups is mostly to inform them, to explain to them. It's true that they can't influence policy.**

—*Ministry of Industry*

**We always consult. It doesn't mean we listen, but we consult. We don't always reveal our intentions. We reveal only as much as we think it is necessary to reveal.**

—*Ministry of Education*

**First, we make out a report or draw up a text, then we pass it around discreetly within the administration. Once everyone concerned within the administration is agreed on the final version, then we pass this version around outside the administration. Of course, by then it's a *fait accompli* and *pressure cannot have any effect*. [emphasis added]**

—*Ministry of Industry*<sup>5</sup>

They did not ignore people they considered “serious”—the representatives of big business and

others who shared their vision of economic growth—that is, people like themselves. They simply did not consider them to be interest groups. In so doing, they convinced themselves that they did not consult with such groups in any meaningful and, in their eyes inappropriate, way. But they were still able to work closely with those organizations and individuals who shared their conceptions of France's future. This is hardly surprising, given that the partisan and business leaders they did take seriously mostly started their careers in the civil service and share the bureaucrats' background, training, and worldview.

Although the evidence is indirect, it certainly seems that these men and women understood that they had a choice: Either they could devote their resources to economic growth and national grandeur, or they could succumb to what they saw as the petty and selfish demands of the “nonserious.” And there was no question in their minds which they should choose.

Consequently, workers were not able to communicate to key decisionmakers that they were among the most exploited people in Europe. Immigrants were not able to do much about either the racism or the horrible working conditions they had to put up with.

The Socialists did try to address some of these issues when they first came to power in 1981. New admissions procedures were established to make it easier for working-class and underprivileged youths to get into the ENA and the other grandes écoles. This was supplemented in 1997 by a limited affirmative action program for students from a number of impoverished Parisian suburbs. Similarly, in a symbolically important step, the ENA campus was moved from the heart of Paris to Strasbourg, near the border with Germany. Still, on balance, one has to be struck by the continuity, not the change, in the bureaucratic impact on national government since 1981.

### **Local Government**

We can see the declining but still critical centralization of power in France by shifting our attention away from Paris and briefly exploring local government.

Two French terms tell us a lot about what that centralization was like. First, until 1981, the closest the French came to an American governor for its now ninety-six departments was the **prefect**. Unlike the American governor, who is elected, the prefect was a national civil servant, appointed by the minister of the interior. Moreover, tradition had it that prefects should not be from the department they ran and were rotated out after two or three years so they would not get too close

<sup>5</sup>Ezra Suleiman, *Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 333–336.



## USEFUL WEB SITES

There are fewer web sites on France than on Britain or the United States, at least in English. Gradually, however, organizations are adding English versions of their French sites, and so I have included a number of French-only sites in the body of the text. Those listed here are all in English.

There are two American-based sources of links to political topics in France. The first is maintained by the library at New York University. The second is an offshoot of H-France, a listserver for scholars working on things French.

[www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wess/fren/polygov.htm](http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wess/fren/polygov.htm)

[www3.uakron.edu/hfrance/resources.html](http://www3.uakron.edu/hfrance/resources.html)

There are surprisingly few ways of getting news on France in English. The best source is French-News.com.

[www.French-News.com](http://www.French-News.com)

The best, though still limited, English-language source on public opinion polls is run by the firm CSA.

[www.csa-tmo.fr/home.asp](http://www.csa-tmo.fr/home.asp)

The President's Office site is a good entry point to government agencies.

[www.elysee.fr/ang/index.shtm](http://www.elysee.fr/ang/index.shtm)

The Tocqueville Connection is a project of U.S.-CREST, a nonprofit organization based in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area that focuses on enhancing dialogue between France and the United States.

[www.ttc.org](http://www.ttc.org)

to the local people. The second is the *tutelle*, or oversight, the prefects and the administration as a whole exercised over local governments. Virtually all local decisions, down to the naming of schools or streets, not to mention municipal budgets, had to be approved by the prefect's office in advance.

By the 1970s this extreme centralization had become a serious burden. There were simply too many things that had to be done locally for the central bureaucracy to control. Moreover, even if they did not make much policy, local governments had grown in size because of the decisions they had to implement, which gave the mayors considerable leverage over the prefect. That local power was reinforced because of a peculiar French policy that allows people to hold more than one elected office. Mayors of most major cities were mem-

bers of parliament and often were prominent national politicians as well.

Socialist mayors chafed under the *tutelle*, and they convinced the PS to make decentralization a critical plank in the party's program during the 1970s. When the Socialists finally won in 1981, decentralization was the first major reform to work its way onto the statute books. The *tutelle* was abolished, though it was later restored for the smallest towns, which actually needed the support services the former prefectural offices provided. Among other things, cities and towns (*communes*) gained control of urban planning, the departments assumed jurisdiction in the administration of welfare, and the regions got responsibility for economic planning. The heads of the elected departmental and regional councils are at least as important as the prefects were. The central government now issues block grants to fund long-term investment programs and gives local authorities the revenues from the annual automobile registration fees. *Communes* also have the freedom to set real estate and other local tax rates.

## The Courts

The Fifth Republic has a large and strong judiciary, headed by the *Cour des comptes*, which is the country's chief financial investigator, and the *Conseil d'état*, which has jurisdiction over the state and its actions.

These are not, however, bodies that exercise judicial review and thus rule on the constitutionality of laws or other governmental acts. As in Britain, the Third and Fourth republics' tradition of parliamentary sovereignty meant that the courts were not granted any such power.

The constitution of 1958 did create a Constitutional Council with the power to supervise elections and rule on the constitutionality of bills passed by the Assembly before they formally become law. This council is composed of nine judges who serve staggered nine-year terms. Three each are appointed by the president of the Fifth Republic and the presidents of the two houses of parliament. Under de Gaulle, the council was little more than a political joke. The one time it tried to assert its power, by finding his decision to hold a referendum on the direct election of the president unconstitutional, de Gaulle simply ignored its judgment and forged ahead.

In the 1980s, however, the council began to play a more assertive role. For the first few years of the Mitterrand presidency, it was still dominated by judges appointed by conservatives, and it forced the Socialists to modify a number of their reforms—among other things, dramatically increasing the compensation to the former

owners of nationalized firms. After 1986 the new conservative government faced a court with a Socialist majority, which overturned four of the fourteen laws that sold off much of the state sector.

One should not, however, draw too many parallels between the French and the American or even the German courts, which we will cover in the next chapter. The French courts' powers are far more limited both by the constitution and by tradition.

### *The Changing Role of the State*

So far, this chapter has revolved around a single theme—the growing stability and acceptance of the Fifth Republic and its strong executive. We do have to add one qualifier to this theme that is important not only for France but for most of the other industrialized democracies as well.

There has been no appreciable erosion of support for the French regime, nor have its institutions changed in any significant way. In fact, the most important reform of the past generation—the reduction in the president's term from seven to five years—will probably not change the nature of the office at all.

However, the presidency and the other institutions have weakened in ways that have not reached the statute books and that often do not draw much public attention. Each is more pronounced in France than in Britain because the French state entered the last decades of the twentieth century so much stronger than its counterpart across the Channel. Three aspects of those changes stand out.

First, France has a stronger civil society. As Vivien Schmidt put it, the traditional vision of politics in France was that

**the state would lead, society would follow. [Now], the state is no longer so sure of its leadership capacity [and] society is no longer so willing to be led.<sup>6</sup>**

French interest groups are no stronger than they were thirty years ago. However, French society has changed in ways that make it hard for the state to run roughshod over it.

Second, France has a less imperial presidency. In the 1960s the historian Arthur Schlesinger coined the term *imperial presidency* to describe the growing powers of whoever occupied the White House. The term is even

more appropriate for describing the French presidency in the first half of the Fifth Republic.

Much of the public policy we will cover in the next section grows out of a tradition of “heroic” decision making by an individual leader such as de Gaulle or a cohesive elite of ENArques and their allies. According to most interpretations, they were able to use the levers provided by the Fifth Republic to take bold new policy initiatives in the economy and in foreign affairs.

In recent years, however, there has been less demand or need for heroic policy making. Instead, France has had a different and less dramatic style of leadership, most notably expressed in the declining clout of the presidency since the middle of the Mitterrand years.

There are several reasons for this shift. First and foremost, between 1986 and 2001, France had nine years of cohabitation in which one coalition controlled the National Assembly and had to govern with a president from the other side of the political spectrum. Under those circumstances, no one political point of view could dominate. In addition, since the PS abandoned policies designed to produce a “rupture with capitalism” two years after Mitterrand won his first presidential election, neither the left nor the right has supported proposals for profound change. Thus, the PS and its allies have not “modernized” themselves as much as Blair's Labour Party, and the Gaullists, in particular, have resisted the whole-scale adoption of liberal values we saw in Thatcher's and Reagan's governments. Finally, Mitterrand and Chirac have been decidedly “unheroic” individuals. Mitterrand was and Chirac is immensely talented. However, their ages (Mitterrand was seriously ill for most of his second term) and the scandals that reached into the Elysée sapped them both of any hopes of leading the country in a profoundly different direction.

Third, France is increasingly subject to global forces. The French interventionist state worked from the 1950s through the 1970s because it could largely control the country's economy. France was by no means autarkic. Nonetheless, it was able to enact policies that reshaped the French economic and social landscape.

This is far less true today. As we will see in more detail in the rest of the chapter, France is like other states in that it is less and less master of its own destiny. This is an outgrowth of the world's headlong shift toward globalization. National boundaries simply matter less than they used to in determining the flow of goods and services. In France, at least a third of the gross domestic product is the result of foreign trade. Sometimes, it is hard to see this effective loss of national sovereignty because it is at least one step removed from most people's

<sup>6</sup>Vivien Schmidt, “The Changing Dynamics of State-Society Relations in the Fifth Republic,” in *The Changing French Political System*, ed. Robert Elgie, (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 141.

daily lives. But for the fifteen member states of the EU, the decline of the state has a concrete, legal base. As we will see in chapter 7, the EU has gradually added to its powers over member states since it was formed in 1957. At this point, it certainly is more important than the member states as far as economic policy making is concerned, especially since the introduction of the euro as a common currency for eleven of the members in 2002.

## Public Policy: The Pursuit of Grandeur

The 1958 constitution gives Fifth Republic leaders powers to make policy in ways that their predecessors could only dream of. The emergence of the integrated elite in the 1960s gave them even more leverage, allowing the Gaullists to restore French power at home and abroad in pursuit of what the general called **grandeur**. Since the late 1970s, however, his successors on the left and right alike have enjoyed far less success.

This section will illustrate one of the key themes of this book as clearly as any segment on the state or public policy in the chapters that follow. The Fifth Republic's early years show us what a strong state can accomplish. Conversely, the past two to three decades drive home how difficult it is for any country to achieve policy success using a strong state.

## Economic Policy

### Les Trentes Glorieuses

In the eighteenth century, the French coined a word to describe state management of a capitalist economy—*dirigisme*. Between 1789 and 1958, however, republican governments were reluctant to use the policy levers at their disposal to modernize the country. The failures of the 1930s and 1940s changed all that.

From the end of World War II until the recession sparked by the OPEC oil embargo of 1973–74, France enjoyed a period of unprecedented economic growth, which one historian called *les trentes glorieuses* (thirty glorious years). Economists have yet to separate out the independent effects of the various forces that propelled France into this economic prosperity. However, the policies pursued by the Gaullists during their brief period in power after the Liberation in 1944 and then after 1958 have to be near the top of any list of causes of that post-war boom.

The provisional government nationalized a number of firms, including the Renault automobile company and the three leading savings banks. De Gaulle also cre-

ated the General Planning Commission to speed the recovery from the war by bringing business leaders and civil servants together to help rebuild such key industries as electricity generation, cement production, and the railroads. Meanwhile, a number of business leaders realized that they had to modernize, which they decided could best be done by cooperating with the bureaucrats.

Although the economic growth continued under the Fourth Republic, the political connections between public and private sector were not as strong. Most political leaders were opposed to *dirigisme* or too weak to pursue it.

That changed when de Gaulle returned to power. From 1958 until 1973, the economy, on average, grew more in one year than it did during the entire interwar period, a rate that outstripped that of all its main competitors except Japan. Changes occurred most rapidly in large firms, which, through the use of modern technologies, could be competitive in world markets for products such as automobiles, heavy durable goods, intermediate machinery, electronics, and chemicals.

During the 1960s, the government helped broker the creation of hundreds of larger and more efficient firms. During the 1950s companies worth a combined 85 million francs merged with each other. By 1965 the net value of firms that merged had leaped to 1 billion francs, and by 1970 to 5 billion francs. Typical of the change was the gradual consolidation of five relatively weak automobile companies into two then highly profitable giants—Renault and Citroën-Peugeot.

In the late 1950s, not one of the world's most profitable hundred firms was French. By 1972 France had sixteen of them, whereas West Germany had only five.

The economic growth also had a human side that went beyond the statistical indicators. The improved standard of living was easy to see in the new houses and cars and even the changed diets that have produced a generation of taller, thinner French people. The *hyper-marché* (a combination supermarket and department store) all but wiped out the quaint but inefficient corner shops in most urban neighborhoods.

This economic growth did not appear out of thin air. The emergence of the modern French economy was in large part a result of the policies and procedures introduced by the Gaullists. De Gaulle understood that, as with everything else that could lead to grandeur, the state had to play a prominent role in managing the economy.

The Gaullists and the rest of the iron triangle were committed to the long-term development of the French economy. In part, they hoped to create firms that would be competitive enough to withstand competition from foreign firms at home and to win France a larger share of

markets abroad. They hoped, too, that modernizing these industries would have spillover effects throughout the economy.

They relied primarily on discretionary tax and investment credits, subsidies, and other state funds to encourage the wave of mergers and the formation of larger firms. The state's ample investment capital funds were channeled overwhelmingly to the largest and most modern firms. Five giant corporations received about half of the subsidies granted in the mid-1970s, a figure that leaped to 80 percent by the end of the decade. In all, an average of 2.7 percent of GNP went to support industry. Under Giscard, the government's explicit goal became the creation of one or two large firms in each industrial sector to produce potential "national champions" that could lead in world markets.

The argument being made here is not that there was a one-to-one correspondence between elite integration and economic success, but rather that there was a strong connection between this increasingly integrated, self-conscious elites' policies and the economic prosperity. Their attention was selective, focusing on high-growth industries that they assumed would make French firms leaders in global markets for the rest of the century.

Other advanced industrialized countries enjoyed similar successes in the years after the end of World War II. But the countries that relied most heavily on market forces—including Great Britain and the United States—did not perform especially well for most of the past half-century. Rather, those that used the state in a concerted way to devise a reasonably coherent and consistent set of economic policies that limit the disruptive aspects of market forces did far better. Each country followed a unique path, but all involved increasing the cooperation among public and private sector elites and diminishing the role of "traditional" political forces, including legislatures and political parties.

## A Decline

The French economy as a whole went into a tailspin after 1973. Since then, France frequently has been outperformed by most of its European competitors, and when compared with the recent past, conditions seem bleak indeed. (See table 5.8.)

Industrial growth dropped to an average of 1 percent per year. Unemployment topped 10 percent for most of the 1980s and 1990s, with France losing an average of 150,000 industrial jobs per year. Inflation, too, averaged over 10 percent per year from the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s before it was finally brought under control.

Industrial disasters replaced the success stories. Shipbuilding all but collapsed. Steel was in so much

**TABLE 5.8** The French Economy in Decline (in percentages)

YEAR	UNEMPLOYMENT	GROWTH IN GDP
1979	5.9	3.2
1981	7.4	1.2
1983	8.3	1.7
1986	10.4	2.5
1988	10.0	4.5
1993	11.7	20.9
1995	11.7	2.0
1998	11.5	0.3
2001	12.2	0.3

Source: Adapted from David Cameron, "Economic Policy in the Era of the EMS," in *Remaking the Hexagon*, ed. Gregory Flynn, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), 145, and *Economist*, 10 Feb. 1999, 134.

trouble that the government had to restructure the industry in the late 1970s and then was forced to take it over altogether in the 1980s. The French automobile companies saw their share of the European market cut by a third while the number of imported cars grew by more than half.

Under Giscard the government tried to reduce state intervention so that market forces could shape the future growth of a strong economy. The recession after the first oil embargo, however, forced Giscard and Prime Minister Barre to redirect the substantial state investment to industries that they felt would be most likely to be national champions in a global market, especially in the third world.

The Socialists started out with clear goals and coherent policies. At the core of their economic strategy was the nationalization of the leading industrial firms and banks that remained in private hands. The new nationalization put the government in control of about 60 percent of France's industry and even more of its investment capital. The elite, in short, would have increased leverage in shaping the economy as a whole and, in Mitterrand's terms, in "reconquering the domestic market."

But the Socialists quickly had to abandon their goals. Within a year, France found itself facing rapidly growing unemployment and inflation rates. The budget deficit skyrocketed, in large part because many of the newly nationalized firms lost money. In 1983 the Socialists did a U-turn, adopting a policy of economic austerity and abandoning all talk of further radical reform.

In the first cohabitation period, the Chirac government largely controlled economic policy. It came to power at a time when neoliberal economic policies were the rage in Europe and North America. As a result, Chirac set out to dismantle much of the **interventionist state** he had helped create in the first place. The government announced that sixty-five nationalized firms

would be sold. Before the 1987 stock market crash brought those efforts to a halt, the government did sell off fourteen companies, including eight large conglomerates. Subsidies for private industry were slashed. More emphasis was placed on regional economic planning and on the development of small and medium-sized businesses.

By 1988 a rough consensus had emerged on both the left and right. In his reelection campaign, Mitterrand announced that there would be neither more nationalization nor more privatization in his second term. All parties agreed that market forces would have to play a larger role in determining what firms in both the public and private sectors could do, especially those that competed globally.

But two caveats should be kept in mind here.

First, neither the left nor the right has moved as far toward reliance on market forces as has Labour, let alone the Conservatives, in Britain. The Gaullist-Giscardien government did pass a law authorizing the privatization of another seventeen companies in 1993. However, only about half of them had been sold off by the time of the 1997 election. More importantly, unlike in Britain, the state retained a controlling share of their stock after the public offering.

The Socialist government came to power in 1997 having promised not only not to nationalize any more firms but also to halt the pending privatizations. In practice, it will have to sell off parts of the companies that compete in global markets (for example, Air France and France Telecom). But, again, the state is likely to retain significant control over these nominally privately owned companies.

Furthermore, the Socialists have not indicated that they are willing to put the basics of France's welfare state into question as has Blair's Labour Party. If anything, France's welfare state is more extensive, with taxes and government expenditures each accounting for more than 45 percent of GNP. France spends more on health care than any other European country. And its unemployment benefits are so generous that it rarely makes economic sense for people to take low-paying jobs with few opportunities for advancement.

Second, no government has had much success in solving France's economic problems. To some degree, this reflects the reluctance to break away from state-centered approaches to economic policy making. But even more important are the global forces that have left French policymakers less and less able to shape their own economic destinies, and it is to that international role that we now turn.

The agreement to forsake radical economic policy departures and use the market more fell far short of the

acceptance of a market-driven economy by both major parties in Britain. For example, Harvey Feigenbaum, Jeffrey Henig, and Chris Hamnett have labeled British privatization as systematic because the Thatcher and Major governments truly believed in it and sold off almost every nationalized firm they could. By contrast, they consider French privatization to be pragmatic, conducted not out of principle but because selling off state assets will either help an individual firm or bring in needed funds for the state's coffers.

Privatizations have continued even when the Socialists controlled either the Elysée or the National Assembly. But as one would expect of pragmatic policy making, the most recent privatizations have been in industries (airlines, telecoms) in which the once state-owned firms have to compete internationally. What's more, none of the privatizations have been complete.

As practiced in the 1960s, *dirigisme* is a thing of the past. However, the cultural values that stress the "state with a capital S" are slow to disappear among the ENArques and others who dominate the political system on the left and right alike. This can best be seen in the way the Gaullists and their allies structured privatization. In most cases, the government has retained a large share of the stock in the companies it used to own. What's more, it often arranged for major French companies to purchase additional large blocks of shares (*noyau dur*). Finally, it enacted a "golden veto" clause in the legislation that enabled the privatization of critical firms to keep them from falling under foreign control.

Similarly, the Socialists have been reluctant to endorse the kinds of welfare reform enacted by the Blair and Clinton governments. Any time it has even considered reform that would cut or restructure the elaborate social service benefits, it has faced crippling strikes by truckers, railroad engineers, commercial fishermen, and others. Critical here is the 27 percent of the workforce that is still in the public sector, far more than in any of the other leading industrialized democracies. And, in its most publicized and criticized move, the Jospin government won passage of a distinctly nonmarket-oriented law mandating a thirty-five-hour work week and imposing a stiff tax on companies that force their employees to work overtime.

Perhaps the two most important aspects of French economic life in a period of growth that began in the late 1990s have little to do with the state or its policies. The ENArques were never known for their entrepreneurial skills. Now, a new generation of economic leaders is being forced to develop them.

First, as in the United States and the United Kingdom, the leading force behind the growth that began in the late 1990s was the new and relatively small firms in

## Economic Liberalization in France

**FRANCE'S RECORD on liberalization is the most ambiguous of any of the industrialized democracies covered in this book.**

**The right has embraced privatization in its rhetoric. But its actions while in office have been less clear-cut, most notably in maintaining the state's continued stake in most of the privatized corporations. The left has not gone as far as Labour in Britain or the German SPD in making its peace with a market-driven economy, and the Jospin government sold off only those firms it had to for primarily international economic reasons.**

**There are many reasons this is the case. Among the most important is the role the "state with a capital S" has played not only in day-to-day political life but also as a very symbol of what it means to be French. In other words, just as "that government that governs least governs best" is an integral part of American political culture, the strong state is at the heart of France's. And, so far at least, it has proved difficult for liberals to overcome.**

**As one its leading left-of-center analysts put it:**

**The French are not simply afraid of losing the safety net provided by the welfare state; they fear that the retreat of the state could undermine their sense of collective purpose. Although most French people complain about the state, they are proud of its achievements and seem to accept financial burdens that in other countries, less preoccupied with their sense of "grandeur," would be considered excessive.<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup>Jean-Marie Guéhenno, "The French Resistance," *Prospect* (London), June 1998, 32.

the high-tech sector. Very few ENAraques are found in that part of the business community, though a growing number of graduates of other grandes écoles are choosing to become entrepreneurs rather than work for the big companies in either the public or the private sector. At best, the government's role here is indirect, most notably in subsidizing rail service or helping to build industrial parks, the most important of which is in the new city of Sophia-Antipolis, which is rapidly become France's Silicon Valley.

Second, the economy is being shaped more and more by European and global financial dynamics. In 2000 there were 119 leveraged buyouts of French firms. Some of the purchasers were foreign, such as the British Candover company, which bought the giant French frozen food company Picard Surgelés. Even more frequently, the financing of these deals was arranged by European venture capitalists looking for firms that

would be more dynamic and flexible. In the most spectacular case, the government tried to secure the merger of three banks both to keep them in French hands and to create a huge company that could compete with British, German, and American financial institutions. It failed in large part because the shareholders of one of them—including many foreigners—opposed the idea and began looking for a British or German bank to merge with instead.

The bottom line is clear: France has to operate in an economy in which national borders matter less and less, and a goal like Mitterrand's to take back control of the domestic market becomes more and more implausible. In the 1990s the French invested almost \$300 billion abroad, and foreigners invested about \$200 billion in France. Those investments account for about 30 percent of France's jobs and 40 percent of its exports.

## Foreign Policy

The argument that no government has had much success in solving problems in recent years can also be made about French foreign policy, which is often seen as overly nationalistic and uncooperative by other members of the Western alliance. The goal here is not to make a normative case about whether France's diplomatic role makes sense. Rather, this section focuses on two other issues:

- France's strong and independent foreign policy of the 1960s and 1970s had the same roots in Gaullist goals and institutions as its economic policy.
- Global forces increasingly limit the ability of French policymakers to "go it alone."

## The Gaullist Years

Prior to 1914 France was one of the world's great powers. It had the largest, best-equipped army in Europe, and its empire was second only to that of Great Britain.

Over the next thirty years, France's position deteriorated rapidly. In particular, it emerged from the Second World War with its economy in tatters, its political leadership in disrepute, and its fate largely in American hands. Almost immediately thereafter, it faced the first in a series of colonial wars that pointed to the demise of its empire by the middle of the 1950s.

De Gaulle was able to stem that decline. His political philosophy and sense of mission revolved around addressing those problems and restoring France to its "proper" place among the world's major powers. The general believed that all countries have an inherent national interest akin to what the eighteenth-century po-

litical theorist Jean-Jacques Rousseau meant by the “general will.” Grandeur was thus the successful pursuit of that national interest, thereby maximizing the country’s power and prestige.

He assumed that the effects of a strong foreign policy would ripple through the entire society. Foreign policy success would further strengthen the state and make it better able to solve domestic problems as well. And perhaps most importantly, it would help restore the sense of unity and pride the French had lost under the Third and Fourth republics.

De Gaulle is frequently criticized for what is alleged to be excessively nationalistic and bombastic, and even dangerous, policy initiatives. That image, however, does not fully square with the evidence.

The general was neither a romantic nor a utopian. Rather, he used the available institutional levers and his own charisma in the unbending but normally pragmatic pursuit of grandeur. Observers are commonly misled because de Gaulle’s pragmatism was not of the kind one normally expects in foreign policy. His was leadership designed to produce as much symbolic and substantive change as possible. In each of three key policy areas, de Gaulle succeeded in expanding French influence and prestige.

There is no better example of the mix of symbol and substance in Gaullist foreign policy than the decision to create the French nuclear arsenal. De Gaulle had no illusions that it would make France the equal of the United States or the former Soviet Union. He did hope that as France developed its arsenal it would come to play a larger role in major international decisions involving the superpowers and the countries caught between them. Most importantly, the bomb was to be a symbol of France’s newly rediscovered influence, leading people to develop a sense of pride and unity that he was sure would spill over into other policy areas.

De Gaulle’s desire to free France of American tutelage had a similar motivation. Throughout his decade in office, de Gaulle made it clear that France would no longer blindly accept American cold war policy. He rejected proposals by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy to integrate French forces more fully into the NATO command, because this would have meant relinquishing part of French sovereignty. In 1964 and 1965, he responded favorably to Soviet overtures about improving Franco-Soviet relations. The next year, de Gaulle withdrew French forces from NATO control and, while speaking at the Kremlin, advocated cooperative relations between France and the Soviet bloc.

That same desire to maximize French power animated policies related to European integration. De Gaulle

accepted the principle that the countries of Western Europe would have to cooperate more if they were to meet the challenge posed by the growing role of American capital and industry on the Continent. Therefore, de Gaulle firmly supported the elimination of tariff barriers and the provisions of the Treaty of Rome (which created the European Economic Community in 1957) that worked in France’s interest.

There were limits, however, to how much cooperation he would accept. As someone interested in grandeur and France’s own problems, he opposed a multinational, integrated, homogeneous Europe, preferring one based on sovereign states cooperating in ways beneficial to France (and, when possible, its partners as well). Consequently, he opposed British entry into the Common Market, as well as anything else he felt might lead to a loss of French influence.

If de Gaulle is seen as a visionary nationalist, **Georges Pompidou** is commonly portrayed as a moderate pragmatic practitioner of realpolitik. In fact, Pompidou continued the quest for grandeur, though he did it through more conventional political and diplomatic means. Pompidou did not engage in the kinds of flamboyant actions de Gaulle was so famous for. That wasn’t his style. Because he had firmer parliamentary support than de Gaulle did in the early 1960s, and because France’s position in the world had improved substantially, he didn’t have to. He was able to continue de Gaulle’s foreign policy using the more conventional tactics the general himself had come to rely on during his last years in office.

However more cooperative and malleable Pompidou may have been, he did not compromise on the central tenets of Gaullist grandeur. Pompidou never considered integrating French forces into NATO. There was never any question of abandoning nuclear weapons or submitting them to international control. In fact, new weapons systems, including missile-launching submarines, were developed during his presidency. The French government continued trying to play its own role as an intermediary between East and West, most notably doing what it could to settle disputes in Indochina and the Middle East.

### **French Foreign Policy Since the OPEC Oil Embargo**

President Pompidou died just months before the OPEC oil embargo of 1973–74 and the worldwide recession it helped spark. Since then, French foreign policy has been noticeably less successful as the “inward” arrows of the figure on the inside front cover have grown more powerful.

Its rhetoric often has struck the independent and anti-American tones of the Gaullist years. There is still a consensus that the country should keep its nuclear arsenal. And there remain areas in which it continues to go its own way, most tragically in Rwanda, where French policy contributed to the genocide that claimed 10 percent of the country's population in a few weeks in 1994. Socialist officials have been critical of what they see as U.S. cultural hegemony and have been at the forefront of efforts to limit American imports—including curved bananas, under the pretext that straight ones (grown in former French colonies) are better.

But overall, France has adopted a foreign policy that is in line with those of the other major Western powers. Support for the EU in general and the euro in particular are at its core. French intellectuals may chafe at American imports and use them as a way of attacking globalization, but the fact remains that global trade has had a lot to do with France's economic resurgence in recent years.

France played at best a minor role in ending the cold war and in the so-far futile attempts to create a new world order in its wake. As its 1995 nuclear weapons tests so starkly reminded the world, France is still committed to keeping its nuclear weapons. But there is more question than ever about whether they really promote French, let alone global, security.

As we will see in chapters 6, 9, and 10, the events that led to the end of the cold war and the collapse of communism in Europe took almost everyone by surprise, including the French. As the Soviet Union began to change and the peoples of Eastern Europe mounted the movements that overthrew their regimes, France was only a bit player in that remarkable political drama.

This is most evident in the negotiations surrounding perhaps the most dramatic and least expected event—the reunification of Germany in 1990, which we will explore in more detail in the next chapter. As one of the four powers that occupied Germany after World War II, France was involved in the “four-plus-two” negotiations that led to formal approval of this dramatic development. The emphasis, though, should be on formal, because real decisions were made by the two superpowers and the two Germans.

The post-cold war period has seen French leaders of the left and right trying to find their place in a world adrift in a sea of political uncertainty. The French were actively involved in most of the international crises of the 1990s, most notably the Gulf War (see chapter 14), the efforts to stop the fighting in the former Yugoslavia,

and the campaign to combat terrorism following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

But France has not been able to play the kind of role it did at the height of the cold war, when it wielded an influence greater than we might expect from a country with its geopolitical resources. And it probably is not fair to accuse French politicians of incompetence. After all, their colleagues everywhere are struggling to figure out how to reconstruct a world that, ironically, seems much harder to control or even predict than the world of the cold war period.

It is in that context that France's universally condemned 1995 decision to test nuclear weapons makes the most sense. Chirac and his advisers were convinced that France needed the tests to ensure that its nuclear arsenal was technically reliable. But their desire to maintain their country's international power and prestige probably left them all the more eager to go ahead with what was at least a symbolic reminder to the rest of the world that France was still a major power.

Evidence of the strength of forces beyond French control is even more striking when it came to Europe. France was one of the charter members of the Common Market, but its support for further integration waned under de Gaulle. Once he left the scene, however, politicians of all ideological stripes came to see greater European involvement as critical for France's development.

A number of critical choices were made by French governments, especially during the Mitterrand presidency, but two in particular stand out. Each reflects a decision made by France, but each also reveals a Europe in which decision-making power was shifting away from Paris and other national capitals.

The first was Mitterrand's decision to appoint his former finance minister, Jacques Delors as president of the European Commission in 1984. As we will see in more detail in chapter 7, Delors was the chief architect of the expansion of what is now the EU to fifteen members and the leading force behind the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty.

The second was the broader decision to make Europe France's top foreign policy priority in the post-cold war years. Early on, this was widely seen as an attempt to dilute the power of a unified Germany, which had emerged as both the largest and the wealthiest country in western Europe. But by 1991, the Socialists, many of whom had once been quite skeptical of the EU, had become its strongest supporter, seeking Europe-wide solutions to such problems as the fighting in the former Yugoslavia.

At first, all the signs were positive. France was now the strongest proponent of the movement to deepen and

broaden European institutions. It parlayed its presence in Europe into expanded markets for its goods and a vehicle to help strengthen its currency.

As the 1990s wore on, however, the European gambit failed to solve France's long-term problems, especially its high unemployment rate. More importantly, as support for European integration disintegrated, France found itself facing more problems no matter who was in control in Paris. And some of the positions it took struck foreign observers as churlish, if not downright silly. In the negotiations for a new GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), France insisted on protection for its farmers, who then accounted for less than 5 percent of the population, and on its right to limit the number of American movies and television shows shown in France.

But many of its problems were real. High unemployment rates were becoming the rule, not the exception, especially among the young and less skilled. By contrast, even with the problems of its own, which we will address in the next chapter, Germany had solidified its position as Europe's most powerful country.

Tensions reached a peak over French ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. When it was signed, all leading French politicians supported the treaty, and it was assumed it would pass easily, even after the Constitutional Council ruled that it had to be put to the people in a referendum. When the vote was held, the French came within a whisker of turning it down.

European integration turned out to be the lightning rod for the dissatisfaction with the politicians and the economy that had been building for years. Moreover, the treaty, and all the other issues that eddied around it, divided the three major parties in ways quite reminiscent of the American debate over NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) early in the Clinton administration.

Prominent Gaullists, Socialists, and Giscardiens found themselves on both sides of the issue. The opposition included not only some mainstream politicians but also members of the PCF and the National Front—unusual political bedfellows, to say the least.

Perhaps most importantly, what looks like a set of willful choices by French governments since Pompidou's day may actually have done little more than acknowledge the existence of changes that were already taking place and that would have altered French political and economic life whatever the politicians had done. As table 5.9 shows, international trade is a much more important part of French life today than it was even a generation ago.

**TABLE 5.9** France and the Global Economy

YEAR	EXPORTS AS PERCENTAGE OF GDP	IMPORTS AS PERCENTAGE OF GDP
1962	12.3	11.0
1974	20.1	21.6
1980	21.5	22.7
1992	23.0	21.8
1999	26.1	23.6

Source: Data for 1962–92 from David Cameron, "Economic Policy in the Era of the EMS," in *Remaking the Hexagon*, ed. Gregory Flynn (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), 121; data for 1999 from [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org), accessed 20 July 2001.



The table presents raw statistics, but they have real meaning in people's lives. The fact that imports and exports account for more than 20 percent of French consumption and production affects everyone. It means that more people eat McDonald's burgers, drive Nissans, and, shockingly, drink Italian or German wine. By the same token, France's prosperity is ever more dependent on its ability to sell Renaults, Airbus jets, and cheese abroad. It also means that people who lack the education or skills to shift from the dying heavy industries to more high-tech ones are losing out and, not surprisingly, are getting angrier and angrier.

### Sniffing Airplanes and Declining Influence

A Gallic version of Andrew Marr's statement that opens chapter 4 would have served just as well here. Like Britain, France used to happen to the rest of the world. Now, increasingly, the rest of the world happens to France.

If we go by the statistics, the French probably have been somewhat more successful than the British in coping with those trends. There is still a French automobile industry. Paris is still dominated by French restaurants, whereas English cuisine (if there even is such a thing) has long disappeared from London other than in its pubs.

But if the leading scholars inside and outside of France are to be believed, globalization has had a deeper impact on the French psyche. The most influential and controversial book published in France in 1997 argued that the French must reassert their national identity to thwart the spread of global (that is, American) culture. The emergence of racist and nationalistic politicians, and even the debates about the "Frenchness" of its soccer team, are signs of just how worried many French people have become about what they perceive as their waning independence.

## Globalization and France

**RECENT FRENCH governments have taken relatively ambiguous positions on globalization. Most notably, they have tried to promote international legislation that would restrict the number of foreign television programs and movies allowed into the country. But they have also been among the most resolutely European. In particular, they recognize that France's economic success is inextricably intertwined with that of the EU and have thus been among the strongest supporters of the single currency and other attempts to deepen integration. Conversely, public opposition to the EU and other "foreign" influences has risen noticeably since the mid-1990s.**

As is often the case, an account of a seemingly minor incident can tell us as much as a raft of statistics. Although this one is a generation old, its implications—as well as its absurdity—still ring true today. In 1979, a man approached the Giscard-Barre government, claiming he had invented an *avion renifleur*—literally, a sniffing airplane that could detect oil and mineral deposits below the earth's surface. The government, desperate for new and dependable sources of energy and, perhaps, a technology it could sell to other countries, leaped at the idea and secretly spent a few hundred million dollars on what turned out to be a hoax. Somehow, one cannot imagine a de Gaulle, with his concern for grandeur and dignity—but also ruling during far more propitious times—doing anything of the sort.

## Feedback

In most respects, the French media resemble the British. The printed press is dominated by Parisian-based dailies, which are sold throughout the country. Each of them has a distinctive political slant. Some are very good, especially *Le Monde*, which is widely considered to be one of the world's four or five best newspapers. Television news, too, is based primarily on nationwide channels rather than networks built on locally owned and controlled stations.

There are some important differences. The tabloid press has a much smaller circulation and more limited influence than in Britain. France also has three high-quality weekly news magazines, each of which takes

a different political line. Finally, until the early 1980s, the government routinely influenced the content and tone of television news. That changed once Giscard's government began privatizing television and Mitterrand's administration decided to adopt a more hands-off policy.

One of the quirks of French political life is that pollsters are not allowed to publish their findings in the week before an election. They can and do carry out surveys for parties and candidates. However, the law prevents them from making the money and getting the exposure they would otherwise obtain through contracts with the print or audiovisual media. Pollsters have always found ways to partially get around the law by publishing their results abroad; in 1997 they also began posting their findings on the Internet using foreign-based web sites.

## Conclusion: A Remarkable Turnaround

France has experienced a remarkable political turnaround since the creation of the Fifth Republic in 1958. At the time, few observers expected it to last, let alone thrive. Many wrote books and pamphlets discussing why it was bound to collapse and outlining what form they thought the next republic should take.

The new republic was blessed with a remarkable leader with a proven track record as a reformer. However, even this was no guarantee that it would succeed. Indeed, this book is filled with examples of countries in crisis that also had leaders with plausible ideas for fundamental reform. All too often, neither those leaders nor their ideas got a chance, and if they did, they failed in their efforts to produce change.

The Liberation government of 1944–46 in France provides one such example. Even more striking is the Gorbachev era in the former Soviet Union, in which the failure to carry through with an ambitious reform package led to the collapse of one of the world's two superpowers. (See chapter 10.) In other words, relatively peaceful, successful, and profound reforms are the exception rather than the rule.

Political scientists have yet to do many comprehensive and comparative studies of such periods of dramatic but nonrevolutionary change. Any attempt to lay out a theory of why they occur is thus premature at best. Nonetheless, the history of the shift to the Fifth Republic contains three ingredients we probably would expect to find in any such transition.



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First, the old regime has to be in a particular type of crisis. Obviously, it has to face deep and enduring problems such as those we have just seen for the Third and Fourth republics. It just as obviously has to confront a wrenching, immediate trauma like the Algerian uprising, which forces the issue of the very survival of the regime onto center stage. Conversely, the political situation cannot have degenerated to the point that substantial numbers of respected leaders think revolution or some other violent alternative to the status quo is the only possible course.

Second, the transition needs strong leadership. Often, this involves a charismatic individual like de

Gaulle who can mobilize average citizens and elites across much of the ideological spectrum. It also probably requires a broader leadership that can build an enduring coalition that includes not only opponents of the old regime but also at least some of its critical supporters, something the Gaullists were able to do at the polls.

Finally, any transition needs a certain amount of luck. As noted in chapter 1, political scientists seek regular and rational patterns in the events and trends they study. In fact, life cannot easily be put into such neat packages, and this is especially true at times like these. In this case, the transition from the Fourth Republic to the Fifth was certainly facilitated by a number of what could almost be considered accidents of history, including these:

- The fact that France (unlike Italy, which was in similar circumstances at the time) had a de Gaulle to turn to
- De Gaulle's survival of the 1962 assassination attempt
- Having the new generation of ENArques—instead of party politicians, few of whom shared the Gaullist commitment to growth and grandeur—ready to step into leadership positions

### Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, places, and events
Anticlerical	Chirac, Jacques	CFDT	Communist Party
Autogestion	De Gaulle, Charles	CGT	École nationale d'administration
Bloc vote	Debré, Michel	ENA	Events of May
Cohabitation	Giscard d'Estaing, Valéry	FN	Fifth Republic
<i>Dirigisme</i>	Jospin, Lionel	PCF	Force ouvrière
Grandeur	Le Pen, Jean-Marie	PS	Fourth Republic
Incompatibility clause	Mitterrand, François	RPR	Gaullist
Interventionist state	Pompidou, Georges	UDF	Grandes écoles
Iron triangle			National Assembly
Pantouflage			National Front
Parity law			Radicals
Prefect			Rally for the Republic
Proportional representation			Senate
Single-member district,			Socialist Party
two-ballot system			Union for French Democracy
<i>Tutelle</i>			

### ***Critical Thinking Exercises***

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of French politics presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the “right direction” or is on the “wrong track.” If you were asked such a question about France, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?
3. Democracy did not develop as quickly or as smoothly in France as in the United States or Great Britain. Why do you think that was the case?
4. French political culture is no longer as alienated or divided as it once was. Explain the changes.
5. Some political scientists argue that French political parties refused to fail in the 1960s and 1970s but are in more trouble today. Why is that the case?
6. The French state has a more integrated elite than do its British or American counterparts. How did that develop? What difference does it make?
7. As the saga of the sniffing airplanes suggested, French policymakers face more difficulties today than they did a generation ago. Document and explain those changes.

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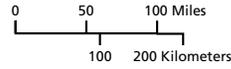
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# GERMANY

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A Telling Snapshot
- Thinking About Germany
- The Evolution of the German State: The German Questions
- Creating a Democratic Political Culture
- Political Participation
- The German State: A Smoothly Functioning Democracy
- Public Policy: Modell Deutschland
- Feedback
- Conclusion: Democratization



*Germany's reemergence as a world power has been driven by no one and no cult but by many Germans pulling together in an elaborate democracy and market economy.*

NICO COLCHESTER

## A Telling Snapshot

In June 2001 Chancellor **Gerhard Schroeder** of Germany got a gift from a long-lost cousin—a photograph of his father. Getting a picture of your father from relatives is rarely a politically interesting event. In this case, it was in at least two respects.

First, Schroeder had never known his father, who was killed a few months after Schroeder was born in 1944. In fact, this was probably the first picture of his father he had ever seen.

It showed Corporal Fritz Schroeder in his Nazi uniform, with a swastika on the helmet. He looked just like his son had at that age. Schroeder knew that his father was a low-ranking enlisted man who had been forced into the army like most men of his generation. But the photo forced the younger Schroeder, like all Germans of his generation, to come to grips with personal links to Germany's horrid past.

The Holocaust and other atrocities of the thirteen-year Nazi era are now more than a half-century in the past. Very few people who took an active part in them are still active in political life, because they are all in their late seventies at the least. Nonetheless, Germany and the Germans cannot escape a history that makes its political life very different from what we saw in Britain, France, or the United States.

Second, the photograph was politically interesting because it came from a cousin Schroeder did not know existed. Like many German families, his had been separated by the postwar division of Germany and the subsequent creation of the Federal (West German) and Democratic (East German) republics. And like many families, the Schroeders in the west lost all contact with the Schroeders in the east. The eastern cousins were able to establish connections with their famous western cousin shortly after he became chancellor, as the Germans call their prime minister. They could do so only because the end of the cold war meant that Germany was no longer divided into two separate countries. In other

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## GERMANY: THE BASICS

Size	356,910 sq. km (about two-thirds the size of France)
Population	83 million
GNP per capita	\$25,000
Currency	1 € = \$0.88
Ethnic composition	91.2% German; of the largest remaining groups, 2.5% Turkish, 1.0% Yugoslav
Religion	38% Protestant, 34% Catholic, 2% Muslim, remainder unaffiliated or undeclared
Capital	Berlin
Form of government	Federal republic
Head of state	President Johannes Rau (1999)
Head of government	Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder (1998)

words, the Schroeders' experience, again, was like that of many families in that, in the chancellor's words, "Now the fall of the Iron Curtain has become personal as well as political. I have to find a relationship to people I had not believed existed."<sup>1</sup>

The differences between the two Germanys is the leading issue facing the country today. The economic gap between the two remains immense. A decade after unification, unemployment stood at 17 percent in the east, a full 10 points higher than in the west. This was the case even after the federal government and Western firms had pumped close to \$200 billion into the east.

But as Schroeder's experience shows, the real gap may be in the Germans' heads and hearts more than in their pocketbooks. It turns out that his cousin, Renata Gritzke, had worked for the Stasi, East Germany's notorious intelligence agency. She—and about 40 percent of her fellow East Berliners—still vote for the **Party of Democratic Socialism, (PDS)**, the renamed and more moderate communist party. By contrast, her cousin the chancellor is a moderate social democrat who is trying to forge the same kind of "third way" policies as Bill Clinton and Tony Blair.

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<sup>1</sup>Roger Cohen, "Schröder, Like Germany, Looks Harder at the Past," *New York Times*, 2 July 2001, A1, A6.



Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.

© AFP/CORBIS

## Thinking About Germany

### *The Basics*

Traditionally, introductory courses in comparative politics have not included either Germany or Japan. But it is hard to leave them out today. They are, after all, two of the world's leading political and economic powers. Furthermore, they are important for comparative analysis. The two countries have been so successful in recent years largely because they have been able to combine a functioning liberal democracy with a strong state. Thus, they are important countries to consider given the overarching themes of this section of the book.

Germany is the strongest country in Europe. Its more than 83 million residents make it by far Europe's most populous country—unless one counts Russia as wholly European. Its GNP per capita of well over \$25,000 make the **Federal Republic of Germany** one of the world's richest countries. Germans who earn noticeably less than that average are covered by Europe's most extensive social service system, which makes it all but impossible for them to have to endure the kind of poverty,

homelessness, or treatable ill health that is common in many other industrialized democracies.

Germany's wealth is all the more remarkable given the devastation of World War II, which left its economy in ruins. The Federal Republic turned the economy around so far and so fast that its system, dubbed **Modell Deutschland** (the German Model), was widely seen as an approach for other countries to emulate.

The country has its share of problems. The five *laender* (states) inherited from East Germany in 1990 remain far poorer than the rest of the country. It is there, too, that racist attacks have occurred most frequently and that neo-Nazi organizations have enjoyed the most support.

Schröder's government faces economic problems that, curiously, grew out of its past success. Only a country with West Germany's assets could have easily taken on the challenge of unification. Moreover, as we will see, the system of cooperative labor-management relations and extensive social services, which helped build the Modell Deutschland in the first place, leaves the economy less flexible and dynamic than many of its competitors today.

Germany is as socially diverse as France or Britain. However, it was only in 2000 that immigrants who were not ethnic Germans could become citizens without waiting for fifteen years and that children of foreigners living there could be naturalized once their parents had been in Germany legally for eight years.

When all is said and done, we should not make too much of those problems. Germany has done something no other industrialized democracy has had to face—incorporate 16 million people whose standard of living was at most a quarter of its own, and do so virtually overnight, with minimal political or social disruption. German's position as the second or third wealthiest country in the world is not in jeopardy. Instead, most observers assume that it will overcome any short-term difficulties and remain one of the world's leading political and economic powers. And, as we will also see, much of the key to that success lies in the pragmatic and careful approach to political life evoked by the late Nico Colchester in the statement that begins this chapter.

### *Key Questions*

We could ask the same basic questions about the stability of democracy in Germany that we did for Britain and France, and to some degree we will. But the Schröder family history gives us a first glimpse at how much higher the political stakes have historically been in Germany and how much they have been lowered since the



A right-wing rioter tossing a firebomb at a hostel for asylum seekers in Rostock, Germany.

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end of World War II. Any discussion of the country, then, has to focus on the **German question**, which is really a series of questions:

- Why did it take Germany so long to unite originally, and how did that delay affect German behavior once it did come together under Prussian rule in the 1870s?
- Why did Germany's first attempt at democracy give way to **Adolf Hitler** (1889–1945) and his **Nazi** regime, which were responsible for the deaths of Fritz Schroeder and millions upon millions more?
- How did the division of Germany and other events after World War II help create the remarkably prosperous and stable democratic Federal Republic of Germany in the west but also the stagnant and repressive **German Democratic Republic (DDR)** in the east?
- Why did unification occur with the end of the cold war in Germany, and what new challenges has it posed for what is now the largest and richest country in Europe?

Because the first three German questions have had such sweeping implications for Germany and much of the rest of the world, we will spend more time on the historical material here than we did in the preceding two chapters. Once we examine how the Federal Republic was created and became a stable and legitimate regime, we will

turn to the kinds of “normal” political issues we focused on for Britain and France while considering that final question. Even though there is some uncertainty on that score, we will see that the economic and cultural difficulties brought on by unification have been handled using the conventional tools of an established democracy.

Germany does have right-wing, antidemocratic protest movements. Since unification, most of the neo-Nazi and skinhead groups have focused their hatred on immigrants, asylum seekers, and other foreigners. However, their influence is limited, and despite an occasional breakthrough at the state level, none of them have shown any signs of breaking the 5 percent barrier parties need to attain to gain representation in the Bundestag, or lower house of parliament.

Put simply, Germany now faces the same kinds of political, social, and economic problems we find in all major industrialized democracies. Democracy is as secure in Germany as it is anywhere. To refer again to that key distinction made in chapter 1, its regime is as secure as any.

## The Evolution of the German State: The German Questions

In 1945 no serious observer would have dreamed that Germany could become so rich, so stable, and so democratic so quickly. The country was defeated, dis-

membered, and treated as a pariah by the rest of the world (europeanhistory.about.com/cs/germany).

Yet succeed it did. If we are to understand that turnaround and the development of a democratic Germany, we actually have to start much earlier and explore why there have been so many “German questions” over the centuries.

### *Unification and the Kaiser's Reich*

In chapters 4 and 5, we saw that the state and nation developed roughly in tandem in Great Britain and in France. This was not the case in Germany. Domestic and international pressures kept Germany divided until 1871, a delay that has had tremendous implications for political life there ever since, especially its ability to sustain a democracy.

During the early Middle Ages, Germany had one of the most advanced political systems in Europe. It was more united than most “countries” by a single government, the Holy Roman Empire, which some Germans call the First Reich. More than most, too, Germans were unified around a common culture and language—or at least closely related dialects.

By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, any semblance of political unity had disappeared when the German part of the Holy Roman Empire disintegrated into hundreds of principalities. The Reformation deepened those divisions as local princes lined up on both sides of the Catholic-v-Protestant split. They were soon to fight the Thirty Years' War (1618–48)—the bloodiest conflict the world had ever seen, but one that did not produce a clear winner or loser. As a result, Germany remained a patchwork of tiny states, some Catholic, some Protestant. The religious conflict did, however, reinforce the authoritarianism of most of the rulers, Catholic and Protestant alike.

The first tentative steps toward eventual Germany unification occurred late in the seventeenth century in the backward eastern province of Brandenburg, which became the Kingdom of Prussia in 1701. Under Frederick William (ruled 1640–88) and Frederick the Great (ruled 1740–86), Prussia gradually gained control of more and more territory. By the end of the eighteenth century, it was one of Europe's great powers, and also one of its most conservative. Lacking wealth and other resources, the Prussians had to rely on discipline, thus strengthening authoritarian values that were under increasing pressure to the west.

Prussian expansion was brought to a temporary halt by the Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon's campaigns served to consolidate many of the smaller states, especially in

**TABLE 6.1** German Regimes Since 1871

YEAR	REGIME
1871–1918	Second Reich
1919–33	Weimar Republic
1933–45	Third Reich
1949–	Federal Republic
1949–90	German Democratic Republic

western Germany. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 continued that trend, leaving only thirty-eight German states, of which only two, Prussia and Austria-Hungary, had the size and resources to conceivably unite Germany.

Under the skilled, if often ruthless, leadership of Chancellor **Otto von Bismarck**, Prussia won wars against Denmark, Austria, and France between 1864 and 1870. At that point, Bismarck had brought all the German states other than Austria under Prussian control. In 1871 these states “asked” the Prussian king, Wilhelm I, to become emperor or kaiser of a new Second Reich. (See table 6.1.)

The new German state was very different from the ones in either France or Britain. To begin with, it was more deeply divided. The religious disputes of the preceding three centuries had left a country divided not only between clericals and anticlericals but between Catholics and Protestants as well. Germany's democrats found themselves sharply at odds with the dominant Prussian elite. With the introduction of universal male suffrage, the **Social Democratic Party (SPD)** became the largest party, but it had no real influence, because the new parliament was all but powerless.

Bismarck and his colleagues responded to the disruptive potential of these cleavages by extending the Prussian constitution to the entire country, thereby creating a strong, authoritarian regime. For its first twenty years, the Second Reich was dominated by Bismarck. After he left office in 1890, it was controlled by the kaiser and the powerful Junkers and other nobles in the bureaucratic, military, and civilian elites.

All men could vote, but Germany was far from democratic. The Reichstag (the German parliament) did not control the budget, nor were the chancellors and their cabinets answerable to it. The leadership resisted the prodemocratic forces that were gaining strength in their country, as well as in those to their west, and thus laid the seeds for greater conflict down the line.

The newly unified Germany also lagged behind Britain and France economically and militarily. Although the industrial revolution was well under way in parts of the country, unification had been sparked by the still predominantly rural Prussians. Germany lacked an

independent entrepreneurial class and the kind of heavy industry needed to produce such weapons as machine guns and massive metal warships.

The government recognized that it had to modernize its military and economy as rapidly as possible. As the rulers saw it, they could not afford the time it would take if they relied on market forces. Instead, they devised a new way of developing an industrialized capitalist economy directed by the state, sometimes called a revolution from above. The government worked with the traditional elites in the nobility and the military to, in essence, force the country to industrialize so that it could compete militarily and economically with its European rivals.

Germany changed at an unprecedented pace. By the end of the nineteenth century, a modern army and navy had transformed Germany into a global power that rivaled Britain and France. Militarization, in turn, required the construction of huge industrial centers, specializing in the production not only of weapons but of modern industrial goods, including railroads, chemicals, and telephone and telegraph equipment. The production of both iron and steel, for instance, grew more than 700 percent between 1870 and 1910.

In Britain and, to a lesser degree, France, the impetus for the industrial revolution had come “from below,” from capitalist entrepreneurs operating largely on their own, independent of the state. Both countries also took substantial, if less than complete, steps to incorporate the working class and other underprivileged groups into the political process. Perhaps most importantly, both reinforced parliamentary rule, thereby curbing the arbitrary power of elites not elected by the people.

Little of that happened in Germany. Instead, the Prussian-based elite clung to power. It did introduce social insurance programs to try to gain the support of the working class. It also passed a series of antisocialist laws and repressed the growing union movement, which left an unusually alienated and potentially revolutionary working class. By 1890 the SPD had become Germany's largest political party, and the trade union movement affiliated with it enrolled millions of members.

Imperial Germany was what scholars call a **faulted society**. On one side of the political fault line were the elites; on the other were the powerless and increasingly angry masses. On the one hand, the elites pursued policies that were transforming German society; on the other, they resisted accepting the political consequences of those social and economic changes. Indeed, the failure of the elites to adapt to the changed conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led some observers at the time to expect a civil war.

An important fault line also was present in Germany's relationship with the rest of Europe. There was no easy way to fit a newly powerful and ambitious German state into the elaborate and fragile international system created at the Congress of Vienna. Germany's imperial aspirations were mostly thwarted—at least in German eyes. It did take over a few colonies, but its empire was far smaller than those of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Portugal, let alone Great Britain and France.

Just like their geological namesakes, geopolitical fault lines ultimately produce geopolitical earthquakes. In this case, the European balance of power finally crumbled early in the twentieth century. A variety of open treaties and secret pacts pitted Germany and the weakening Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires against Britain, France, and Russia. Then in 1914 a Bosnian Serb nationalist assassinated the heir apparent to the Austro-Hungarian empire. That isolated act by a single individual acting on his own culminated in the outbreak of World War I, a war no one wanted, but one that no one could prevent.

At first the war went well for Germany. Hopes for victory in a matter of weeks, however, gave way to a bloody stalemate. By the end of the war, more than 8 million people were dead, more than half of them civilians.

At home Germany was torn apart. The left increasingly opposed the war. At the other end of the spectrum, nationalist groups began blaming the left and the Jews for Germany's woes.

On 6 November 1918, the military-led government initiated a program of political reforms. Three days later, the kaiser was forced into exile, and the monarchy was replaced by a hastily organized group of politicians who declared Germany a republic. Two days later, Germany surrendered.

### *Weimar and the Rise of Hitler*

The next spring the **Weimar Republic** (named for the town where its constitution was drafted) was created. It never had a chance.

This constitution transformed Germany from one of Europe's most authoritarian into one of its most democratic countries overnight. The traditional political and bureaucratic elites were stripped of almost all their power. Instead, authority was vested in a reformed Reichstag to which the cabinet was answerable. Elections were conducted using **proportional representation**, which gave parties a share of the seats equal to their percentage of the vote. This made it easy for extremist parties to get their foot in the parliamentary door

and left Weimar with a far more fragmented and polarized party system than France's Third Republic.

Few politicians gave the new republic their wholehearted support. Most socialists did so until the very end. More radical leftists, however, wanted nothing to do with the new republic and attempted revolutions in 1919 and 1920. Although they were put down rather easily, the revolutions did drive an even deeper wedge between the increasingly moderate SPD and the new Communist Party (KPD).

On the right, many traditional elites and millions of average Germans could not bring themselves to accept that their country had been defeated because of its own weakness and ineptitude. Rather, they looked for scapegoats. Dozens of small, antidemocratic nationalist groups formed, laying blame for the defeat on "non-German" forces, including Jews, socialists, and the politicians who had both sued for peace and formed the Weimar Republic. They, too, attempted a number of coups.

The terms of the Treaty of Versailles that formally ended the war magnified the frustrations, especially on the right. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson had called for a "just and lasting peace" sustained by a powerful League of Nations. The British and French, however, insisted on a far more vindictive settlement. The size and composition of the German army were severely restricted, and the Allies imposed a strict system of **reparations** that forced Germany to pay for the costs of the war. The payments worsened an already serious economic crisis. Inflation skyrocketed, unemployment tripled, and the purchasing power of those who kept their jobs was reduced by as much as two-thirds. Especially hard hit were the veterans who had survived four years of hell at the front only to return to a social, political, and economic hell at home.

The fact that the same politicians who had surrendered in 1918 also agreed to the treaty's terms reinforced the right wing's hostility toward Weimar. In 1919 the three parties that most strongly supported the new republic—the SPD, the Catholic Zentrum (Center), and the mostly Protestant and liberal People's Party (DDP)—won over three-quarters of the vote. In the next two elections, they saw their share of the vote drop to the benefit of the Communists on the left and the Nazis and German National People's Party (DNVP) on the anti-democratic right.

Antitreaty protest reached a new peak in early 1923. That November, the little-known Adolf Hitler and his little-known party, the Nazis or **NSDAP** (National Socialist Democratic Workers Party), attempted their first putsch, against the government. It failed miserably. Many Nazi

leaders were arrested. Hitler himself spent nine months in prison, where he wrote his infamous *Mein Kampf*.

As the economy rebounded, at least temporarily, support for the extremists, especially on the right, began to wane. Better news came from abroad, too, as the Allies agreed to a series of measures that reduced reparations payments.

The calm did not last. In 1929, the bottom fell out of the German economy after the New York stock market crash. Unemployment leapt from 6.3 percent in 1928 to 14 percent in 1930 and 30 percent two years later. No German family was spared.

The Great Depression and the growing political tensions came at a time when effective government was most needed and least possible. The three main Weimar parties had seen their share of the vote drop below 50 percent. In other words, at a time of crisis, German government fell further into the trap of immobilism than anything we saw in France.

The parliamentary stalemate was broken in 1930, though not in a way that would strengthen the republic. Chancellor Brüning knew he had no chance of gaining a parliamentary majority that would support his policies. Therefore, he convinced the aging President Hindenburg to invoke the emergency powers provision of the 1919 constitution that allowed the government to rule by decree.

The parliamentary elections two months later confirmed the legislative paralysis. The Weimar parties won barely 40 percent of the vote. Meanwhile, the Nazis continued their growth, earning nearly 15 percent of the vote, almost double their total from two years before.

The temporary expediency of emergency rule became permanent. For three years, right-wing politicians pursued an orthodox economic strategy that emphasized fiscal responsibility and deflation. As President Herbert Hoover discovered in the United States, such policies only worsened the depression.

What happened in the streets was at least as important as what happened in governmental offices. As one author put it, there was a "tense atmosphere of perpetual conflict."<sup>2</sup> The Communists, the SPD, and the Nazis all had massive popular organizations, which waged battles against each other and against the police, who were powerless to stop the violence.

Support for the regime continued to ebb. By the time elections were held again in July 1932, the antisystem parties had won over 40 percent of the vote, a figure

<sup>2</sup>V. B. Berghahn, *Modern Germany: Society, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11.

they would nearly match when Germans went back to the polls in November.

The big winners were the Nazis. After the fiasco in 1923, Hitler realized it would be far easier to come to power electorally. For the next decade, he dedicated his demagogic skills and the party's organization to that effort.

The Nazis' fortunes sagged during the relative calm of the mid-1920s, but when the depression hit, the Nazis were ready. Their popularity took off, especially among small-town and lower-middle-class Protestants. By 1932 the NSDAP had become Germany's largest party, and Hitler had made a surprisingly successful showing against President Hindenburg in that year's presidential election. Even more importantly, the party's influence in the streets had grown to the point that its SA (*sturmabferlung*) was the largest and most ruthless of the partisan "armies." By the end of the year, Germany had reached a turning point. Brüning and his successor, von Papen, had accomplished next to nothing despite the continued use of emergency powers. Moreover, they were unable to maintain order in the streets as the balance of political power shifted from the moderates to the extremists, both left and right. Finally, the politicians had to make a choice, and on 30 January 1933 they invited Hitler to become chancellor and to form a government.

Most conservative politicians assumed that they would be able to tame Hitler by bringing him into office and then get rid of him once the immediate crisis had passed. However, in conjunction with the more mainstream right-wing parties, Hitler controlled a majority in the Reichstag. He used that majority to pass legislation that created the most repressive and reprehensible regime in history.

### *The Third Reich*

Within weeks of taking office, Hitler began dismantling the Weimar Republic. On the night of 7 February, the Reichstag building was set ablaze. Hitler blamed the communists even though the Nazis themselves were responsible for the fire. The Nazi-controlled police began arresting communists the next day. New parliamentary elections were held less than a week later. Even though the NSDAP fell short of an absolute majority, it did win enough seats to allow passage of the infamous Enabling Act on 23 March, which provided the legal basis for the creation of the Third Reich.

Before the end of 1933, trade unions and all political parties other than the Nazis were banned. Germany also dropped out the hated League of Nations. The next year Hitler declared himself **führer** as well as chancellor,

at the same time abolishing the presidency and most of the remaining Weimar institutions. Universal military service was reinstated. The infamous Nuremberg laws were passed, which removed Jews from all positions of responsibility and began the officially sanctioned anti-Semitism that would only end with the appalling "final solution" and the death of over 6 million Jews.

Hitler and his henchmen proved to be remarkably persuasive leaders, using the new media of radio and cinema to reach, seduce, and mobilize millions of Germans. Nazi organizations blanketed all areas of German life. Even the 1936 Olympics were organized to show off the new Germany.

To undo the "damage" of 1918 and 1919 and restore Germany to its "rightful" place among the world's powers, the Nazis looked far beyond German soil. Hitler's notion of Aryan superiority meant that all other nationalities were inferior to and so should be ruled by Germans. Moreover, as the world's superior race, the Germans needed more space or living room (*lebensraum*).

Germany rearmed and set its sights first on neighboring countries with a substantial German population and then on the rest of the world. In 1936 Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland along the French border. Two years later Germany annexed Austria and intervened in the Spanish civil war on the side of Generalissimo Francisco Franco's neofascist forces. Later in the year, it laid claim to the Sudetenland, a region in the new country of Czechoslovakia that was predominantly German. Germany's actions caught Britain and France unprepared, and at the now infamous Munich conference of 1938, Prime Ministers Chamberlain and Daladier acceded to Hitler's demands in what has since come to be called appeasement. Despite Hitler's comments at Munich, German ambitions were not satisfied. In March 1939 its forces occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia. In August it signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union in which the two countries pledged not to attack each other and secretly planned the dismemberment of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

Germany's aggression finally met resistance when it invaded Poland on 1 September. Two days later France and Britain declared war on Germany. The Second World War had begun barely twenty years after the First World War had ended.

For more than two years, German successes on the battlefield suggested that Hitler may have been right in proclaiming the Germans the master race and his a thousand-year Reich. Poland and the rest of eastern Europe were quickly overcome. The German blitzkrieg shifted to the west, defeating Belgium, the Netherlands, and France in a matter of weeks. In 1941 the Germans attacked the Soviet Union, laid siege to Leningrad,

## ADOLF HITLER



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Adolf Hitler, reviewing Nazi forces.

**A**dolf Hitler was born in Austria in 1889. Prior to 1914 he was a ne'er-do-well who had dreams of becoming an artist, although his biographers say he had little or no talent. He joined the German army in World War I, experienced the horrors of trench warfare, and eventually was wounded.

Hitler came back to a weakened and dispirited Germany. Like so many of his generation, he could not accept a German defeat as anything but the result of a conspiracy. By the time he got out of prison after his failed 1923 putsch attempt, he had woven together an appeal that focused on frustrated national-

ism and on the widespread hatred of the republic, the Jews, and the left.

During the course of the next decade, Hitler turned his impressive oratorical and organizational skills to building support for the Nazi Party. After it came to power, he began systematically wiping out all opposition, creating a totalitarian state, and taking the aggressive steps that would ultimately lead to World War II and the Holocaust.

Hitler died in his bunker during the final days of the war.

reached the outskirts of Moscow, and penetrated 1,500 miles into Soviet territory. In all of Europe, Britain was the only major power to hold out.

When the Soviet Union and the United States entered the war on the Allied side, German fortunes began to sag. At the battle of Stalingrad in the winter of 1942–43, the Soviet army finally halted the German advance and launched a counterattack that would last until the end of the war in 1945. At about the same time, Allied troops invaded Sicily and began their slow, steady drive up the Italian peninsula. Allied planes began an air assault on the German homeland that would leave the country in ruins. The final straw came with the Allied

D-day invasion of the beaches of Normandy in France on 6 June 1944. On 30 April 1945 Hitler committed suicide. Eight days later, the German general staff surrendered unconditionally.

The thousand-year Reich was over twelve years after it began.

### *Occupation and the Two Germanies*

With the end of the war, the four main Allied powers occupied Germany, Italy, and Japan. Although the circumstances of the defeat and occupation varied somewhat

from country to country, the Allies were committed both to avoiding the “mistakes” of Versailles and to crafting stable democracies.

Given what we have seen so far, that must have seemed a daunting, if not impossible, challenge. However, it is what happened in all three.

To some degree, the defeated countries turned inward as people tried to come to grips with the values that had produced fascist governments. In so doing, some key politicians were able to draw on the less-than-successful, but still significant, experiments with democracy all the defeated countries had conducted before the fascists came to power.

All benefited from the occupation in three ways. First, the victorious powers helped restructure the political systems, most notably by barring former fascists from holding political office and by writing new constitutions. Just as important was the massive financial aid provided to rebuild the economies and, with it, confidence in the political system. Finally, the cold war gave the United States and its allies all the more reason to do what they could to ensure that stable, effective, and democratic governments survived.

The Western powers would have liked to have turned Germany into a strong democratic regime right away, but they were convinced that authoritarian values were too deeply engrained. Therefore, they removed Nazis from leadership positions, and the most nefarious of them were executed. Even more importantly for the long run, the Western powers realized they would be better off if they helped rebuild Germany rather than add insult to injury by imposing reparations and other policies like those of the 1920s. Food, clothing, and other forms of Western relief aid poured into the three western zones in Germany. The educational system was reformed in an attempt to build more support for democratic values. Tentative steps were taken to reestablish the German government as well. Potential leaders who had not been tainted by involvement with the Nazis were identified. Anti-Nazi political parties and trade unions were allowed to reorganize. Limited authority over education, welfare, and other policy areas was given to the new states into which the three western zones were subdivided.

In 1947 the Soviets began systematically imposing Stalinist governments on the countries in their sphere of influence as the cold war began. This led to a shift in Western policy toward Germany (and, as we will see in chapter 8, Japan as well). Strengthening recent enemies so they could become allies became more important than the long-term goals of de-Nazification and cultural change.

The purge of former Nazis came to an end, and some of them with limited involvement in the Third

**TABLE 6.2** German Chancellors Since 1948

YEAR	NAME	PARTY
1948–63	Konrad Adenauer	CDU
1963–66	Ludwig Erhard	CDU
1966–69	Kurt-Georg Kiesinger	CDU
1969–74	Willy Brandt	SPD
1974–82	Helmut Schmidt	SPD
1982–98	Helmut Kohl	CDU
1998–	Gerhard Schroeder	SPD

Reich were allowed to hold bureaucratic and teaching positions. Attempts to break up the prewar cartels that had supported Hitler and to democratize the German economy also were halted.

The Western powers sped up the political integration of their three zones. At the London Conference in January 1948, the three occupying powers began implementing currency reform that would bring the three economies closer together and drafting what would become a new constitution.

Pressure for the creation of a western state increased six days after the currency reform went into effect. The Soviets imposed a land blockade on Berlin, which was deep inside their zone of occupation. The West responded with an airlift that kept the besieged city supplied until May 1949. During the blockade, a Constituent Assembly met to draft a constitution, which was completed three days after the blockade was lifted. Because they assumed it would be in place only temporarily, until Germany was reunited, the drafters called it the **Basic Law**, not a constitution. On 14 August the first postwar elections were held. The **Christian Democratic Union (CDU)**, the successor to the prewar Zentrum, and its leader, the antifascist mayor of Cologne, **Konrad Adenauer** (1876–1967), won a slim plurality of the votes. (See table 6.2.)

Chancellor Adenauer then put together a coalition of his CDU, the liberal **Free Democratic Party (FDP)**, and a number of regional parties. On 23 September 1949 his cabinet was accepted by the Allied High Command, signaling the birth of the Federal Republic.

Few expected much of the new republic. The cold war loomed over German politics. Within weeks of the ratification of the Basic Law, the strictly Stalinist DDR (German Democratic Republic) was established in the east. Moreover, there was no guarantee that the economic recovery would continue, especially given that the new republic had to integrate more than 10 million refugees from countries that had come under communist rule. Everyone acknowledged, too, that there had not been enough time to progress very far in changing German values. Most observers had doubts about how

deeply democratic roots had been sunk in a country that had so recently embraced one of the most authoritarian regimes ever. Finally, there was little or no enthusiasm for building a democracy based on a regime that had been largely imposed by outsiders.

### *Building a Democratic Germany*

But that is precisely what happened.

For fourteen years, Adenauer and the CDU gave the country strong leadership around which new political institutions and a modernized economy could be built. Throughout that period, Adenauer dominated political life without ever facing a serious challenge to his authority from the opposition either in parliament or in the streets. Moreover, the CDU and its FDP allies forged links with the business, industrial, bureaucratic, and even union elites, thereby producing the greatest period of growth Germany had ever seen, dubbed the economic miracle.

Crucial to the renewal of German political and economic life was Adenauer himself. He had been a leader of the Catholic Zentrum Party during the Weimar Republic and had impeccable anti-Nazi credentials. That made him an obvious person for the Allies to turn to in seeking leadership for the new Germany.

Adenauer was widely respected and, like his contemporary, Charles de Gaulle, used that reputation to gain broader support for the new regime. Under his leadership, the CDU and its allies won four elections in a row and gave the new Federal Republic strong leadership during its critical first few years. Like most politicians of his day, he was skeptical about how democratic Germany could be in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Therefore, he centralized power as much as possible in the chancellor's office, forging a system that has been called **chancellor democracy** ever since.

With his finance minister, Ludwig Erhard, Adenauer used the new political system to help forge the unprecedented economic growth mentioned earlier. When Adenauer was finally urged into retirement (at age eighty-six), he left the same kind of legacy as did de Gaulle—stability that made domestic and foreign policy success possible.

Adenauer was succeeded by Erhard, who generally was given credit for the economic miracle. Erhard, however, was not an effective chancellor and took the blame for the first postwar recession, which occurred during his three years in office. During the recession, the neo-Nazi **National Democratic Party (NPD)** began to make major gains and threatened to cross the 5 percent barrier, raising concerns about continued German susceptibility to right-wing extremism.

### Democratization in Germany

**HISTORIANS AND political scientists still debate why democracy took root so much later in Germany than in the United States, Great Britain, or France. In the end, we will probably never be able to sort out the reasons, because the various factors overlap so much.**

**There was little in German history before 1945 to suggest that it could democratize so quickly. Its divided and authoritarian past, as well as the ill-fated effort to impose a democratic regime after World War I, served to discredit democracy far more than in countries like France, where it had also had its share of troubles.**

**After the Second World War, however, a combination of international and domestic factors made effective democracy possible. The three occupying countries in the west avoided the mistakes they made after World War I, helping to rebuild rather than cripple their former enemy. More importantly in the long run, many Germans themselves “turned inward” and sought their own ways of avoiding the forces that had led to the creation of the Third Reich.**

**Just as remarkable was the smooth political integration of the DDR into the Federal Republic after 1990. Despite forty more years of authoritarian rule, people in the east had had extensive exposure to western media and, of course, benefited from the remarkable wealth the Federal Republic could offer to ease the transition.**

**In other words, the German experience probably offers few guidelines for other countries to follow. None have either the luxury of extensive outside support or the time to rethink national priorities that so aided Germany from 1949 onward. The one partial exception may be South Africa, which we will consider in chapter 15.**

In 1966 Erhard resigned and was replaced by another Christian Democrat, Kurt-Georg Kiesinger. This time, the coalition was formed not with the FDP but with the SPD in a **grand coalition** of the two largest parties. They came together, among other things, to end the recession and, with it, the NPD threat. Moreover, with the **1967 Law for Promoting Stability and Growth in the Economy**, the two parties committed themselves to policies designed to produce balanced growth that would benefit all of German society. In other words, a broad consensus about social and economic policy was added to the stability achieved during the Adenauer years. Indeed, that consensus and the ways that it has been implemented over the years set Germany apart from Britain and France, as we will see throughout the rest of this chapter.

After elections in 1969, a new coalition between the SPD and FDP was formed, removing the CDU from

office for the first time. Under the leadership of **Willy Brandt** and then **Helmut Schmidt**, the SPD enacted modest social reforms and opened up relations with the communist world. Far more importantly, the socialist leaders demonstrated their commitment to working within the broad consensus established during the grand coalition years. The government also was able to withstand terrorist attacks at home and the economic shock of the OPEC oil embargo in the 1970s with remarkable ease.

In the early 1980s, however, the Schmidt government encountered increasing difficulties. The SPD's left wing pulled it in one direction, and the increasingly conservative FDP pushed it in the other. Finally, in 1982, the FDP decided to quit the center-left coalition and ally once again with the CDU. On 1 October the Schmidt government lost a vote of confidence. Because of the rules on **constructive votes of no confidence** (see the section on the German state), the Bundestag immediately selected **Helmut Kohl** to be the new chancellor. Because the Bundestag was not dissolved when the FDP switched camps, no new elections were held. Kohl did agree to early elections the next year, which the CDU-FDP won easily, the first of its four consecutive victories.

Kohl's sixteen years in office reflected how far German politics had come since the war. We will discuss all these issues in more detail later in the chapter. However, the following examples illustrate the pragmatism and stability in German political life during the 1980s:

- Kohl's government did not follow Reagan's and Thatcher's lead and shift dramatically toward a more market-oriented economy. Rather, Kohl largely retained the social market economy that reflected the societywide consensus on balanced growth. Among other things, it ensured that workers would receive generous social benefits and encouraged the trade unions and corporate executives to cooperate with each other. In so doing, Kohl kept Germany in its position as one of the three leading economies in the world.
- The government did not overreact to the cultural and political shock waves that occurred following the election of Green Party members to the Bundestag in 1993. Instead, Germany became an environmental leader. Tough laws mandate the recycling of 80 percent of all cardboard and plastics and 90 percent of all aluminum, glass, and tin. Germany also agreed to reduce its greenhouse gases more than it was later required to do by the provisions of the Kyoto Treaty on climate control.

- Even though he came to office without any experience in international relations, Kohl had an even greater impact on foreign policy than he did on domestic affairs. He skillfully guided Germany through a difficult decade that began with renewed superpower tensions but concluded with the unexpected end of the cold war. Germany remained one of the strongest advocates of European integration and became one of the chief architects of the Single European Act, the Maastricht Treaty, and a common currency. Kohl also spearheaded attempts to forge a common policy on such difficult issues as the fighting in the former Yugoslavia. Most importantly of all, Kohl skillfully engineered the later stages of the reunification of Germany in the months after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and then the DDR.

We could go on and consider the details of Kohl's remarkable sixteen years in office and what has happened since his defeat. But this would add little to what should be a clear picture by now. The issues facing Germany since the 1980s are little different from those in any stable democracy. It has plenty of problems, but the durability and legitimacy of its regime are not in question.

## Creating a Democratic Political Culture

In their attempts to figure out why German politics changed so dramatically and so quickly, many political scientists focused on the political culture, where the evidence of change is overwhelming and, historically speaking, the most surprising. As noted earlier, at the end of the war, most analysts were convinced that the values that had made the Third Reich possible were deeply rooted in German society. According to the conventional wisdom, the Weimar Republic failed in large part because it was a "republic without republicans." Even the most sympathetic observers, who believed that the overwhelming majority of Germans had not openly supported the worst aspects of Nazism, at least find them guilty of having silently accepted Hitler's Reich and not having done anything about its excesses when such opportunities were open to them. No one put those sentiments more eloquently than Pastor Martin Niemöller, writing while in a concentration camp in 1944:

**First they came for the Communists, but I didn't do anything, because I wasn't a Communist.**

**Then they came for the Jews, but I didn't do anything, because I wasn't a Jew.**

**Then they came for the trade unionists, but I didn't do anything, because I wasn't a trade unionist.**

**Then they came for the Catholics, but I didn't do anything, because I wasn't a Catholic.**

**Finally, they came for me, and there wasn't anyone left to do anything.**

In the immediate postwar years, there were ample signs that the antidemocratic and authoritarian culture persisted. Various anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi organizations appeared, and many veterans openly expressed their continued desire for a strong military. Early public opinion polls indicated that many Germans still preferred authoritarian forms of government and that others could conceivably support Nazi-like movements at some point in the future.

The first elections confirmed those fears. Turnout was low, primarily because the young *ohne mich*, or "count me out," generation wanted nothing to do with politics.

Creative artists explored the German soul, trying to discover how the nation that had produced Beethoven and Hegel could also give rise to Hitler and Goebbels. The conclusions most of them reached were hardly encouraging. In his novel *Dog Years*, for instance, Günter Grass gives 1950s German teenagers special eyeglasses that allow them to see what their parents had done during the war, which led many of the teens to have nervous breakdowns or commit suicide.

Even after the Bonn republic began to take hold, skepticism remained. Observers worried that support for the system was dependent on continued economic growth and that hard times could, and some thought would, bring new antidemocratic movements.

Some of those concerns were confirmed empirically in 1959 when Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba found substantial differences between German and British or American values, which they thought did not augur well for German democracy.<sup>3</sup> Very few Germans took pride in their political institutions. They were less trusting of authority figures and felt less able to influence decision making than their British or American counterparts were. In trying to explain why Germans held these views, Almond and Verba pointed to German history and to the continued authoritarian nature of German schools and families.

Twenty years later, Almond and Verba gathered a group of scholars to reconsider their conclusions in the

light of more recent data. They realized that the earlier depiction of German culture no longer held. Instead, Germany now had the kind of civic culture they claimed was democracy's best attitudinal underpinning.

There are still signs of rigidity. In his wonderfully insightful study of postunification Germany, the *Washington Post's* Marc Fisher describes a number of them. Many rules and regulations are amazingly strict and, even more amazingly, are obeyed.<sup>4</sup> Germans cannot, for instance, mow their lawn between 1:00 and 3:00 P.M. because this might disturb a napping neighbor. Other rules sharply curtail how long stores can be open in the evenings and on weekends (though these have recently been relaxed) and even how long workers can take for their *pinkelpause*, or bathroom break. Laws even prescribe what Germans must put at the beginning of the messages on their answering machines.

One should not make too much of such laws, however quaint and irksome they can be for visitors from more informal societies. The fact is that, as far as political values are concerned, Germans have more in common with their counterparts in other industrialized societies than these laws would lead you to believe.

According to a typical poll conducted in 1977, only 7 percent of the public could conceivably support a new Nazi party. Well over 90 percent now routinely endorse the idea that Germany needs a democratic form of government with a multiparty system. Germans are as supportive of democratic practices as citizens anywhere. Although it is hard to draw conclusions across national lines on the basis of spotty comparative research in which different questions are asked, the conclusions about Germany itself are rather striking. (See table 6.3.)

The German people clearly believe that the Federal Republic is legitimate. The nation has the kind of strong, general support that characterizes the British and American political cultures. Moreover, Germans tend to see political participation as a way to affect decision making rather than simply as a social obligation.

There are some blemishes on the German culture. More than other Europeans, Germans do not favor an equal political role for women. There also has been a resurgence of racist, anti-Semitic, and even neo-Nazi activity since unification, especially in the east.

Obviously, any such behavior is reprehensible at best, but we should not overstate its importance. In 1992 authorities estimated that there were no more than 1,500 active neo-Nazis and 50,000 sympathizers in the entire

<sup>3</sup>Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracies in Five Countries* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), and their edited volume *The Civic Culture Revisted* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979).

<sup>4</sup>Marc Fisher, *After the Wall: Germany, the Germans, and the Burden of History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

**TABLE 6.3** Germans and Democracy (percentage agreeing)

	1980	1983	1989
<b>The present national government protects our basic liberties.</b>	89.5	81.6	79.0
<b>The political system as a whole is just and fair.</b>	87.6	86.8	77.0

Source: Adapted from Dieter Fuchs, "Trends of Political Support in the Federal Republic of Germany," in *Political Culture in Germany*, ed. Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Ralf Rytlewski (London: Macmillan, 1993), 249.

country, many of whom are better thought of as violent hooligans than as ideologically sophisticated extremists. Of all the people arrested for their participation in racist attacks, 70 percent are men with little education. Many seem more angry about their personal prospects as a result of unification and the influx of hundreds of thousands of immigrants than they are committed to right-wing extremism. What's more, the parties that espouse neo-Nazi themes are nowhere near as successful in Germany as the National Front is in France.

The obsession with the nondemocratic fringe kept political scientists from giving another important cultural trend its due until quite recently—the postmaterial values discussed in chapter 3. Polls throughout the 1990s showed that fully a third of the electorate could be classified as postmaterialists, which is far more than the European average and three times the German figure for 1970.

Those views are most evident in support for environmental causes. One 1991 poll showed that 87 percent of the people in the west and 82 percent of those in the east believe that the environment should be a top priority for government and industry.

Postmaterialism has also had its clearest political impact in Germany. Well over 80 percent of all postmaterialists vote for the left or the **Greens**, the first party in the world to gain widespread support on the basis of this "new politics."

Postmaterialists are frequent participants in citizens' initiatives as well. In sharp contrast to the conventional view of a population that supposedly shuns voluntary participation, thousands of locally based, issue-oriented groups have sprung up in recent years to oppose the storage of nuclear waste, expand kindergarten space, support recycling programs, improve the conditions of immigrant workers, and so on.

There is one final area in which the German political culture has changed. The overwhelming majority of Germans have come to accept their geopolitical status. Most are profoundly antimilitarist and endorse the govern-

## Conflict in Germany

**THE MOST important conclusion to reach about conflict in Germany is that it is not very serious. Germany certainly has social movements and individuals who do not believe that the Federal Republic should continue in its current form. For the moment, the most prominent of them are the neo-Nazis on the right. And it should be remembered that the left spawned a number of terrorist groups in the 1960s and 1970s, the most violent of which—the Red Army Faction—only decided to disband in 1998.**

**Political scientists have not done the kind of research that would allow us to say with any precision whether extremist groups are more or less problematic in Germany than in the United States, Great Britain, or France. Still, there is nothing to suggest that these or any other groups will constitute a serious threat to the legitimacy of the Federal Republic for the foreseeable future.**

**Critics are quick to point out that the Nazis themselves started out as a small band of hooligans whom no one took seriously. However, there is one important difference between Weimar and the Federal Republic. In Germany today—as in the United States, Great Britain, and France—virtually everyone agrees that the regime is legitimate and will not support movements that call for radical constitutional change, democratic or otherwise.**

ment's leading role in the EU, NATO, and other international organizations. Many scholars are convinced that Germany's new pacific (if not pacifist) culture is one of the reasons it has not sought to assert its new-found power militarily or even sought to participate more in multilateral campaigns in places like Kosovo—campaigns that the Constitutional Court ruled in 1994 were legal.

Political scientists have pointed to three broad reasons the political culture has changed so dramatically in barely fifty years. The first and most obvious is that the Federal Republic has worked. As we saw with the Fifth Republic in France, the Federal Republic's success has had an impact on the way people assess it.

Second, there has been considerable change in two of the major "agents" of political socialization. Under Allied pressure, the states began teaching civics during the occupation years and have included it in their curricula ever since. The right-wing bias of the prewar teacher corps has disappeared. Similarly, the impact of the "authoritarian father" has declined. Child-rearing patterns have been liberalized, and, as in all industrialized democracies, the family is less important in most people's lives in general.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we are now two generations removed from the Nazi era. Fewer than 15 percent of those in the current electorate reached adulthood during either the Weimar or the Nazi periods, and even the Kohl generation of political leaders only experienced Nazism and the war as teenagers.

## Political Participation

### *Parties and the Electoral Process*

As we saw earlier, the fragmented and ideologically polarized parties were a major problem in the Weimar Republic and played a substantial role in its demise. Many observers expected that to be the case in the Federal Republic as well. By the mid-1950s, however, Germany had developed what many observers have called a two-and-a-half-party system. The CDU and SPD have been the dominant parties, never winning less than 74 percent of the vote since the 1949 election. (See table 6.4.) During this period, the FDP has won between 5.1 percent and 12.8 percent of the vote—thus earning the half-party designation. And, except for the years from 1957 to 1961, the grand coalition period (1966–69), and the present, the FDP has provided either the CDU or the SPD with the seats needed to form a parliamentary majority. Only one new party, the Greens, has been able to overcome the 5 percent barrier nationwide and win seats in the Bundestag on a consistent basis. The formerly communist PDS did so in 1998 as well with a strong showing in its eastern strongholds, but even these developments have not altered the basic logic of a system that has worked effectively since 1949.

More than is the case for the constitution in any other country covered in this book, the Basic Law puts political parties in a privileged position. It gives them official status and assigns them the role of “forming the political will.” The major parties play a central role in nominating judges, university professors, television and radio station managers, and directors of firms ranging from the big banks to local public transit authorities.

Public financing provides at least a third of their ample funding (\$134 million for the CDU alone in 1998).

Perhaps the most important provision of the Basic Law is Article 21, which created a dual system for electing the Bundestag, designed to minimize the number of new and small parties. Half the seats are elected in 329 single-member districts, as in Britain and the United States. Any number of candidates can run, and whoever wins the most votes takes the seat. This makes it easy for the SPD and CDU to convince people that casting a ballot for a new, fringe, or extremist party means that they are wasting their vote. Indeed, they routinely win all the single-member districts in the old West Germany and lose only a handful of seats to the PDS.

Voters also cast a second ballot in which they choose from lists of candidates representing each of the parties. Seats are then allocated proportionally to all parties that win over 5 percent of the vote. Thus, if the FDP wins 6.3 percent of the vote, as it did in 1998, it gets that proportion of seats in the Bundestag. The second ballot is also used to make any adjustments necessary from the constituency races so that each party’s total Bundestag representation equals its share of the proportional vote. Here, the 5 percent barrier has worked extremely effectively, dooming a number of parties that won seats in 1949 to extinction in the 1950s and keeping all claimants but the Greens and the PDS out thereafter.

The parties themselves also changed. During the Weimar era, the German parties were known for their ideological rigidity and for their millions of dedicated grassroots activists. During the 1950s, however, continued rapid growth and affluence undermined support for left-wing radicalism, while the very success of the regime did the same for neo-Nazism on the right. In other words, divisive ideological issues disappeared and, as we will see shortly, the voters flocked toward the center and away from extremist positions, left or right. To maintain their share of the vote, first the CDU and then the SPD had to follow suit.

Each became a catch-all party in order to appeal to the increasingly moderate voters who clustered around the middle of the political spectrum. The parties had to

**TABLE 6.4** German Election Results Since 1949 (percentage of vote)

PARTY	1949	1953	1957	1961	1965	1969	1972	1976	1980	1983	1987	1990	1994	1998
CDU/CSU	31.0	45.2	50.2	45.3	47.6	46.1	44.9	48.6	44.5	48.8	44.3	43.8	41.5	35.2
FDP	11.9	9.5	7.7	12.8	9.5	5.8	8.4	7.9	10.6	7.0	9.1	11.0	6.9	6.2
SPD	29.2	28.8	31.8	36.2	39.3	42.7	45.8	42.6	42.9	38.2	37.0	33.5	36.4	40.9
Greens	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.5	5.6	8.3	3.9	7.3	6.7
PDS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.4	2.4	5.1



## USEFUL WEB SITES

There are three good entry points to German politics on the web, though none of them are as good as the portals for most of the other countries covered in this book. The Dartmouth College library has an excellent one on German studies in general. The editors of H-Net, a collection of listservers for scholars, maintain a set of links on German issues, including politics. Also useful is Inter Nationes, maintained by the Goethe Institute.

[www.dartmouth.edu/~wess/](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~wess/)

[www2.h-net.msu.edu/~german/](http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~german/)

[www.inter-nationes.de/d/presse-e.html](http://www.inter-nationes.de/d/presse-e.html)

The German government's gateway includes links to most agencies and limited news coverage of political life.

[eng.bundesregierung.de/frameset.index.jsp](http://eng.bundesregierung.de/frameset.index.jsp)

The best source of news comes from the television and radio network.

[dw-world.de/english](http://dw-world.de/english)

*Debatte* is an academic journal that deals with contemporary German affairs. Some of its articles are available at its web site.

[web.bham.ac.uk/minnerhg/debate.htm](http://web.bham.ac.uk/minnerhg/debate.htm)

water down their ideologies. The number of ideologically motivated activists diminished, forcing the parties to shift their organizational tactics and rely more on leaders who were effective campaigners on television. Because television news stories rarely last more than a couple of minutes, parties had to sacrifice the complexities of a sophisticated belief system for slogans that would fit into sound-bite journalism.

In this sense, the major parties are very different in that, instead of focusing their attention on a particular group, they literally try to "catch" all voters. The SPD no longer sees itself as primarily a working class party but appeals to progressive members of the middle class as well. The CDU no longer woos only Catholics as the Zentrum did but also tries to attract support from all Germans who care about religion and traditional values ([www.cdu.de](http://www.cdu.de)).



### *The Christian Democrats*

The CDU has been by far the most powerful party in the Federal Republic both before and after unification.

Technically, the CDU is two distinct parties. The CDU exists in every state other than Bavaria, where it works with a local partner, the CSU (Christian Social Union). During the 1970s and early 1980s, there was some tension between the two, because the CSU was noticeably more conservative than its partner. After the death of the CSU's leader, Franz-Joseph Strauss, in 1988, however, the tensions abated, and we will treat the two as if they are a single party.

After World War II, Adenauer and the other surviving Zentrum leaders chose not to re-create a party whose appeal would be limited to Catholics and, thus, to less than half the population. Instead, they decided to form a more broad-based organization that would apply basic Christian principles to political life. At first, this included a clear commitment to social justice. The Ahlen Program of 1947 called for egalitarian social reforms and even the nationalization of some industries. The CDU also agreed to the codetermination law in 1951 (see the policy section), which gave workers' representatives seats on the boards of directors of large firms in the coal and steel industries.

The early CDU was pulled in two contradictory directions. On the one hand, Catholic thought had long stressed social solidarity and, with it, programs for the poor and otherwise disadvantaged. On the other hand, because it drew most of its support from practicing believers who tended to be rather conservative, the party had rather strong right-wing inclinations.

Adenauer and his colleagues quickly resolved those tensions by forging a centrist and pragmatic party that focused more on winning elections than on doctrinal principles. As Germany came to be the flash point in the cold war, and as the United States grew increasingly disenchanted with progressive social and economic policies, the CDU's support for conservatism at home and a pro-American foreign policy only increased.

But after the shift from Adenauer to Erhard in 1963 and the economic slowdown in 1965, the CDU did not fare as well. Finally, in 1969, the party lost control of the government. For much of the next thirteen years, it floundered. It had never developed either a large mass membership or a strong central organization. Instead, power within the party remained primarily in the hands of the state parties and their leaders. Following the CDU's defeat at the polls in 1972 and 1976, the party's drift was compounded by a deep ideological struggle between its right wing, headed by the CSU's Strauss, and the moderates, increasingly dominated by the young Helmut Kohl, minister president of the Rhineland-Palatinate state.

## HELMUT KOHL



AP/Wide World Photos (Fritz Reiss)

A 1998 campaign ad by the CDU playing on Kohl's size (hence the elephant) and Lake Wolfgang, his favorite holiday spot, and trying to capitalize on the importance of continuity and stability.

**H**elmut Kohl (1930–) was the longest-serving chancellor in the history of the Federal Republic. He was also the first to have come of age after World War II and the Third Reich.

Other than that, his career was fairly typical. After graduating from university, he began his political career within the CDU organization in his home state, Rhineland-Palatinate. Following the party's loss to the SPD in the 1972 Bundestag elections, Kohl was chosen leader of the party. At the time, few expected much of a man known for his pragmatism, an expectation that was reinforced by the CDU's defeat again in 1976.

In 1978 the party broke with its pragmatic practices and issued a vague new program calling for "renewal" on the basis of more traditional values and market-oriented economic policies. In 1980, however, the party suffered its third straight defeat—this time with Strauss as its candidate for chancellor—and power within it swung back toward Kohl and the moderates.

Kohl was never as dynamic a leader as the other two great conservative heads of state of his generation—Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. He also never

But, as so often happens in politics, events transformed Kohl and his career. The collapse of the SPD-FDP coalition brought him to power in 1982. At the end of the decade, he skillfully guided the Federal Republic through unification and then was a major player in the strengthening of the EU with the Maastricht Treaty two years later. Kohl is a remarkably unpretentious man, known to prefer vacationing at home, watching television while wearing his Birkenstocks. He is also an extremely large man who, with his wife, has published a cookbook of traditional (and fatty) German dishes.

supported their hopes for a radical shift toward smaller government and a more powerful market. But he didn't have to. His first decade in office was marked by a dramatic economic upturn that allowed the government to maintain popular support without questioning the status quo.

From 1990 on, Kohl's support was based largely on his successful handling of German unification. To the surprise of many, Kohl proved an effective negotiator both with authorities in the DDR and with the victors

from World War II, who had to sign off on any agreement to unify the two Germanys. He also was largely responsible for pushing through economic policies that directed hundreds of billions of dollars in aid to the five new states.

By the middle of the 1990s, however, the costs of unification had become clearer, and the CDU saw its support drop. It probably held on in 1994 only because the SPD ran a lackluster campaign. Finally, as we saw earlier, the CDU's and Kohl's string of successes ended in 1998.

Kohl's legacy will not be an altogether positive one, however. In 1999 he was implicated in a financial scandal. The CDU had accepted millions of dollars in illegal contributions, and Kohl has acknowledged personally taking at least \$1 million, though he refuses to name the donor. As of mid-2001, the CDU has paid over \$1 million in fines and will have to forego at least \$20 million in state funds. Kohl's reputation for honesty is shot, and the party's image as the embodiment of the best in traditional German values is in jeopardy.

Before news of the scandal broke, the CDU had been doing fairly well. Its standing in the polls had risen, and the party had won a number of state elections in *laender* previously controlled by the SPD. Now, it is even less popular than it was in 1998, and most observers are convinced that it will lose the 2002 ballot as well.

When first chosen in 2000, it seemed that the CDU's new leader, **Angela Merkel** (1955–), might lead the party out of the political wilderness. Hers is an interesting story. Her father was a Lutheran minister who chose to move to and preach in East Germany when Angela was a baby. Angela was educated in the East German state system and eventually earned a Ph.D. in physics. Because of her father's profession, however, she was never able to get an appropriate post under the Communists and was a member of the small CDU in the east before the fall of the Berlin Wall. She quickly emerged as one of the most popular and effective party leaders. When Kohl's designated successor, Wolfgang Schaueble, was forced to resign as party leader, she was chosen to replace him—the first woman and the first easterner to reach the top of the political world in the Federal Republic.

Known for her wit and independence, Merkel was one of the first CDU leaders to break with Kohl once news of the illegal payments broke. Initial reaction to her was positive, but as the 2002 election drew near, serious concerns were aired about her lack of experience, especially in economic policy making. And, in April 2001, she, too, had to admit involvement in obtaining questionable funds. Therefore, in January 2002, Merkel decided not to try for the nomination to run against Schroeder in elections scheduled for the fall. Instead, the party opted for

the more charismatic and more conservative premier of Bavaria, Edmund Stoiber. Merkel remains head of the CDU organization.

## *The Social Democrats*

The SPD historically has been the Federal Republic's second strongest party ([www.spd.de/english](http://www.spd.de/english)).

Although the SPD has been in office twice (1969–82 and 1998–), it has outpolled the CDU in only two elections. The SPD has lagged behind the Christian Democrats in large part because it has not been as successful in becoming and remaining a catch-all party. To some degree, this reflects the SPD's early postwar history. It was led by men who had survived the Third Reich as prisoners, exiles, or members of the small underground resistance. Most were supporters of the prewar party's commitments. None were revolutionaries or even doctrinaire Marxists, but most shared leader Kurt Schumacher's support for nationalization of major industrial firms.

The SPD's failure to seriously threaten the CDU's hold on power touched off a heated internal debate over its basic principles, much like the one over Clause 4 in Britain's Labour Party. In 1959 matters reached a head when the moderates won a majority at the annual conference at Bad Godesberg and dropped all references to Marxism and the nationalization of industry from the party's program.

At about the same time, politicians from the Schumacher generation left the political scene, to be replaced by younger and more pragmatic leaders, most notably the mayor of West Berlin, Willy Brandt. The party made significant progress in the 1961 and 1965 elections. Its fortunes continued to improve when the CDU brought it into the Grand Coalition to help thwart the far right and end the country's first postwar recession. Socialist ministers performed well, and the party demonstrated its acceptance of capitalism with its ringing endorsement of the 1967 law on balanced growth.

The SPD took control of the government when the FDP decided to form a coalition with it rather than the CDU after the 1969 election, even though the Socialists, again, had come in second. Rather than embarking on a bold program of social reform, Brandt stressed "continuity and renewal." In fact, his greatest accomplishment came not in expanding socialism but in improving relations with the Soviet bloc, for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize.

When Brandt was forced out of office in 1974 as the result of an espionage scandal, he was replaced by the even more moderate Helmut Schmidt. With the excep-



tion of the codetermination system (to be discussed shortly), social reform all but ground to a halt as Germany struggled to cope with the turbulent economic conditions of the post-OPEC years. Schmidt's moderation earned him the respect of leaders around the world, but it opened deep divisions within his own party. The economic problems and the ideological infighting cost the SPD 4 percent of the vote in 1980. Still, it was able to form another coalition government with the FDP. But, in the one example of a lost vote of confidence in the Federal Republic's history, the FDP put the Schmidt government out of its misery two years later.

The next sixteen years spent in opposition were difficult for the SPD. It lost four consecutive elections, which allowed commentators and voters alike to begin thinking of the CDU as the "natural party of government." The Socialists' problems were magnified by the CDU's popularity because of unification.

Meanwhile, the Socialists shot themselves in the political foot. They were slow to support unification, and some of the party's leading intellectuals actually opposed it until the last moment. Moreover, the party contested the 1994 election under a rather lackluster leader, Rudolph Scharping, who became chancellor-candidate only after a scandal forced his predecessor to withdraw.

The SPD did begin to turn things around in 1995. Scharping was replaced by the more dynamic, if more left-wing, Oskar Lafontaine, the popular chief minister of Saarland. Though Lafontaine had led the party to its 1990 loss, he was widely seen as a breath of political fresh air. Under his leadership, the party began to modernize.

Then, in 1997, Gerhard Schroeder (1944–) burst onto the political scene. Dubbing himself Germany's Tony Blair, he openly wooed the middle class and the business community and gained massive media exposure—and popular support. At that point, Lafontaine stepped aside, and Schroeder became the party's candidate for chancellor.

Schroeder comes from the same reformist wing of modern social democracy as Tony Blair in Great Britain. His personal views are quite similar to Blair's. However, traditional social democrats have a stronger influence in the SPD than in Labour, and the country's social service and social market economic policies are far more popular and effective than in Britain. Last, but by no means least, the SPD has to keep the support of its coalition partners, the environmentally oriented Greens, whom we will encounter shortly.

If anything, the SPD government has gained the most publicity for its progressive actions. Its participation in the NATO bombing of the former Yugoslavia in 1999 marked the first time that a postwar German gov-

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## GERHARD SCHROEDER

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**G**erhard Schroeder is not just the first SPD chancellor in sixteen years. His election also marks an important generational shift in German politics.

Born in 1944, he is the first chancellor not to have experienced the Nazis or World War II. He is also the first in recent memory to have been born into poverty, his father having been killed in the war shortly before Schroeder was born.

Like many baby boomer politicians, Schroeder began his career on the far left of the SPD in the late 1960s. Unlike many of his wealthier comrades, Schroeder never questioned the party's commitment to social democracy and reformist strategies. Like his American contemporary, Bill Clinton, Schroeder's views moderated during the 1970s and 1980s, and he rose to prominence as a popular and successful state governor.

Unlike Clinton or any other ambitious American politician, Schroeder has been married four times.

ernment had taken part in a military operation. The Greens' impact has been felt most strongly in an environmental tax that adds about 30¢ per year to the price of a liter of gasoline until 2003. Similarly, in 2000, the government passed a law making it possible for roughly half of the 7.3 million non-German residents to gain citizenship. In 2001, it announced that it would not support any further reforms of the labor market or initiate any further tax cuts until after the 2002 election.

But overall, continuity with—rather than change from—the policies of the Kohl years characterizes Schroeder's SPD. As we will see in the rest of this chapter, left and right alike share basic values about the key policy issues the country faces, including support for a more integrated Europe, NATO and a foreign policy conducted through international organizations in general, and the social market economy.

### *The Free Democratic Party*

The FDP has always run a distant, but surprisingly influential, third behind the CDU and SPD. Although it regularly comes close to falling below the 5 percent barrier, the FDP derives its strength from the fact that it has been needed to form all but three of the governments since 1949 ([www.fdp.de/portal](http://www.fdp.de/portal)).

Like the CDU and SPD, the FDP had "ancestors" in Weimar, when there were a number of predominantly middle-class, Protestant parties that called themselves liberal. But theirs was an economic more than a political



liberalism, which left the party in an ambiguous position during Hitler's rise to power.

The postwar FDP has been more consistently liberal on political issues, valuing personal responsibility, individual freedom, and respect for the rights of others over what it sees as the collectivist tendencies of the SPD and CDU. Mostly, though, the FDP carved a niche for itself as the party its two larger rivals needed to form a government. In that role, the FDP has provided the Federal Republic with a number of important leaders, including, most recently, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who was foreign minister from 1974 until 1992.

The FDP has struggled since unification and, then, Genscher's retirement. It came dangerously close to falling below the 5 percent barrier in both 1994 and 1998. Its standing in the polls improved somewhat in 2000, but mostly because disgruntled CDU supporters said they might vote for it out of disgust with Kohl's financial scandal, not because they supported the FDP per se. In an attempt to make a comeback, the party named Guido Westerwelle, a thirty-nine-year-old lawyer, its leader and Cornelia Pieper, a forty-two-year-old easterner, its secretary-general. There is no reason to believe, however, that dynamic new leadership can turn the FDP into a challenger for power.

### *The Greens*

In 1983 the Greens became the first new party to break the 5 percent barrier and enter the Bundestag. The Greens are also Germany's most intriguing and least understood party. To many people, members are still seen as weird and, perhaps, even dangerous, an image fostered by their early deputies' insistence on wearing jeans and sporting shaggy beards ([www.gruene.de](http://www.gruene.de)).

The Greens *are* different. Until 1991, for example, Greens elected to office were expected to resign and be replaced by colleagues halfway through their terms so that they could never let power go to their heads.

However, the image is also seriously off-target because there is something serious and important about the Greens and their philosophy. The success they have enjoyed in Germany and some other European countries is no fluke. It reflects the inability of established parties to devise widely accepted solutions to the new problems facing their countries. Moreover, the research on postmaterialism indicates that there is a far larger pool of potential supporters than the Greens have yet been able to tap.

The Greens' ideology is based on deep ecology, or the belief that all of life, and thus all of our problems, are interconnected. Pollution, militarism, sexism, homophobia, poverty, and the like—all are part of a single gen-

eral crisis that can only be addressed through an equally general and radical shift to a worldview that puts the good of the planet and humanity first.

The Greens scored major breakthroughs in the 1983 and 1987 elections. However, they were in deep trouble in the early 1990s. Even more than the SPD, they suffered because of their qualms about rapid unification. More importantly, the party itself was split, with the more radical *fundis* gaining influence at the expense of the more pragmatic *realos*. After the 1994 election, however, the pragmatists gained the upper hand. The most plausible scenario for beating the CDU was a "Red-Green" coalition with the SPD, which the party had entered into in several state governments. Also, frustrations growing out of always being on the fringes led party moderates like **Joska Fischer** (1947–) to question their own and the party's more radical pasts.

Therefore, the Greens reached an agreement with the SPD to form a coalition and to serve in it for the length of the next parliament if the two parties won the 1998 election. Although it raised concerns in many other Western capitals, Fischer became foreign minister. It is hard to gauge the Greens' impact on the government because they are very much the junior member of the coalition. The stiff gasoline tax undoubtedly would not have been passed had the Greens not been in government. The same may be true of the law making it easier to gain German citizenship.

More important here is the fact that the Greens have continued their movement toward moderation. In particular, like many individuals and organizations with roots in the new left of the 1960s, the Greens reluctantly abandoned their pacifism and supported the Allied war effort in the former Yugoslavia following ethnic cleansing in Kosovo in 1999 and the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon two years later. The Greens have also become staunch supporters of the EU.

### *The Party of Democratic Socialism*

The Greens are no longer the only "new" party to have made it into the Bundestag since the 1940s. The PDS was created out of the ashes of the Socialist Unity Party (SED—in essence, the Communist Party) that ruled the DDR until its collapse ([www.pds-online.de](http://www.pds-online.de)).

The SED had been one of the most rigid and out-of-date of all the communist parties in cold war Eastern Europe. From 1949 until 1989, it monopolized political power in the DDR. (See chapter 9.) As the DDR collapsed, the SED tried to reform itself, among other things changing its name to the PDS. It also chose a new leader, Gregor Gysi, who was well known for defending

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## DOUBLE STANDARDS

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For understandable historical reasons, observers have been reluctant to label either Germany or Japan democratic and have been quick to voice concerns about incidents involving the far right in both countries. Although there are plenty of reasons to worry about such events, we should also be careful not to use a double standard and hold these countries to higher criteria than we use for others with fewer historical blemishes. All democracies have imperfections—including Germany and Japan. But, as this chapter has suggested, theirs are no more (or less) worrisome than those we find in the United States or Great Britain, the countries that are usually portrayed as the paragons of democratic virtue.

dissidents under communist rule—and who is now deputy mayor of Berlin.

In 1990 the PDS benefited from a one-time rule that allocated proportional representation seats separately in the east and west. In 1994 it survived only because it won a number of single-member districts in working-class districts in the Berlin metropolitan area.

Most observers doubted the PDS could win seats again. However, it confounded the pundits by getting nearly 20 percent of the vote in the old DDR and thus topping 6 percent nationwide in 1998. In 2001 it was in a governing coalition with the SPD in one of the old East German states and in the city of Berlin.

But we should not read too much into the PDS's success. For one thing, it is a purely regional party. Although it does well in the old DDR, it struggles to reach 1 percent of the vote in the west, where only 3,000 of its 95,000 members live. More importantly, like most of the "reformed" communist parties in eastern Europe, the PDS is by no means a throwback to the Marxist-Leninist organizations that ran the old communist regimes with an iron fist. The party does accuse the federal government of favoring the west and business interests over those of the east and of labor. But neither the party nor its members advocate anything like a return to the DDR, and most seem to have made their peace with democracy, if not modern capitalism.

### *The Far Right*

Throughout its history, the Federal Republic has had to deal with right-wing parties that, in one way or another, appealed to some of the same traditions as the Nazis. As we saw earlier, the NDP came close to breaking the 5 percent barrier in 1966 before its support evaporated.

Since unification, there has been another flurry of support for the far right, given the pressures of unification and immigration. A number of small parties have done reasonably well in state and local elections, including one that won over 5 percent in one of the eastern states in 1998. However, the far right did not come close to the 5 percent barrier in the national elections that year, reinforcing the belief that it is not a serious force in German politics.

### *Interest Groups*

As we will see in the discussion of corporatism, German interest groups play a more important role in policy making than their British or French equivalents. Surprisingly, however, there has not been very much detailed research on German interest groups, so we cannot say for sure if it is their strength that has led them to be included or if their inclusion has, instead, contributed to their strength.

Unlike France, Germany has a relatively large and unified labor movement. About two-thirds of all industrial workers and over 40 percent of the total workforce are unionized. The overwhelming majority of workers belongs to the **Federation of German Labour (DGB)**. The DGB is a peak association representing seventeen unions, each of which organizes a single industrial sector. As such, it is better able to coordinate union activity or even speak with a single voice than is the more decentralized and fragmented TUC in Britain.

The organization of the business side is a bit more complicated. The two largest peak associations—the Federal Association of German Employers (BDA) and the Federation of German Industry (BDI)—both represent smaller associations of business groups organized on geographical and industrial lines. Although it is harder to determine membership rates for business associations than for trade unions, a large proportion of businesses belong to one or the other of these organizations. In addition to the BDA and BDI, there are quasi-public chambers of commerce and industry (DIHT) that promote business and also provide job training and certification services for the government.

Both business and labor have close ties with the political parties. Union officials hold important positions in the SPD and in its Bundestag group. Agricultural and business interests have a similar relationship with the CDU. Members of parliament from these groups tend to dominate their parties' delegations on the Bundestag committees that deal with their interests. Church groups also have a significant impact on the CDU, helping to explain why West Germany banned abortion unless a doctor certified that the woman's life was in danger.

Interest groups in other areas are nowhere near as strong or as well connected politically. As noted earlier, a lot of locally based citizens' initiatives were an important building block for the early Greens. Also, a number of protest groups emerged in East Germany in the late 1980s, but most of them have fallen by the wayside.

## The German State: A Smoothly Functioning Democracy

From the mid-1960s until the recent economic difficulties, observers praised what they called the “German model.” Put simply, the state built on a nationwide consensus and close cooperation with business and labor to forge consistent economic growth, the benefits of which were enjoyed by virtually everyone ([www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/gm00000\\_.html](http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/gm00000_.html)).

To some degree, that success reflects the formal institutions created by the Basic Law in the late 1940s. Just as important, however, are more informal arrangements that political scientists call **corporatism**, in which the government and key interest groups work behind closed doors to forge integrated economic policies. Rarely are the supposedly vital actors in a democracy—political parties and elected officials—central players in them. Moreover, corporatist practices are never spelled out in constitutions, and only rarely are they even mentioned in laws. But they are important, because the countries that have most fully adopted corporatist practices are the ones that were most successful economically from the end of the Second World War into the 1990s.

### Chancellor Democracy

Before turning to those corporatist arrangements, we have to see how the conventional side of the German state works. Any such discussion must begin with the chancellor. (See figure 6.1.) As in other parliamentary systems, the chancellor started out literally as the “prime” minister, the first among what were supposed to be equally powerful members of the cabinet. During the twentieth century, however, the powers of prime ministers everywhere grew so dramatically that all notions of being first among equals disappeared.

This was done at least partially by design when the Federal Republic was created. The conflicting and overlapping jurisdictions of the chancellor and president had been among Weimar's many flaws. The framers of the Basic Law did not want to eliminate the dual executive in which the largely ceremonial functions of a head

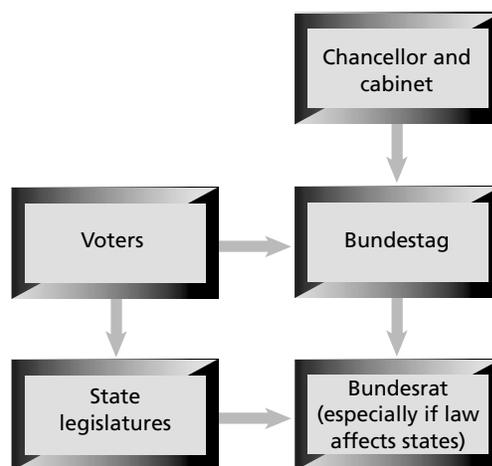


FIGURE 6.1 Policy-Making Processes in Germany

of state (president) and the actual control of the government (chancellor) are in separate hands. At the same time, they wanted to make it clear that the chancellor held the real executive power ([www.bundesregierung.de/frameset/index.jsp](http://www.bundesregierung.de/frameset/index.jsp)).

Executive and legislative power are fused. The chancellor and most members of the cabinet also are members of the Bundestag, and remain in office either as long as they have the confidence of the parliamentary majority or until their four-year terms end. Because of the powerful link between cabinet responsibility and party discipline in parliamentary systems, German chancellors have been able to see most of their policy proposals enacted without much interference from the Bundestag.

There are some differences between the role of the chancellor in Germany and that of the prime minister in other parliamentary systems. One is the unusual power the Basic Law grants to that office. In particular, Article 65 gives the chancellor the power “to determine the guidelines of policy” and to assume responsibility for defining the government's policy, resolving differences within the cabinet, and proposing virtually all major legislation.

The chancellor is subject to a constructive vote of no confidence. The opposition can throw a government out only if it simultaneously agrees on a new one to take its place. As a result, the chancellor is far less vulnerable than prime ministers in most parliamentary systems. In fact, this is one of the reasons most of the Greens (who opposed German involvement in the war against terrorism) did not vote “no confidence” in Schroeder's government in November 2001.

The chancellor's power is reinforced by a large Chancellor's Office with over five hundred employees. A staff that large gives the chancellor the opportunity to

coordinate the entire executive. Indeed, each Monday, the head of the Chancellor's Office (who holds cabinet rank) meets with the top civil servants in each department to do just that.

German governments are also more streamlined than most. Although the cabinet is of average size, most departments have only the minister and one other political appointee. In all, only about 8 percent of all Bundestag members (as opposed to 17 percent in Britain's House of Commons) serve in the government, thereby giving the chancellor considerably more ability to choose a leadership team. Ministers tend to serve unusually long terms in a single department and can thus develop more expertise than their British or French counterparts. Erhard, for instance, was economics minister from 1949 until he became chancellor in 1963. Similarly, Hans-Dietrich Genscher was foreign minister for nearly twenty years.

Much of the administrative work of cabinet ministers in France or Britain is conducted either by the states or by independent agencies. Cabinet ministers are, thus, free to spend more time planning rather than implementing public policy.

The chancellor, however, is not as powerful as the French president. The chancellor cannot, for instance, go to the public with a referendum, and the emergency powers available to the government are harder to invoke and far more limited. There is no German equivalent to the sweeping domain of regulation that allows the French government to rule by decree in many policy areas.

The chancellor's power is also less personalized. As in Britain, there is little room for an "outsider" to make it to the top on the basis of his or her personal popularity, despite Schoeder's meteoric rise prior to the 1998 election. Previously, at least, chancellor candidates progressed through their party's ranks, like British prime ministers, in careers in which negotiation and coalition building were among the most valued skills.

### *The Bundestag*

Like most legislatures in parliamentary systems, Germany's lower house, the **Bundestag**, has the formal power to pass legislation and select the prime minister ([www.bundestag.de/htdoes\\_e/index.html](http://www.bundestag.de/htdoes_e/index.html)). In practice, real power lies elsewhere. Because the chancellor is responsible to the Bundestag, he can expect his majority to hold up on any crucial vote, thus minimizing the actual impact the members of parliament can have on most legislation.

That does not mean that the Bundestag is powerless. Although the comparative evidence is sketchy at



AP/Wide World Photos (Sven Kaestner)

The old Reichstag building in Berlin, which became the new Bundestag building when the German capital was moved there from Bonn in 1999. The new illuminated dome, designed by a British architect, is a sign of how much more "European" Germany has become.

best, the Bundestag probably is a bit more powerful than the lower houses in Britain, France, or Japan.

For one thing, the Bundestag can play a pivotal role in determining who becomes chancellor. The peculiarities of the provisions of the constructive vote of no confidence have made it a significant (though not the most powerful) actor on a number of occasions when the parliamentary arithmetic was less than clear. The most important came in 1972, when the Brandt government did not have the popular support to pursue some important domestic reforms. Polls showed that if elections were held right away the coalition's support would increase substantially. The Basic Law, however, allows the chancellor to dissolve the Bundestag only if he loses its confidence and no alternative majority exists to take its place.

Brandt engineered that outcome by retaining the support of almost every SPD and FDP deputy but having seventeen of the eighteen cabinet members abstain, leaving the government one vote shy of a majority.

The Bundestag also has a far more powerful committee system than either the British House of Commons or the French National Assembly. There are twenty-one standing committees, each of which has several specialized subcommittees that discuss all pending legislation. Committee members and chairs are chosen on a proportional basis from each of the parties. Because individual members' votes are not made public, party discipline is far less strict in the committees than it is on the floor of the house.

The legislative committees are, however, considerably less powerful than their American equivalents. It is virtually impossible, for example, for them to drastically revise or kill a piece of legislation. Nonetheless, the committees propose amendments on most legislation, many of which are accepted by the government and the entire Bundestag.

The third source of Bundestag power lies in its organization. As in France and Britain, the Bundestag elects a speaker (president) and a broader leadership group (Council of Elders) that is responsible for organizing its schedule. In the Bundestag, however, comparatively more power is given to the party groups. Individual members have larger staffs to draw on for both clerical and research assistance, which allows them to develop something like the experience and expertise of many American senators and representatives.

### The Bundesrat



The most unusual aspect of the Federal Republic's legislative system is the **Bundesrat** ([www.bundesrat.de/english/index.html](http://www.bundesrat.de/english/index.html)). Most upper houses have lost any real power to affect either the composition of the government or the content of legislation.

That is not the case with the Bundesrat. This unusual upper house gives the sixteen states direct representation in the national government. The framers of the Basic Law saw it as yet another institution that could reduce the possibility of any future Nazi-like regime emerging by limiting the power the national government could exert, whoever ran it.

Each state has from 3 to 6 votes in the Bundesrat, for a total of 69. Officially, the state governments are represented by cabinet members. In practice, the demands of running a state are so great that they normally send senior civil servants instead.

Like most upper houses, the Bundesrat has no impact on the composition of the cabinet. Similarly, it can

**TABLE 6.5** State Government Coalitions, June 2001

COALITION	NUMBER OF STATES	NUMBER OF VOTES IN BUNDESRAT
Opposition (CDU and/or FDP)	6	28
SPD with an opposition party	4	15
SPD alone or with another left-of-center party	6	26

Source: Bundesrat web site, <http://www.bundesrat.de/Englisch/aktuell/Stimmen.html>, accessed 20 July 2001.

only delay enactment of laws that would not have a direct impact on the states. However, the Bundesrat must approve all "consent" legislation that affects the *laender*, which accounts for roughly half of all bills that come before it. When the two houses disagree, the Bundesrat convenes a Mediation Committee composed of members of both houses, which tries to iron out the differences.

The Bundesrat has vigorously defended state interests without being an exceptionally partisan or disruptive force. For most of the Federal Republic's history, the two houses have been dominated by the same parties, and so there have been few ideological disputes. In summer 2001, however, the situation was rather murky, as table 6.5 shows. The SPD on its own or in alliance with one or another of the other left or center parties was in power in states with only 26 of the 69 total votes, though it was expected to gain Berlin and its four seats before the year was out. The opposition actually controlled 28 votes in a total of six states. Finally, four states with 15 votes had governments run by coalitions that combined the SPD with the CDU (three) or FDP (one).

Given its current balance of power, the Bundesrat has served to moderate the proposals made by the Schroeder government. This was most evident in the new citizenship law, when likely opposition from the Bundesrat and the CDU led the government to submit a proposal that was far more restrictive than it had led voters to expect during the 1998 campaign.

### The Federal System

The Bundesrat is but one part of an unusual constitutional system for a parliamentary-based system. Most other countries, including Britain and France, are unitary states in which virtually all power is derived from the central government. The Basic Law, by contrast, divides responsibility between the national and state governments.

The national government has sole responsibility for matters that transcend state boundaries, such as foreign

policy, defense, issues involving German citizenship, economic policy, transportation, communication, and property rights. Everything else—including civil and criminal law, the organization of associations, broadcasting, welfare, mining, industry, banking, labor, education, highways, and health—is left to the states. The states also administer most federal law and have some leeway in determining how they do so.

But as in other federal systems, the balance of power has long been tilting toward the national government. Most of the important policy issues, including those we will focus on in the next section, are predominantly federal in nature. And even for many of those that are not federal, such as the mass media, the highways, and welfare programs, the federal government has imposed more uniform rules and procedures from state to state than one finds in the United States.

Over the years, the most important role of state politics has been as a source of national-level leaders. Kohl, Strauss, Brandt, and Schroeder all rose to power first at the state level. That is quite different from the situation in France or Britain, where the careers of major national leaders are shaped almost exclusively in Paris and London, respectively. In the mid-1990s, the states were also important because they provided opportunities to try out different types of governing coalitions that could eventually replace the CDU-FDP at the national level.

### *The Civil Service*

Although German legislators have larger staffs and more expertise than their French or British counterparts, they, too, are ill equipped to deal with the technical issues facing most governments today. As a result, bureaucrats there—as everywhere—are playing an increasingly influential role in policy making, as well as implementation.

Upper-level civil servants have long had a powerful, though not always positive, impact on German politics. In the early years of the Second Reich, only the chancellor was a political official. All the other members of the cabinet were drawn from the upper ranks of the civil service. In the Weimar period, the bureaucracy remained extremely conservative and was recruited primarily from the nobility. Most senior civil servants actively and voluntarily cooperated with the Nazis.

It was hardly surprising that de-Nazifying and democratizing the bureaucracy became one of the Allies' highest priorities after the war. In all, about 53,000 civil servants were purged before the British, French, and American authorities realized they needed a strong administrative service if the new republic they were creating was to get off the ground. With the onset of the cold

war, the de-Nazification and democratization programs were quickly ended. As a result, there was considerable continuity in both the operations and personnel of the prewar and postwar civil service.

The new civil service, however, differs significantly from the old one. Most notably, it is decentralized. Only about 10 percent of the top civil servants, or *Beamten*, work for the federal government.

Federal bureaucrats do relatively little administrative work, most of which is the responsibility of their counterparts at the state level. Instead, federal civil servants spend most of their time drafting legislation and regulations for their partisan bosses. Most civil servants accept their political role far more readily than do their British or American counterparts. Many, in fact, are open party members or sympathizers, and some have moved on to partisan political careers.

The civil service as a whole has largely escaped the daily battles of partisan politics, but there are two significant exceptions. In the aftermath of student protests and terrorist attacks in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the SPD government passed laws that severely restricted the entry of alleged radicals into the civil service at all levels, especially among the ranks of teachers and social workers. And after unification, many communist officials were purged in the east, especially in the education and foreign ministries.

### *The Constitutional Court*

Like the civil service of which they were a part, most judges before 1945 were conservatives who actively supported the Third Reich. In attempting to minimize the chances of a Nazi revival, American advisers advocated a revamped judiciary that would be more politically neutral but that could actively buttress the new democracy.

The most important part of the judicial system they and the framers of the Basic Law created is the **Constitutional Court**. Its two chambers or "senates" each have eight judges who serve nonrenewable twelve-year terms. Half are chosen by the Bundestag, and half by the Bundesrat. In each house, a two-thirds vote is required, which means that to be elected any judge has to be acceptable to some members of both major parties. In other words, although most of them have as clear a political identity as any U.S. Supreme Court justice, they have to have more broad-based support and thus more moderate views than many of the justices nominated by recent U.S. administrations.

The court has wide-ranging powers. It can hear cases involving the constitutionality of state and federal law. Through the process of abstract review, an issue can

go directly from the parliament to the court without any legal proceedings ever being started.

The court has had a hand in almost all important policy areas involving all aspects of the Basic Law, including these:

- Ruled that the Communist Party and the neo-Nazi Reichs Party were illegal under the provisions of the Basic Law concerning political parties (1952)
- Determined that the Adenauer government could not establish a second, nationally directed television network because the Basic Law gives states responsibility for the media (1961)
- Upheld the treaty with the DDR that was the cornerstone of Brandt's opening of relations between the Federal Republic and the countries of the Soviet bloc (1973)
- Largely upheld the provisions designed to keep "radicals" out of the civil service and required new federal and state employees to affirm their loyalty to the Federal Republic (1975)
- Overturned the liberal abortion law passed by the SPD-FDP government (1975)
- Upheld the codetermination law that gives workers nearly half the seats on the boards of directors of large firms (1979)
- Determined that the first elections in the newly unified Germany had to be conducted using a modified version of the two-tiered electoral system with separate allocation of seats in the west and east (1990)
- Made almost all abortions illegal (1993)

### *Corporatism*

Corporatism is the last—and perhaps most important—component of the policy-making process. It is not mentioned in the Basic Law. Nonetheless, as in many countries, informal procedures can be more influential than any constitutional provisions in determining what actually happens.

The word *corporatism* itself is one of the most controversial in modern political science. Its origins lie in nineteenth-century Catholic thought. It was later taken over by the fascists to describe the sham legislatures they created in which major interests or "corporations" were supposedly represented. In other words, when scholars first began using corporatism to describe these close relationships between the state and interest groups, their very choice of terms conveyed the strength of their reservations about such arrangements.

Scholars also have not used the term very precisely. There are dozens of definitions of corporatism, most of which revolve around the broad cooperation of highly centralized business and labor organizations with the government in setting economic policy. Typically, corporatist negotiations take place behind closed doors, and neither political parties nor backbenchers have much of a role in them. Rather, cabinet members and, even more importantly, high-level civil servants serve as brokers to help the interest groups reach agreements, which are then accepted as binding by everyone involved.

Germany has used corporatist procedures more than any of the other countries covered in this book. That said, they were used on an official basis only when the SPD was first in government and helped orchestrate the **Concerted Action** meetings that brought business, government, and labor together from 1966 until 1977. Concerted Action was originally instituted by the CDU-SPD grand coalition as part of its efforts to end the Federal Republic's first recession. Over the next three years, groups met several times a year and reached sweeping agreements about wage and price increases, broad macroeconomic and social policy issues, and the landmark 1967 law on balanced growth. Once the CDU went into opposition and the post-OPEC economic slump hit, the discussions became more acrimonious and less productive. They were scrapped in 1977 when union officials refused to participate following the decision by several industrial associations to challenge the codetermination law (to be discussed shortly) before the Constitutional Court.

Since then, there has been far less formal corporatist decision making, especially at the macroeconomic level. One should not, however, make too much of its decline because, on balance, the most important practices have always been based on informal ties between the bureaucracy and the business community. Indeed, it is often said that the Economics Ministry sees itself as the *Anwalt*, or attorney-spokesman, for industry. The ministries' planning staffs cooperate with business and labor in trying to determine what their goals could and should be for the next five years or more. Because the states administer most federal policy, they also collect most of the data. Therefore, when federal civil servants need information, they often simply turn to the business associations with which they have developed close relationships over the years.

Informal corporatist arrangements also build on the consensus that exists between business and labor on basic economic priorities. At first, the DGB shared the SPD's desire for socialism. However, as the "economic miracle" unfolded, the unions, too, made their peace

with capitalism and began concentrating on demands for a bigger share of the expanding economy for their members instead.

Labor's biggest contribution today comes through Germany's unique system of **codetermination**, which gives unions half the seats on the boards of directors of all companies with more than two thousand employees. The workers' representatives are not quite as powerful as those named by the owners. The law reserves one of the union seats for someone representing management employees and automatically gives the chair of the board to ownership.

Codetermination is but one part of a relatively peaceful system of labor-management relations that has endured throughout the postwar period. Unions traditionally have been willing to sacrifice short-term wage gains in exchange for job security and long-term corporate growth from which they benefit. All firms have works councils that bring employees and management together to discuss job-related issues. Elaborate rules exist that help regularize and harmonize worker-management relations, including one that requires bosses to send flowers to any employee who has been out sick for more than six weeks.

Thus, codetermination is part of a system of industrial relations that is less adversarial than that found in any other liberal democracy. Although there has been some tension between the two sides over the years, union-management relations are usually cordial and cooperative. One union official who serves on the board of a major corporation put it this way:

**It is true that relations have become a little more conflictual nowadays, owing to lower growth and higher unemployment. But basically, we still believe that it is by cooperating with management, rather than fighting it, that we stand the best chance of securing better pay and working conditions—and the results prove it. What is more, as we see it, our obligation is not just to our own members or to other workers but to German society as a whole, where we must play an active role in upholding democracy and the rule of law. We're part of the establishment and proud of it. We're certainly not revolutionaries; we do not want to overthrow capitalism but to reform it from inside, in a more "social" direction, within the social market economy.<sup>5</sup>**

Finally, until recent changes shook up the industry, Germany's banks helped set and coordinate economic

policy. The three main private banks—Deutsche, Dresdner, and Commerz—own about 10 percent of all the stock in Germany's leading industrial and commercial firms. For example, Deutsche Bank owns more than a quarter of the German-held stock in Daimler-Chrysler. It has a similar stake in another fifteen major companies. In addition, depositors give the banks their proxies for their individual shares, leaving the banks with de facto control of almost all major firms. Thus, a relatively small number of bank officials can work with a similarly small number of colleagues in the public sector to coordinate much economic policy.

Many observers also argued that the **Bundesbank** was Germany's most powerful political institution until the EU's central bank took over many of its functions in 1998. Technically not part of the government, the bank worked closely with the cabinet for fifty years following its formation in 1948. In particular, it single-mindedly sought to use interest rates and other financial levers to keep inflation down and thereby help the country avoid one of the main problems that led to the collapse of the Weimar Republic. It is widely assumed that German influence will ensure that the new European Central Bank plays a similar role now that the euro has replaced the deutsche mark and ten other national currencies.

Corporatism is not an unmixed blessing.

Though less so than was the case under the fascists, corporatist systems underrepresent labor. Compared with what we saw in France or Britain, labor has fared rather well in Germany. But even so, it has only approached being an equal partner during the first few years the SPD was in power in the early 1970s.

Labor is not the only group to get short shrift. The consensus and the neocorporatist arrangements are limited to issues of industrial and economic growth. Groups concerned with issues such as women's rights, immigrant workers, and the growing elderly population, which emerged with postmaterial politics and citizens' initiatives beginning in the 1970s, are not part of the corporatist system.

Chapter 3 outlined two versions of liberal democracy. The American presidential system makes it relatively easy for organized groups to influence the decision-making process between elections. The fusion of legislature and executive in parliamentary systems provides a sharper link between party programs and the policies the government enacts, making elections themselves an effective way for a majority of the public to voice its opinions and, in turn, shape subsequent public policy making.

Corporatism poses problems for either version. Decision making takes place behind closed doors and

<sup>5</sup>Quoted in John Ardagh, *Germany and the Germans: After Unification* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 125.

involves bureaucrats, not the elected officials over whom the voting public has some degree of control.

None of this is to say that Germany or the other relatively corporatized countries are not democratic, in the sense most political scientists use the term. However, the realities of corporatism reveal one of the great trade-offs of German politics today. There is little question that these cooperative arrangements have helped Germany become one of the world's leading economic and political powers, something we will see in more detail in the rest of the chapter. And they will probably be revived with the new SPD-led government to help pull the country out of its recent economic difficulties. Yet that success has come at the cost of substantial popular participation in the setting of economic policy.

### Public Policy: Modell Deutschland

The SPD-Green coalition came to power in 1998, the year after left-of-center governments took office in London and Paris. In those other countries, the new governments immediately advanced dramatic new policy initiatives, including welfare reform and devolution in Britain and the thirty-five-hour work week and the parity law in France.

Even though the SPD had been out of office for sixteen years and the Greens had never been in power above the state level, the key to the Schroeder government's public policy has been continuity, not change. But there have been some important stylistic differences. Schroeder, Fischer, and the others are flashier politicians than the formal and stoic Kohl. The capital has moved from Bonn to Berlin, which allows the government to act with more fanfare and gravitas than it could when it ruled from a dull, provincial town.

However, when it comes to economics and unification—the two key policy concerns of any German government since 1990—it is surprising how little things have changed. And, to the degree that they have, the SPD has followed a more promarket strategy than its supposedly more capitalist rivals in the CDU under Kohl.

### *The Social Market Economy*

Germany has not always been one of the world's richest countries. In 1951 GNP per capita stood at \$500 a year, or about a fourth that of the United States. By the end of the 1980s, it had drawn even with the United States on most major economic indicators. Only Japan's economy has grown at a faster pace since the end of World War II. And, unlike during the interwar years, Germany was able

to keep its inflation and unemployment rates among the lowest in the world.

As was the case with the Gaullists in France, public policy has not been the only cause of this remarkable track record. Germany's recovery got a needed boost from \$4.4 billion in Marshall Plan aid and the influx of 14 million refugees from the east who helped keep labor costs down. Since the late 1940s, Germany has done well, too, because its companies produce high-quality goods that are in demand in the international marketplace. This is why, for instance, BMW and Mercedes-Benz sell far more cars than Cadillac does in Japan.

Still, the state has played an extremely important role in Germany's turnaround. Since the 1950s, the government has followed remarkably consistent and successful economic policies, which were formalized in the 1967 law that obliges the state to pursue policies that maintain stable prices, full employment, adequate growth, and a positive balance of trade.

More than have French policymakers, the German elite has also understood that the route to economic growth lies in international trade and investment more than through attempts to capture a larger share of a relatively small domestic market. As a result, Germany has Europe's most globally oriented economy. It exports more goods and services than any other country in the world on a per capita basis. Its exports account for more than a quarter of all trade within the EU. Its currency dominated the EU for two decades and, in many respects, is the foundation on which the euro has been built.

The key here is not so much economic performance as the consistent role of the state in promoting it, which we can see by considering the last two alternations in power—the beginning of the Kohl and Schroeder governments, respectively.

Margaret Thatcher, François Mitterrand, and Helmut Kohl took office in the aftermath of the second oil shock of the 1970s, which was a period of sluggish and intermittent growth. As we saw in the last two chapters, Thatcher and Mitterrand enacted sweeping reforms they thought would help their countries cope with these deteriorating conditions.

Under Kohl, by contrast, there was more continuity than change. Rather than embarking on a radical Thatcher-esque restructuring of the economy, Kohl advocated minor reductions in government spending to make more funds available for private investment in order to re-create one of the conditions that had led to the economic miracle of the pre-OPEC years.

Also unlike the British and French policies, Kohl's seemed to work. By 1986 the budget deficit had been cut by two-thirds, and inflation had been all but eliminated.

Industrial production increased by an average of 15 percent per year. The fact that half of Germany's exports were bought by its European partners made it the country that benefited the most from the creation of the single European market.

That economic success can perhaps best be seen in the standard of living its citizens enjoy. The average industrial worker makes about \$30 per hour in wages and nearly as much again in fringe benefits and social services. Most workers also earn the equivalent of another month's wages in annual Christmas bonuses. Until France passed its thirty-five-hour work week, the Germans worked the shortest hours and enjoyed the most vacation time (forty-two working days a year) in Europe. Most are able to afford large cars, which they drive as fast as they want on the country's superhighways that effectively have no speed limits. There is little poverty, and all Germans benefit from the most extensive social service system in Europe.

Since the early 1990s, Germany's performance has not been as impressive. In part, that reflects the economic costs of unification, which we will consider shortly. In part, too, the last decade has seen some of Germany's past strengths turn into weaknesses.

Economic growth has lagged behind that in France and Britain since the late 1990s. Unemployment has averaged at least 10 percent per year for the last decade. Exports slumped until the value of the deutsche mark began to decline with the official launch of the euro.

On one level, these are problems Germany shares with the other industrialized democracies. The heavy industries Germany has specialized in, like automobiles and steel, are in trouble because of stiff competition from Japan and, increasingly, the NICs (newly industrializing countries), where labor costs are dramatically lower.

That competition, in turn, is a symptom of the broader trend toward globalization in the international political economy. No country has ever been totally self-sufficient. However, in the past generation or two, the balance of economic power has shifted away from national decisionmakers to global currency and financial markets, the EU, and the board rooms of corporations that are themselves more and more international in character.

No one has yet figured out how to measure the effect of these global forces on individual countries with any degree of precision. Nonetheless, it is clear that they have hit Germany particularly hard in large part because the social partnership between business and labor, and the social market economy as a whole, have proved so resistant to change, whoever is in power. Labor costs, in particular, have remained high, making it harder and

## Liberalization in Germany

**LIBERALIZATION POLICY in Germany can be broken into two components. In the west, there has been relatively little liberalization, because the government owned relatively little of the economy. Although the two main state-owned industries—Deutsche Post and Deutsche Telekom—are being privatized, the key issue in western Germany is not the ownership of industry, but the intricate system of regulation, which remains largely in place.**

**The situation is very different in the east. There, the regime owned virtually the entire economy before it collapsed (see chapter 9). Unlike some of the other former communist countries in eastern Europe, however, Germany quickly reached a consensus on the need to privatize state-owned firms as soon as possible, a task that it accomplished by the middle of the 1990s.**

harder for German firms to export their goods. Yet both unions and management are reluctant to trade the labor peace they have had for two generations in an attempt to create more efficient businesses.

It is in that economic context that Schroeder came to power. In fact, the SPD won in 1998 largely because of public dissatisfaction with the economic doldrums of the later Kohl years.

As was the case with Kohl, however, Schroeder did not advocate major reforms. Even if he had wanted to, the DGB probably could have blocked drastic reductions in either social service programs or wages.

That said, Schroeder's government has enacted some reforms that, ironically, have tended to move the economy more toward the free market than toward socialism. For instance, it has begun the process of privatizing the telephone and telecommunications monopolies, the two major state-owned industries. It has begun privatizing part of the pension system as a first step toward reducing the cost of social services, which account for fully a third of Germany's GNP. There has been some loosening of regulations on bank lending and the management of businesses to make it easier for entrepreneurs to create the small and medium-sized companies that have fueled much of the economic growth in the United States, France, and Britain since the mid-1990s.

## Unification

Most chapters in this book include a section on foreign policy as one of the ways to demonstrate the state in action. Foreign policy is important in Germany, especially



Crowds scaling the Berlin Wall following the DDR announcement that it would no longer restrict travel to the west.

© Reuters/Bettmann/Corbis

now that it is by far the most powerful country in Europe. However, I chose to focus on unification instead in this chapter for three reasons. First, unification has significantly slowed Germany's economic growth and raised the possibility of serious political disruption. Second, even though Germany has had a hard time coping with the social and economic implications of unification, it actually is likely to make the country even stronger in the long run. Finally, unification provides yet another example of German adaptation to changing circumstances.

The Basic Law was not called a constitution because the Federal Republic's founders expected that the two Germanys would eventually be reunited. For forty years, its leading politicians in the west (but not those in the DDR) consistently called for unification, but no one realistically expected it to happen until the remarkable events of 1989 unfolded.

As we will see in more detail in chapter 9, reform movements swept through Poland and Hungary that spring, culminating in the Hungarian decision to dismantle the barbed wire "iron curtain" along its border with Austria. An average of five thousand East German "vacationers" a day streamed across the border past not very diligent border guards. In September, Hungary gave up even the pretence of policing the border. The DDR

then closed its border with Hungary, but East Germans anxious to head west found another way out through Czechoslovakia.

On September 25, the first of what turned out to be weekly mass rallies demanding political reform took place in the East German city of Leipzig. In October, the DDR celebrated the regime's fortieth anniversary, which Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev attended. During his visit, it became increasingly clear that the East German regime was in deep trouble and could not meet either domestic demands or Soviet pressures for a German equivalent of *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

Shortly thereafter, the Communist Party's elite forced the aging and intransigent Erich Honecker to resign and replaced him with the younger, but still hard-line, Egon Krenz. Krenz could do nothing to stop either the protests or the flood of DDR citizens fleeing to the west. On 9 November, Krenz gave in. All travel restrictions were lifted, and that evening, people began tearing down the Berlin Wall. In less than a month, Krenz resigned, and his successor, Hans Modrow, began planning free elections for the spring. The Federal Republic's parties moved into the east and took over the campaign.

Only then did Kohl seriously back rapid unification. He apparently first raised the idea in a telephone con-

versation with Krenz two days after the wall came down. From then on, Kohl's goal was to incorporate the DDR into the Federal Republic as five new states, under Article 2 of the Basic Law rather than through Article 146, which would have required the negotiation of a whole new constitution subject to a referendum. He also proposed that the all-but-worthless East German marks be exchanged for deutsche marks on a one-for-one basis. Finally, he insisted that newly united Germany remain in NATO and the EC.

At that point, rapid unification still seemed unlikely given Soviet objections to a unified Germany's membership in NATO. But even those objections were quickly overcome. In March 1990, Kohl's supporters won an overwhelming victory in the east's first and only free election, which made negotiations with the west a lot easier. Meanwhile, with strong encouragement from the Bush administration, the Soviet government agreed to join "four plus two" talks, which brought the four former occupying powers and the two Germanys to the bargaining table.

By early summer 1990 the two Germanys had agreed to unify economically on 1 July. In September the Soviets agreed to German membership in NATO after the Germans formally accepted the boundaries drawn after World War II and committed themselves to spending \$8 billion to send the 340,000 Soviet troops stationed in East Germany home, build housing for them, and retrain them for civilian jobs. On 4 October the two countries were politically united. In December Bundestag elections were held throughout the country that confirmed the CDU in power.

Before continuing, it is worth underscoring the most important point here. Most of the steps that made unification possible were taken in East Berlin and Moscow rather than Bonn. When the federal government acted decisively, it did so on the basis of a broad consensus. Only the Greens and a handful of intellectuals, including the novelist Günter Grass, opposed unification. The SPD preferred a slower pace using Article 146, but it still supported the idea of unification. In short, as in domestic policy, the German government acted reactively more than proactively and took bold steps only after achieving a broad consensus.

Unification, however, did present new challenges that could not be met using the incremental policy making that German governments had used since the 1960s, if not before. Almost everything in the east was substandard—workforce training; environmental conditions; the highway, rail, and telecommunications infrastructure; factory equipment; and housing. Only 7 percent of DDR households had a telephone, and there were only a

## Globalization and Germany

**SO FAR, globalization has affected Germany less than the other European democracies. Despite the costs of unification, its companies and its currency (until the launch of the Euro) remain the strongest in Europe.**

**That said, Germany is by no means immune from global pressures. In particular, its high labor costs make its goods increasingly hard to sell abroad. And some of its legal restrictions have forced its companies to do some cutting-edge work abroad. For example, the Basic Law and constitutional court decisions have made the destruction of embryos for stem cell research illegal. This does not mean that German firms do not engage in that research; they simply do it in Britain or France, where there are no such restrictions.**

few hundred lines that could handle international calls—including those to the Federal Republic. Per capita income in the east was a quarter that in the west, and productivity was a third that of the Federal Republic. Economists estimated that it would take up to \$100 billion to modernize the rail system alone and determined that no more than 20 percent of eastern enterprises could survive in a competitive market economy.

Therefore, the Federal Republic adopted policies to make the transition as rapid as possible, even if doing so would cause hardship in the short run. A new agency, the *Treuhandanstalt*—or **Treuhand** for short—was created to supervise the privatization of East German firms. Until they could be sold, the state-owned industries were subjected to the same market forces operating in the west, including the possibility of unemployment for workers and bankruptcy for the firm. All western wage, social service, and labor laws took effect immediately, except for the granting of a year's protection from unemployment for workers in the largest factories.

The economic results were painful indeed. A year after unification, industrial production in the east was down by 70 percent. Unemployment had risen to 3.5 million in a workforce of 8.5 million. The Treuhand discovered that it could not easily sell off antiquated industries even though the federal government offered a 40 percent tax credit for firms that invested in the east. Even when buyers could be found, they faced colossal challenges. BASF, for instance, bought a reasonably modern eastern chemical firm only to discover major environmental problems, a 74,000-person workforce that would have to be cut in half, and a management filled with former Communist Party apparatchiks. What's more, there was not much of a market for the factory's good, because its

primary outlet had been the former Soviet Union, which could no longer pay for the chemicals.

More than a decade after unification, the east remains an economic burden for the west. The federal government has sent an average of over \$100 billion a year to the east in aid and subsidies—the equivalent of 40 percent of the former DDR's GNP. This has had a tangible impact on westerners' lifestyles, because the government imposed a 7.5 percent increase in the income tax and what amounted to a 55¢ additional tax on gasoline.

In the late 1990s, however, economic conditions in the east began to improve. The Treuhand, having sold off all the viable companies, was disbanded. By 2000 unemployment had fallen to 17 percent, only 10 percent more than in the west. Per capita income had topped \$16,000 a year, almost twice what it was at the time of unification.

Integrating the east is not merely an economic challenge. Although most DDR citizens had been able to watch television shows and listen to radio broadcasts from the west for many years, they were largely isolated from the political and, even more, the cultural trends that remade the west after 1945. Most had never experienced a market economy or lived in a democracy, and have had a hard time adapting to them. There has been a backlash against the loss of guaranteed housing, employment, and other services, which were eliminated.

Perhaps the most important long-term obstacle to effective unification is what many Germans call the "wall in the mind." Other terms used to describe the difficulties in combining the *ossis* (people from the east) and *wessis* (people from the west) include "united but not together" and "sharing a bathroom with a stranger." Most observers are surprised at how different the two societies had grown despite having been separated for only forty-five years. Westerners are increasingly resentful of the economic costs of unification, which has come at the cost of their own standard of living. On the other side of the psychological border, a 2000 poll found that only 16 percent of the *ossis* felt "solidarity" with their fellow citizens in the west.

## Feedback

Like their counterparts in Britain and France, Germans have access to a variety of sources of information about politics. Also like their counterparts, few take much advantage of them.

Germany's newspapers have surprisingly small circulations. The five main "quality" dailies sold only 157,000 to 405,000 copies a day at the end of 1997. As in Britain and France, they each have clear, traditional po-

litical leanings. However, as the 1998 election neared, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (known to friends and foes alike as *FAZ*) was unusually critical of the Kohl government it had long supported. The CDU has also been able to count on support from the Axel Springer media empire, with its high-quality daily *Die Welt* and Germany's main tabloid, *Bild*. But they, too, were more critical of Kohl in 1998, perhaps sensing that their readers were ready for a change. Finally, most of the six major weeklies have been more critical of the CDU and Kohl than they were in the mid-1990s.

Germans have more locally produced television options than people in Britain or France do. Subscribers to the ASTRA satellite system (cable is much less well developed than direct satellite broadcasting in Europe) can receive upwards of twenty German-language stations. The most popular private station (SAT 1) was more supportive of Kohl than the state-owned ones (ARD, ZDF) were, and it is widely believed that it played a major role in the CDU's reelection in 1994. Kohl himself was never very effective on television and has never hidden his dislike of journalists (he once quipped that there were photographers and then there were human beings). There is an all-news channel and another channel that resembles C-SPAN, but they are not very popular. The one event that does usually draw a large audience is the so-called "elephant round table," or debate among the party leaders, which occurs in the last few days before a Bundestag election.

## Conclusion: Democratization

Throughout the rest of the book, we will be asking why some countries develop stable, flourishing democracies and others do not. Germany's remarkable history since 1945 provides two insights to keep in mind as we examine countries that have had a more troubled experience.

First, Germany suffered a traumatic defeat in World War II. That loss and the horrors of the Third Reich as a whole forced millions of Germans to question many of their basic values. As a result, German culture changed from stressing authoritarianism to endorsing democratic values as rapidly as any in history. This may not be possible in most other countries.

Second, and more encouraging for other countries, democracy began to take hold before the cultural change had begun. During the economic miracle, people started to accept democracy because it worked. It provided them with tangible benefits—most notably, the prosperity and security offered by the social market economy.



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## Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of German politics presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the "right direction" or is on the "wrong track." If you were asked such a question about Germany, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?
3. Democracy in Germany developed much more slowly and far more tumultuously than in France, let alone the United States or Great Britain. Indeed, Germany's difficulties extended far beyond Nazism and the Third Reich. Why was that the case?
4. How does Germany's troubled history still affect its political culture and the rest of its political life today?
5. The German party system is very different from the one under the Weimar Republic. What historical and institutional factors contributed to those changes?
6. How do federalism and corporatism make decision making in Germany different from what we find in other democracies?

## Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Basic Law	Adenauer, Konrad	CDU	Bundesbank
Chancellor democracy	Bismarck, Otto von	DDR	Bundesrat
Codetermination			
Concerted Action	Brandt, Willy	DGB	Bundestag
Constructive vote of no confidence	Fischer, Joska	FDP	Christian Democratic Union
Corporatism	Hitler, Adolf	NPD	Constitutional Court
Faulted society	Kohl, Helmut	NSDAP	Federal Republic of Germany
Führer	Merkel, Angela	PDS	Federation of German Labor
German question			
Grand coalition	Schmidt, Helmut	SPD	Free Democratic Party
Laender	Schroeder, Gerhard		German Democratic Republic
Modell Deutschland			Greens
Proportional representation			Law for Promoting Stability and Growth in the Economy
Reparations			National Democratic Party
			Nazis
			Party of Democratic Socialism
			Social Democratic Party
			Treuhand
			Weimar Republic

7. How has the operation of the German state contributed to its economic success throughout the postwar period and also to its difficulties since 1990?

8. Why has unification proved to be more of a burden than many expected in 1990?

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# THE EUROPEAN UNION

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- New Money and More
- Thinking About the EU
- The Evolution of the EU
- Political Culture and Participation in the EU
- The European State?
- Public Policy in the EU
- Feedback
- Conclusion: A Balance Sheet

0 250 500 Miles  
0 350 700 Kilometers



*Over the longer term, the institutions and powers of the [Union] will continue to expand and certain policy-making powers, heretofore vested in the member states, will be delegated or transferred to, or pooled and shared with, [Union] institutions. As a result, the sovereignty of the member states will increasingly and inevitably be eroded.*

DAVID CAMERON

## New Money and More

On 1 January 2002, twelve European countries abandoned their own currency and adopted the euro. Some of the old currencies, including the French franc and the Dutch guilder, had been used for centuries and were viewed by citizens and foreigners alike as important symbols of national unity. Never before had so many governments given up their own currency—and the economic and political power that goes with it.

The euro had actually been in existence for two years. In 2000, euro-denominated bank accounts came into existence, and many electronic international transactions were conducted using the virtual version of the currency.

What made the first day of 2002 important was the fact that average citizens got to use the new bills and coins. The day began a three-month transition period during which people could use both their old francs, drachmas, and so on, and the new euro. But change was given in euros, and ATM machines spit out only euros. And, by 1 April, stores and offices would only accept euros, though people (including tourists) will be allowed to convert old currencies at banks for the indefinite future.

This was an important economic move. To cite but the most obvious consequence, if a person toured all the **European Union (EU)** member countries and exchanged money in each one, he or she would be left with \$.51 of every dollar after paying commissions and other fees. Perhaps more importantly in economic terms, the euro and the rest of monetary policy will be administered through a new European Central Bank, which will

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## THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE BASICS

Country	Date of Accession
Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands	1957
Denmark, Great Britain, Ireland	1972/73
Greece	1981
Portugal, Spain	1986
Austria, Finland, Sweden	1995

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have the same kind of clout as the Federal Reserve Bank in the United States or the old Bundesbank in Germany. In so doing, it solidifies Europe's position as a potential economic rival to the United States. (See table 7.1.)

But, in the long run, the most important impact of the euro may be on people's values. During the weeks before the launch of the euro, the *Washington Post's* T. R. Reid traveled from one end of Europe to the other. He found surprising signs of the growing interconnectedness of the member states, from the increased use of English as a common language to the widely popular lunch of a sandwich made from a quarter of a baguette.

Most of all, though, Reid encountered people who were beginning to think of themselves as "Europeans." Someone from the northernmost part of Finland told him, "I am Finn, in Lapland, but now feeling European." Similarly, someone from Portugal (as far as one can get from Lapland and still be in the EU) said, "I am a European who lives in Portugal. There is a mentality now that rivalry is disappearing, and we are all part of the same Europe."<sup>1</sup>

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## Thinking About the EU

### *What's in a Name?*

As was the case with Great Britain, we have to start by clarifying what we will discuss in this chapter. Uncertainty over which label to use—not to mention all the accompanying acronyms—can make studying the EU confusing indeed. In this chapter, four different ones will be used:

- The EEC (European Economic Community), established by the Treaty of Rome in 1957

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<sup>1</sup>T. R. Reid, "Common Currency Builds on Common Culture," *Washington Post*, 1 Jan. 2002, A1, A9.



Euro bills and coins, introduced on 1 January 2002.

- The Common Market, a term informally applied to the EEC by pundits and politicians, and still sometimes used today
- The EC (European Community), adopted in 1965 once its functions expanded beyond economics
- The EU (European Union), the name of all the institutions gathered under the EC's umbrella according to the 1991 Maastricht Treaty on European Union (TEU)

### Who's In? Who's Out?

In 2002 the EU had fifteen member states. France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg signed the Treaty of Rome and became charter members in 1957. Britain, Ireland, and Denmark entered in 1972/73, but the Norwegian electorate voted against membership in a referendum. Greece joined in 1981, and Spain and Portugal followed suit five years later. Finland, Austria, and Sweden became members in 1995. Fourteen other countries have filed applications for membership, and the first of them could begin the process of joining by the end of 2002. That leaves only Norway and Switzerland among the major European countries with no current interest in "acceding" to the EU.

The fifteen member countries have 375 million residents, or roughly 100 million more than the United States. Their combined gross domestic product for 2000 was about \$600 billion more than that of the United States, though in terms of average purchasing power, the Europeans had only about two-thirds of the average American's disposable income. Still, the EU is an economic powerhouse, generating about 30 percent of all international trade in the 1990s.

**TABLE 7.1** The EU and the United States

	THE EU	THE UNITED STATES
<b>Population in Millions</b>	378	284
<b>GDP in Billions of Dollars</b>	7,837	9,896
<b>Percentage Growth in GDP, 1999–2000</b>	3.3	5.0
<b>Imports as Percentage of GDP</b>	12.2	12.9
<b>Exports as Percentage of GDP</b>	10.9	7.9

Source: T. R. Reid, "Common Currency Builds on Common Culture," *Washington Post*, 1 Jan. 2002, A9.

The EU also has many of the trappings of a state. Its flag of fifteen yellow stars on a blue background flies from official buildings. This is also a common logo in advertisements, and you can get it emblazoned on T-shirts and umbrellas (I have one of each). The EU has a capital city—actually cities, because various offices are headquartered in Brussels, Luxembourg, and Strasbourg (France). Most major world powers have an embassy dedicated to relations with the EU in Brussels that is typically larger and more prestigious than the one to Belgium itself. And with the introduction of the euro, the EU has one of the most important attributes of a state—its own currency.

### Three Pillars

As the history of its name suggests, many people mistakenly think of the EU as an economic organization. Although it is true that it began as a trading bloc, its founders always intended it to be much more than that. Since its creation, the EU has gained other powers to the point that observers now speak of **three pillars**, or spheres, of activity:

- Its traditional involvement in trade and other economic matters
- Cooperation in justice and home affairs (JHA)
- The desire to create a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which is the most visionary and controversial aspect of the EU today

### Key Questions

Long ago, political scientists erected an intellectual firewall between comparative politics and international relations. The former deals with politics within states, and the latter with the interactions among them.

In retrospect, it never made sense to treat the two parts of the discipline separately. States have always had

to deal with problems arising outside their borders. Similarly, domestic political dynamics have always factored heavily in determinations of what states can do internationally.

Whatever the situation was in the past, today it is all but impossible to keep international relations out of comparative politics, and vice versa—which is, after all, the idea behind this book's subtitle. Nowhere is this easier to see than in the EU and the way it limits what its member states can do in formulating economic and other policies. Those issues lurked below the surface in the last three chapters, and now we will address them directly by asking the same basic questions of the EU that are being posed for nation-states:

- How and why did the EU emerge?
- What is its political culture, and how does it shape the way people participate in its political life?
- What are its main decision-making bodies?
- What are its critical public policy initiatives?
- How do the European people learn about and react to that policy?

This chapter will also be more than merely another description of a governing body. It will also provide a first glimpse at the trends indicating that we are entering a new period in political history in which the nation-state may no longer be the only or even the primary unit we should focus on. It is very much an open question whether the EU and other supranational organizations will gain much more power, and it is highly unlikely that they will replace the nation-state in the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, the EU forces us to think of political life as a multilevel phenomenon and to cross the traditional divide between international relations and comparative politics. Indeed, the EU is now powerful enough that it has a greater impact on economic life in Britain, France, or Germany than do the national governments discussed in the last three chapters.

That said, do not read too much into the pages that follow. Despite its statelike attributes, the EU is far from being a state. For one thing, it lacks the monopoly over the legitimate use of force that, most political scientists argue, makes a state a state.

What's more, movement toward a more integrated Europe has not occurred at a steady pace. Rather, it has progressed in a series of fits and starts, with bursts of growth followed by longer periods of stagnation filled with doubt and criticism. This holds both for the **broadening** (adding new members) and the **deepening** (adding new powers) of European institutions.

At the same time, the EU is more “advanced” in some policy areas than are other international organizations. For example, the EU has the authority to make and enforce most economic policies where its jurisdiction supercedes that of the member states. But such supranational powers are nowhere near as fully developed in other areas, including the provision of social services and education. On those issues, the member states continue to hold most of the power.

## The Evolution of the EU

As we saw in chapters 3–6, it took centuries of often protracted conflict to create the modern state. This has not been the case for the EU. Rather, European integration is a recent phenomenon that has been all but exclusively the handiwork of political, technical, and economic elites ([www.let.leidenuniv.nl/history/rtg/resi](http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/history/rtg/resi)).



### *Not Such a New Idea*

The idea of uniting Europe has been around at least since ancient Roman times. Leaders from Julius Caesar to Adolf Hitler have tried to make it happen through force, but without lasting success.

In the aftermath of World War I, some politicians and intellectuals began to look to international organization as a possible solution to the wars that had wracked the continent for centuries. Even as the League of Nations was created and many countries signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which formally abolished war, groups of young activists began organizing support for a united Europe, which they also assumed would be a peaceful Europe.

The outbreak of World War II put an abrupt end to their efforts. In the longer term, however, the war only strengthened the Europeanists' cause. Resistance movements developed in the countries the Germans occupied. Most were led by people who had few ties to the discredited prewar regimes, anticipated the creation of new and improved institutions once the fighting ended, and realized that Europeans simply could not afford to keep fighting each other.

A small group of them met in neutral Switzerland to discuss a document that called for a **supranational** government directly responsible to the European people. It would have its own military, which would replace the national armies. And an international court would settle disputes between national governments.

## JEAN MONNET



Jean Monnet giving a radio address on European Union.

Jean Monnet (1888–1979) was a remarkable man. In his long career, he was everything from a brandy salesman to the primary architect of both the French economic planning system and European integration. In a professional life that spanned two world wars (which, perhaps not coincidentally, he could not fight in because of ill health), he came to see the need to replace the carnage resulting from trench warfare and blitzkrieg with a new kind of transnational economic cooperation.

After World War II he dedicated his energies to reconstruction and peace through planning and integration, which he saw as inseparable parts of the same whole. Among the few official positions he held was president of the European Coal and Steel Community from its founding until 1955. He spent the next twenty years trying to create a true United States of Europe. Monnet died at age ninety (so much for ill health) without seeing his broader dream realized but having left an indelible mark on his continent and the world.

By the end of the war, the Europeanists had split into two camps. Whereas the federalists wanted to create that Europe-wide government, the functionalists preferred acting in one area (or on one function) at a time, building momentum for further integration along the way.

As it turned out, neither side got its way. The outbreak of the cold war in the late 1940s made security the paramount issue on both sides of the iron curtain. The tensions between East and West magnified the need to reconstruct the war-ravaged economies and strengthen the new regimes in Germany, France, and Italy. Conventional politicians returned to center stage, eclipsing Europeanist visionaries like **Jean Monnet** in France and **Paul-Henri Spaak** in Belgium.

Nonetheless, the first important steps toward integration did occur in the late 1940s as unintended by-products of the early cold war. The United States decided that it would not allot **Marshall Plan** aid to individual governments. Instead, it chose to distribute the money through the OEEC (Organization for European Economic Cooperation), the predecessor to today's OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). The OEEC had limited powers and thus did not satisfy either the federalists or the functionalists. Still, it was a start on which further integration could be built.

For the rest of the 1940s, little else happened on the economic front. The cold war and the need for military

cooperation did lead to the creation of NATO in 1949. More importantly for our purposes, to the degree that attention was paid to nonmilitary integration, the assumption was that key leadership would have to come from Britain, still Europe's leading power. But such leadership was not forthcoming.

This does not mean that the supporters of European integration gave up. In 1949 they succeeded in forming a Council of Europe that would represent the various governments. The council had little power, given that each government could veto anything it proposed. But it did provide an opportunity for national leaders to meet, and it began developing one of the key components of the later EU: an organization representing individual governments for both consultation and decision-making purposes. (See table 7.2.)

The following year, Foreign Minister Robert Schuman of France issued a plan (actually written by Jean Monnet) for a supranational authority for the coal and steel industries. The two industries were chosen because they were critical to any modern economy, had been damaged heavily in the war, and were an obvious place to attempt more cooperative endeavors.

Negotiations moved swiftly in part because Britain was not involved and because Christian Democratic and other politicians who shared pro-European views occupied key posts in most of the governments involved.

**TABLE 7.2** Key Events in the Evolution of the EU

YEAR	EVENT
1951	Creation of ECSC
1957	Treaty of Rome signed
1967	Creation of EC
1972	First expansion
1981	Admission of Greece
1985	Single European Act passed
1986	Portugal and Spain admitted
1991	Treaty of Maastricht signed
1995	Austria, Finland, and Sweden admitted
1997	Treaty of Amsterdam signed
1998	Twelve countries agree to join EMU
2001	Treaty of Nice signed
2002	Euro launched

France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands signed a treaty establishing the **European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)**. It laid out provisions for a single market in coal and steel through the gradual elimination of tariffs and other barriers to trade. The treaty also created four institutions that remain, in only somewhat altered form, at the core of the EU today:

- A High Authority composed of representatives selected by the national governments who served as the administrative body for the ECSC at the supranational level
- A Special Council of Ministers, consisting of cabinet members from the individual governments charged with making policy for the ECSC
- A Court of Justice to resolve disputes arising between the ECSC and national governments or companies
- A Common Assembly consisting of delegates chosen by the national parliaments

The new community also had a degree of autonomy, because it was funded directly from fees levied against individual companies.

It is important to underscore two points here. First, these initial steps toward European integration had more to do with the cold war than with the purported benefits of cooperation. The United States believed that it needed an economically and politically strong Western Europe to help contain communism and thus supported most early efforts at European integration, including the creation of the ECSC. Second, however small and tentative these steps may have been, the creation of the ECSC did involve the transfer of some aspects of national sovereignty to a supranational body.

Certainly, the ECSC was no overnight success. Almost immediately, member governments began squab-

bling over which language to use and where to locate its offices. The High Authority, although acting cautiously, quickly discovered that eliminating tariffs and quotas would not be enough to create a truly common market. Still, the ECSC did live up to the functionalists' most important expectation—that support for the ECSC spill over into other sectors of the economy. By the middle of the decade, plans involving agriculture, the military, and transportation were on the table.

In mid-1955 the foreign ministers of the six member countries formed a committee headed by Paul-Henri Spaak to explore further options. In its report of March 1956, it called for a common market and an integrated approach to the new industry of nuclear power. Spaak's group then drafted the **Treaty of Rome**, which was signed by the six governments in 1957.

This treaty established two bodies—the **European Economic Community (EEC)** and the European Atomic Energy Commission (Euratom). Its most important provisions called for the elimination of all internal tariffs and the creation of common external ones over a period of twelve to fifteen years.

The EEC had essentially the same institutional structure as the ECSC. The High Authority was renamed the **Commission** and was assigned responsibility for representing supranational interests and for administering the EEC. Though given few formal powers, it was assumed that the Commission would also be the major source of new policies.

The **Council of Ministers** was the organ of the national governments and had to approve all policy initiatives. In those days, its members were the relevant cabinet ministers from the member states, and it met when needed. Most importantly, if a state decided it had a strong interest in an issue before the Council, it could veto it, thus requiring unanimity before the EEC could take any major step. Only a few relatively minor kinds of proposals could be passed through a system of qualified majority voting, which will be described later in the chapter.

The treaty increased the size of the renamed **European Parliament** and gave it the power to review activities of the Commission and Council. Nonetheless, it remained the weakest of the four main European institutions.

The **European Court of Justice (ECJ)** had seven members, one named by each government and the seventh chosen by the other six. Like members of the Commission, the justices were no longer under the direction of their own governments after their appointment. The court was responsible for seeing that the EEC itself, the member governments, and their private corporations abided by the provisions of the Treaty of Rome.

During its first decade, the EEC's primary challenge was the removal of tariffs as called for in the treaty, which it accomplished ahead of schedule. It also decided to streamline its institutions by merging the EEC and Euratom into the new **European Community (EC)** in 1967.

### *Creating the Common Market*

Even in its early years, the EEC was beset by a dilemma that has been at the heart of European integration throughout its history: How much power should be given to the supranational institutions, and how much should remain in national hands as represented by the Council?

The difficulties came to a head in 1963 when France vetoed Denmark's and Britain's applications for membership. At a press conference, President Charles de Gaulle announced that he was for a *Europe des patries*—a Europe based on nation-states—and that Britain was not sufficiently European to join. Then, in the “empty chairs” crisis of 1965–66, the French government boycotted all decision-making sessions, which, given the unanimity rule, paralyzed the entire organization.

De Gaulle's successor, Georges Pompidou, was a far more committed European. He did not block applications from Britain, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway, which were approved in January 1972. But the Norwegian electorate then voted against joining, which meant that the EC grew to only nine members. The organization expanded again in the 1980s when Greece, Spain, and Portugal were added. It reached its current total of fifteen in 1995 when Austria, Finland, and Sweden joined. Progress was made on functional fronts as well. The **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** was created in 1966. The **European Monetary System (EMS)**, with its “snake,” or band, in which all member currencies floated against each other, was initiated in 1972. The EC reached a broad-based trade-and-aid agreement with most third world countries. Members of the European Parliament were chosen in direct elections beginning in 1979. The workings of the Council were made more routine with the establishment of the **Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER)** from the member states.

At the same time, problems began to loom on the horizon. The generation of visionary, functionalist leaders who had played such a vital role in the creation of the ECSC and the EEC left the political scene. Their replacements were far less committed to further European integration—or what was popularly known as the **Common Market**. Their grand hopes also ebbed as a result of the economic slump following the OPEC oil embargo of 1973–74. As the EC proved no more able to spark con-

tinued economic growth than the individual nation-states, people began to talk about “eurosclerosis” rather than further integration.

Meanwhile, the EC itself encountered two roadblocks. First, the elimination of internal tariffs was not enough to create a single, common market. The free movement of goods and services was impeded, for example, by the regulations and standards individual governments used for industrial products or by procurement policies that required state agencies to purchase goods and services from domestic sources. Second, there had been little of the spillover effect the EC's founders had expected, and thus little new support for further economic or political integration above and beyond the expansion of its membership.

It had also become clear to a growing number of business and economic leaders that the EC would have to become more dynamic if the European economies as a whole were to take off again. That realization began a process of consultation and negotiation that eventually led to the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty.

The first step toward further integration came with a report prepared under the direction of Prime Minister Leo Tindemans of Belgium in 1976. Tindemans called for monetary and economic union, a common defense and foreign policy, and a joint industrial development program. Though nothing came directly from the Tindemans Report, it set an agenda for the next fifteen years. Pressures to move forward were intensified when Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Emilio Colombo, the foreign ministers of Germany and Italy, respectively, issued their own report advocating the strengthening of European institutions.

Progress was accelerated, too, by the appointment of **Jacques Delors** as president of the Commission in 1985. Delors had been France's minister of finance and one of President Mitterrand's closest advisers. The appointment of someone of that stature reflected the new life being breathed into European integration.

All those efforts culminated in the Council's passage of the **Single European Act (SEA)** in December 1985. Although the Council did not go as far as some had wanted, its actions in three areas widened the scope of the EC's powers at the expense of national governments.

First and foremost, the SEA introduced provisions for the completion of what is now called the internal market. As noted earlier, the abolition of internal tariffs and quotas did not remove all barriers to trade. In all, the Commission estimated that rules and regulations would have to be written in at least three hundred areas before there could be truly free trade of goods and services across the borders of the member states.

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 JACQUES DELORS
 

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Jacques Delors is generally considered the second-most-important person in the evolution of the EU, trailing only Jean Monnet.

Born in 1925 in a working-class neighborhood of Paris, Delors was unable to attend university because of both World War II and his father's demand that he go to work. He thus started his career as a clerical worker in a Parisian bank and came to politics through his Catholicism and the trade union movement.

From the 1950s on, he was involved in attempts to redefine what it meant to be on the left. At times this led him to work with groups to the left of the communists, and at others to serve as an adviser to Gaullist ministers. In 1981 President Mitterrand appointed him minister of finance, from which position he was largely responsible for the U-turn of 1983 that ended the Socialists' radical reforms. Two years later, he went to Brussels as president of the Commission.

He retired after two terms and resisted attempts to draft him as the Socialist candidate for president of France. He remains an avid soccer fan. His daughter, Martine Aubry, is the second-most-influential member of the French Socialist Party.

Former president of the European Commission Jacques Delors at a press conference in 1989.

The Commission estimated that it would take seven years to draft and ratify all those documents, thus creating the popular image of "Europe 1992."

Second, the SEA introduced a number of changes in the way the EC was run. The most important of these was a sharp cutback in the application of the **unanimity principle**. After 1985 unanimity would be used only when determining whether new members should be admitted and when embarking on wholly new policy initiatives. Otherwise, the EC would employ the easier qualified majority procedures.

The final provisions of the SEA dealt with political cooperation. It regularized the semiannual summit meetings of the national leaders and the links between the Council and the Commission and European Parliament (discussed later in the chapter). The SEA also called for more cooperation in determining foreign policy in general and national security policy in particular, though it did little to specify exactly how that should take place.

The SEA by no means unified the EC. It remained primarily an economic union that had little or no au-

thority regarding social, environmental, and political issues. In most ways, national sovereignty had not been challenged. Even in the economic arena, the all-important issue of monetary and financial integration had barely been addressed.

The drive toward further deepening occurred while the bureaucrats were filling in the details of the SEA. Delors continued to symbolize the enthusiasm many felt about the new Europe. The events that swept the Continent in 1989 made a strong Europe all the more desirable in a world in which power was increasingly defined economically and on a continent whose eastern regions would need billions of dollars to make the transition from communism to capitalism. Finally, the departure of Margaret Thatcher in 1990 removed the national leader who was most skeptical of further expansion of the EC's power, which she had labeled "eurononsense."

This momentum led to the signing of the **Maastricht Treaty** in December 1991. The treaty gave what was now officially called the European Union authority to act in new areas, including monetary policy, foreign

affairs, national security, fisheries, transportation, the environment, health, justice, education, consumer protection, and tourism. It also formally established the idea of three pillars and European citizenship, which means that people can work in any member country and vote in European parliamentary and local elections. All but Britain agreed to harmonize their labor relations and social service policies. In an attempt to appease the concerns of many national politicians, the treaty also endorsed the principle of **subsidiarity**, which holds that the EU should only act in areas in which policy goals cannot be achieved by national or subnational governments and are more likely to be reached at the supranational level. Most importantly, it committed the EU to the single currency and central bank.

For most of the rest of the 1990s, the EU fell on harder times. Europe suffered a serious recession, which reinforced qualms about the EU and put talk of further deepening on hold. The costs of German unification, the EU's inability to end the fighting in the former Yugoslavia, internal divisions over most major issues, and uncertainties about the euro reinforced the sense of "euro-sclerosis" similar to that in the years before Delors moved to Brussels.

Ironically, the EU's troubles began with the Maastricht Treaty itself. At first, everyone assumed it would be ratified easily. However, the Danish voters rejected it in a referendum, and ratification debates dragged on in Britain and Germany. Despite the support of all mainstream politicians, a referendum on the treaty barely squeaked through in France. Great Britain and Denmark eventually did ratify it, but only after provisions that would allow them to "opt out" of the social chapter and single currency were approved.

The EU also had trouble finding a leader to succeed Delors, whose second term as president of the Commission ended in early 1995. After a long process including a British veto of everyone else's first choice, the members chose a little-known former prime minister of Luxembourg, **Jacques Santer**. Although a committed European, Santer lacked Delors' charisma and clout, and his selection was widely seen as a sign that few major initiatives would be forthcoming under his leadership.

The leadership situation was muddled with publication of the European Parliament's study of mismanagement and corruption by the Commission in March 1999. No individual commissioners were accused of wrongdoing. Nonetheless, all twenty commissioners decided to resign, provoking what many thought would be a major setback.

In practice, the crisis turned out to be nothing of the sort. Within days, an agreement was reached: The out-

going commission would stay in office in a caretaker capacity, much as a cabinet that lost a vote of confidence would in any of the member states. A week later, the fifteen governments agreed on a successor to Santer—former Italian prime minister **Romano Prodi**, who would take over with a full complement of new commissioners when the old one's term expired at the start of 2000. If anything, the crisis may have strengthened the EU to some degree. Prodi is a prominent politician who is widely respected throughout Europe and who enjoyed a fair amount of success in the first two years of his term.

The EU also recently adopted two new treaties, whose impact we will explore in more detail in the sections on governance and public policy. The 1997 **Treaty of Amsterdam** extended the Schengen agreement, which eliminates most border controls inside the EU, and gave the EU more responsibility over legal matters, including issuing residence permits to immigrants, determining asylum procedures, and promulgating directives on judicial cooperation across borders. Most importantly, the Amsterdam accord acknowledged that the EU viewed NATO as the dominant security organization in Europe while reinforcing its desire to chart its own foreign policy in other areas, including the creation of a rapid deployment force to use in humanitarian emergencies.

At the December 2000 summit in Nice, France, the leaders of the member states reached an agreement, which they signed in early 2001. The **Treaty of Nice** is vital because it outlines procedures for adding as many as thirteen new members before this decade is out. It also anticipates reforming the Union's institutions so that they can work efficiently with a membership that will come close to thirty countries. The treaty was dealt a blow when Irish voters turned it down in a June 2001 referendum. However, most observers do not expect the defeat to stop expansion; indeed, Prodi announced that the Commission was going ahead with plans to finish "accession" negotiations with at least Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic by the end of 2002.

## Political Culture and Participation in the EU

The chapters on individual countries all have extended sections on political culture and participation. This one does not simply because they are not (yet) very important to politics in the EU in at least two respects.

First, it is hard to even speak of a European political culture. There is little widespread identification with



## USEFUL WEB SITES

The EU's web site is an excellent portal to everything the Union does—and in eleven languages.

[www.europa.eu.int](http://www.europa.eu.int)

Many of the academic centers that focus on the EU have web sites with good collections of links to on-line material about the EU. Among the best are the European Union Studies Association and the libraries at the University of California–Berkeley, the University of Pittsburgh, and Harvard Law School.

[www.eustudies.org](http://www.eustudies.org)

[www.lib.Berkeley.edu/GSSI/eu.html](http://www.lib.Berkeley.edu/GSSI/eu.html)

[www.library.pitt.edu/subjects/area/westeuropean/wwwes/](http://www.library.pitt.edu/subjects/area/westeuropean/wwwes/)

[www.law.Harvard.edu/programs/JeanMonnet/EuatHarvard/](http://www.law.Harvard.edu/programs/JeanMonnet/EuatHarvard/)

*European Voice* is a weekly newspaper on the EU and Europe in general published by *The Economist*. It can be read on-line at:

[www.european-voice.com](http://www.european-voice.com)

The University of Aberdeen has a very useful site that lists and explains all the acronyms used by the EU.

[www.abdn.ac.uk/pir/sources/euroguide.htm](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/pir/sources/euroguide.htm)

Finally, a group of British “euroskeptics” have a ring of web sites opposed to further integration. The best of them is:

[members.aol.com/eurofaq](http://members.aol.com/eurofaq)

“Europe.” As will become clearer through counterexamples in the chapters on the former Soviet Union and the third world, in countries with stable, legitimate regimes, most people have a strong sense of national identification ([europa.eu.int/comm/dgio/epo/eb.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgio/epo/eb.html)).

Although there is growing recognition that the EU plays an important role in people's lives, there are still very few people for whom the statement “I am a European” is anywhere near as important as “I am French” (or German or whatever). Younger, better-educated people who have traveled extensively are the most “European,” but even they tend to put their national identity ahead of any transnational one.

Second, the key organizations linking people to the state have not put down very deep roots at the European level. Parties in the European Parliament are organized

## Conflict and Democratization in the EU

**IT SAYS something about the EU in comparison with the countries covered in part 2 that we can treat the topics of conflict and democratization in the EU so quickly.**

**The EU has always been of primary interest to elites. Although its institutions provide some opportunities for public involvement, it does not have the formal mechanisms for public accountability we find in democratic states. And, of course, it incorporates a much larger population.**

**That said, the EU provokes surprisingly little interest—and hence conflict—among its citizens. This may change as the euro makes the EU an inescapable part of everyone's life. Also, any further deepening of the EU's powers likely will require greater involvement and more active support from rank-and-file voters.**

along transnational lines (for example, socialists from all fifteen states form a single group and sit together). Other than that, partisan life remains almost exclusively national in orientation. Voters tend to use national issues and criteria in making up their minds about how to vote in European elections. Most interest groups, too, remain nationally oriented, even those that maintain lobbying operations in Brussels. Some trade organizations have successfully worked across national lines, but they are almost exclusively businesses run on a Europe-wide basis to begin with. Most other groups, especially trade unions, have found it difficult to present a common front either in their protests in the streets or their “inside-the-system” efforts with the Commission.

The lack of intensive public involvement in the EU has given rise to what critics call its **democratic deficit**. With nearly 400 million citizens and as many as 100 million more to come, the EU's population is exceeded only by those of China and India. What's more, these citizens have at most an indirect role in determining who sits on its most important decision-making bodies. A growing number of Europeans are coming to resent the power of EU institutions and their own seeming inability to hold them accountable—something we have seen in most recent national referenda, in which the anti-European vote has been much higher than most analysts expected. Overall, public opinion has turned into a brake on further deepening if not broadening.

The lack of European-ness is also indirectly reflected in the mass media through which people learn about political life at the national and supranational level. Attempts have been made to create everything

from Europe-wide soap operas to political newspapers. The only real success story is Eurosport, a satellite TV provider that sends out a single video feed of mostly second-tier events with audio channels in all the major languages. There are two different television systems—PAL (used in Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands among others) and SECAM (used in France and Spain most notably). But viewers with televisions that use one cannot watch programs on the other, even with dishes that can reach satellites serving stations using both standards. Although people can get all the major European newspapers in most cities and can have them delivered to their homes, the fact remains that these papers are all nationally based.

One of the key causes of the lack of European identification and the failure to create European political institutions is the language gap. All official documents are published in eleven languages, and that number will double when the new members are added. Many Europeans do speak a second or even a third language, but there is no common language that more than 20 percent of them are comfortable using. Further, that language is English, and there is strong resistance in France and elsewhere toward adopting it or any other single tongue.

## The European State?

This section begins with a question mark, because political scientists debate whether the EU is a state. Most argue that it is not, because it lacks an army and a police force to maintain order and ensure that the rule of law is enforced. That said, the EU has many other features of a state. It has formal institutions that do the same things as the ones we saw in Britain, France, and Germany—enact laws and issue decrees that are binding on the member states, their citizens, and their corporations.

The best way to get past the debate is to view the EU in terms of what international relations scholars call “multilevel governance.” From that perspective, the EU has some of the characteristics of a state, but not all of them. More importantly, the degree to which it is “state-like”—or, conversely, the degree to which the member states retain the bulk of their power—varies from time to time and issue to issue. In particular, the EU is most like a state in exercising sovereign power in the first or economic pillar. However, the states still wield most of the power in major new initiatives and in the few remaining policy areas in which unanimity is required.

**TABLE 7.3** Presidents of the European Commission

START OF TERM	NAME
1958	Walter Hallstein
1967	Jean Rey
1970	Franco-Maria Malfatti
1972	Sicco Mansholt
1973	Francois-Xavier Ortoli
1977	Roy Jenkins
1981	Gaston Thorn
1985	Jacques Delors
1995	Jacques Santer
2000	Romano Prodi

## The Commission

The most *European* institution is the Commission. The word *European* is emphasized here because the Commission has been the most important body in sustaining and expanding the EU's authority. The responsibility for actually making the most important decisions lies elsewhere, but the Commission initiates most new programs and is responsible for implementing them once they are enacted ([europa.eu.int/comm/index\\_euchtm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/index_euchtm)). 

Currently, the Commission has twenty members who serve renewable five-year terms. Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain each have two commissioners. Traditionally, one of them comes from the governing party or coalition, and the other from the opposition. The other ten countries have one commissioner each.

The Treaty of Nice made provision for changing the number of commissioners once the new members from eastern Europe join. At first, each country will have a single commissioner until the total membership reaches twenty-seven. Then the size of the Commission will be reduced, and states will appoint members to the streamlined body on a rotating basis.

Commissioners are nominated by their home governments and are approved by qualified majority voting in the Council. One commissioner serves as president and, in recent years, has been the most visible leader in all the European institutions. (See table 7.3.) Most commissioners are prominent politicians in their home countries. One of Britain's commissioners, Neil Kinnock, is a former leader of the Labour Party. The other, Chris Patten, is a former conservative MP who served as the last British governor of Hong Kong before it reverted to China in 1997.

Once on the Commission, the members swear an oath of allegiance to the EU and are not supposed to take instructions from their national government. At times, the European orientation of the commissioners has

**TABLE 7.4** Directorates-General and Services of the Commission as of September 1996

I	External Relations
II	Economic and Financial Affairs
III	Internal Market and Industrial Affairs; Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
IV	Competition
V	Employment, Social Affairs, and Education
VI	Agriculture
VII	Transport
VIII	Development
IX	Personnel and Administration
X	Information, Communication, and Culture
XI	Environment and Nuclear Safety
XII	Science, Research, and Development; Joint Research Centre
XIII	Telecommunications, Information Industries, and Innovation
XIV	Fisheries
XV	Financial Institutions and Company Law
XVI	Regional Policy
XVII	Energy
XVIII	Credit and Investment
XIX	Budgets
XX	Financial Control
XXI	Customs Union and Indirect Taxation
XXII	Coordination of Structural Instruments
XXIII	Consumer Affairs

posed problems, as when Margaret Thatcher refused to reappoint Lord Cockfield because he had been the architect of the detailed plans to implement the Single European Act (SEA), which the British prime minister did not like.

The Commission is the permanent executive of the EU. It supervises the work of the twenty-three directorates-general and eight services, which roughly correspond with the purview of a traditional national cabinet. (See table 7.4.) Each directorate is managed by a commissioner, who is, in turn, aided by a senior European civil servant and a small personal staff.

The Commission supervises the work of about 2,500 high-ranking civil servants and another 20,000 staff members. Some of these men and women are on loan from their national governments, but the overwhelming majority are permanent EU employees on career tracks reminiscent of the French *ENArques* and the German *Beamten*.

The Commission is also important in the policy-making process. On a day-to-day basis, its primary job is to make rules that spell out the details of European policy, as in the more than three hundred documents it had to draft to put the principles of the SEA into effect. Commission drafts immediately have the force of law in some minor and technical policy areas. Otherwise,

its drafts have to be approved by the Council and the Parliament.

The Commission's most important job is the initiation of proposed legislation or directives. The Treaty of Rome and later agreements gave it the exclusive right to put new policy proposals on the EU's agenda. Although agenda setting is by no means the same as the ability to pass legislation, the Commission has used this power to become the driving force behind the initiatives that strengthened the EU's supranational authority.

The Commission may indeed resemble a national cabinet, but we should not push that analogy too far. In particular, because its members are chosen by fifteen quite different governments, there is far more diversity and disagreement than we would expect in a national government.

The Commission inevitably reflects the personality, style, and preferences of its president. Under Delors, the Commission assembled a staff of dynamic young civil servants who helped push through his agenda, often against the wishes of reluctant fellow commissioners, let alone national governments.

Perhaps in response to Delors' impact, the governments of the member states (especially Great Britain) were reluctant to choose a successor who would be anywhere near as prominent or dynamic. The current president, Romano Prodi, has yet to have that kind of dramatic impact, and the Commission as a whole is decidedly less active or influential as an initiator of policy than it was under Delors ([ue.eu.int](http://ue.eu.int)).



## The Council

If the Commission represents the growing supranational nature of the EU, the Council of Ministers demonstrates the continued power of the states. The Council now actually consists of two institutions. The presidency of each rotates from country to country every six months. That government's representative chairs each Council meeting, represents the EU at diplomatic functions, and makes all its public pronouncements.

The various ministers and other representatives of the national governments meet as needed to make policy decisions. The foreign ministers meet monthly as the General Affairs Council, as do the finance ministers in Ecofin (Economic and Financial Council). In addition, there were sixty-seven other sessions of the Council in 1997. Each government designates one of its members to attend those sessions, the specific person determined on the basis of the issue on the agenda. For instance, when the Council dealt with the mad cow disease crisis



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Romano Prodi, president of the European Commission.

in the second half of the 1990s, it consisted of the member states' agriculture ministers. The work of the Council is supported by the COREPER (Committee of Permanent Representatives), a group of national civil servants who work in Brussels for their national governments.

In addition, the president of France and the prime ministers of the other countries meet every six months as the European Council. Sometimes these meetings are simply opportunities for general discussions. But they have also become the forum at which major new initiatives and reforms to the treaties that gave rise to the EU and its institutions are adopted. Thus, the European Council was the body that approved the creation and launch of the euro and the formation of the European Central Bank in 1998.

The Council is at the heart of the EU's legislative process. The Commission may initiate most EU legislation, but its proposals become law (technically a directive) only after they have been passed by the Council. Since passage of the Single European Act, the Council has to share most of its decision-making power with the Parliament and Commission (see figure 7.1) and can override parliamentary objections only if it acts unanimously. Nonetheless, its approval is needed for any new legislation.

The unanimity principle that often paralyzed the EEC early in its history has been eliminated except with regard to the most dramatic new initiatives and the addition of new members. Otherwise, the Council uses

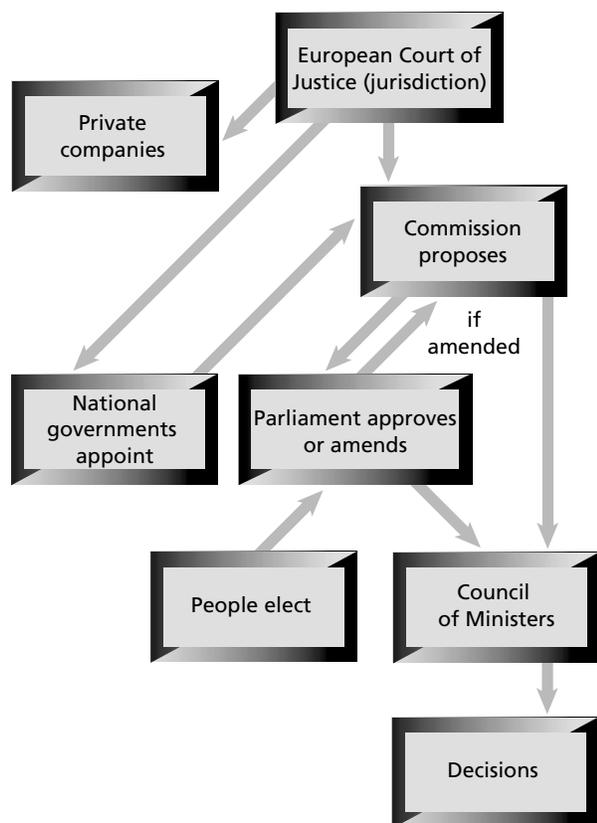
**qualified majority voting.** Each country is assigned a number of votes in rough proportion to its share of the EU population, which it casts as a bloc. (See table 7.5.) Of the current 87 votes, 61 are needed to create a qualified majority. Therefore, 23 are enough to block new initiatives. The system tends to overrepresent the smaller countries, keep large states from dominating, but makes it hard to pass legislation without the support of two or three of the big countries. The Treaty of Nice included a new formula for allocating votes in the Council, to be used when the new members are added, but the principles underlying qualified majority voting will remain the same. In practice, the full European Council rarely votes, but operates by consensus instead.

### *The European Court of Justice*

The EU has a growing judicial system. A Court of First Instance hears cases much the way a superior court in the United States or Crown court in the United Kingdom does. There is also a Court of Auditors that deals with the EU's finances. And the Amsterdam and Nice treaties have provisions for the creation of specialized courts to deal with highly technical issues in narrow subject areas ([euria.eu.int/en/index.htm](http://euria.eu.int/en/index.htm)).

But we can restrict our attention to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). Its decisions have frequently made major expansion of the EU's authority possible. Even more importantly, its actions have limited national





**FIGURE 7.1** Decision Making in the EU

sovereignty in favor of the EU's institutions. As such, it has more sweeping powers than the judiciaries in all but a handful of the world's states.

Each government appoints one member to the ECJ and will continue to do so after enlargement, though the court will rarely meet with all of its judges presiding. Instead, it will meet in smaller "chambers" for all but the most important cases. It also has nine advocates-general who aid it in its work. No votes or dissenting opinions are published.

The ECJ has a broad jurisdiction and hears over four hundred cases in a typical year. The Council, Commission, and Parliament can challenge each others' actions; member states can contest EU actions before the court; and individuals and firms can sue the EU. However, states can bring cases against each other only if the claimant can show it has been directly harmed. Over the years, the court has overturned actions by all the EU institutions, all member states, and hundreds of private companies and individuals.

Early on, the ECJ decided that it practiced constitutional law, which meant that its decisions would have

**TABLE 7.5** Size and Voting Power in the EU

COUNTRY	POPULATION (AS PERCENTAGE OF EU)	VOTES IN QUALIFIED MAJORITY SYSTEM	SEATS IN EU PARLIAMENT
Austria	2.2	4	21
Belgium	2.7	5	25
Britain	15.7	10	87
Denmark	1.4	3	16
Finland	1.4	3	16
France	15.6	10	87
Germany	22.0	10	99
Greece	2.8	5	25
Ireland	1.0	3	15
Italy	15.4	10	87
Luxembourg	0.1	2	6
Netherlands	4.1	5	31
Portugal	2.7	5	25
Spain	10.5	8	64
Sweden	2.4	4	22

more clout than those of traditional international tribunals or national courts, which lacked the power of judicial review. This authority is based on the court's assertion that, in ratifying the Treaty of Rome and subsequent accords, the states relinquished some of their sovereignty. The court has consistently held that European law (as passed by the Council) and regulations (as promulgated by the Commission) take precedence over national law. In other words, when the two come in conflict, it is EU law that is upheld and enforced.

Among the most important and illustrative of the court's decisions was the *Cassis de Dijon* case of 1979 that opened the legal door to both the SEA and Maastricht. *Cassis* is a liqueur that, when combined with white wine, makes the smooth, sweet, and potent drink known as the kir. It is made only near the city of Dijon in France. A German firm wanted to import cassis, but the national government banned it on the grounds that under German law it contained too little alcohol to qualify as a liqueur but too much to be considered a wine. The court found for the importer, ruling that if cassis met French standards for a liqueur it should qualify under Germany's as well and that bans based on such arbitrary differences constituted an illegal barrier to trade. The court thereby introduced the idea of "mutual recognition," which holds that, except under the most unusual of circumstances, member states must recognize the standards used by other countries. This meant that the Commission could avoid the hugely cumbersome task of harmonizing standards across national lines and simply assert that, if one national government ruled that a good or service met its standards, it had to be accepted by all of them.

A more recent ruling with broad (if less political) ramifications came in 1995. Jean-Marc Bosman, a mediocre Belgian soccer player whose contract was expiring, wanted to move to a new team in France, much like a free agent in American sports. But his old team and the Belgian football authorities denied him the right to do so. Bosman took his case to the ECJ, arguing that the so-called transfer restrictions violated the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty regarding the free movement of labor within the EU. The court ruled in Bosman's favor and, in one fell swoop, threw out not only the rules restricting the freedom of players to move but also the ones limiting the number of foreigners who could play for a team at any one time. The wealthiest teams in England, Spain, Italy, and Germany immediately went on spending sprees, signing up players from around the EU. The impact of the decision was obvious to anyone who watched London's Chelsea squad play Rome's Atalanta in the 2000–2001 Champions League. Chelsea did not have a single player who was born or raised in the United Kingdom on its starting team. What it did have was more Italians (four) than Atalanta!

### *The European Parliament*

One reason that scholars and politicians worry about the democratic deficit is that the Parliament is by far the weakest institution in the EU. As we saw earlier, the ECSC had a Common Assembly, which was renamed the European Parliament with the formation of the EEC (www.europarl.eu.int).

Part of its weakness lies in its original composition. Until 1979, members of Parliament, or MEPs, were chosen by national governments. Thus, they tended to act as emissaries from their states, docilely voting as the leadership back home wanted.

Since then, the MEPs have been directly elected, and the powers of the Parliament have grown. The SEA also gave the Parliament more influence by creating a cooperation procedure—now known as the codecision procedure—for most legislation. It obliges the Council and Commission to consult the Parliament in two stages. First, when the Commission proposes a new initiative, the Parliament must give its opinion on it, which the Council must take into account when making its decision. Second, once that happens, the Parliament must be consulted again, at which point one of three things can occur:

- If the Parliament agrees or takes no action within three months, the Council's bill is adopted
- If the Parliament proposes amendments, they must be considered by the Commission within a month

- If the Parliament rejects the Council's position outright, the Council can only adopt it only if it does so unanimously

The architects of the SEA and the Maastricht Treaty understood that the powers of the Parliament would have to be increased if the EU were to achieve widespread legitimacy. Thus, the Parliament now has the right to approve all nominees to the Commission and can remove the entire Commission if a vote of censure passes by a two-thirds margin. The Parliament also has to approve the budget.

As it did for the Council, the Treaty of Nice makes provisions for changes in the size of Parliament and spells out the number of seats each country will have. The total size of the body eventually will rise to a permanent 732 seats. Because most of the new member states will join during the life of the Parliament elected in 2004, it is assumed that the number of seats will actually break the 732 barrier, with the total number dropping back to that level with the 2009 election.

### *The Complexity of EU Decision Making*

Policy making in the EU is more complex and confusing than in any of the individual countries we have considered so far for two main reasons. First, the EU has to reconcile the interests of its fifteen member states with those that transcend national boundaries. Second, the various EU institutions are even more fragmented and independent of each other than those in the United States, where the separation and division of power makes coherent decision making difficult.

The EU's steps forward have occurred when the interests of the major nations and its own institutions coincide as they did in the months leading up to the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. When those interests diverge—as has been the case since Maastricht—it becomes more difficult for European integration to proceed.

This complexity is also a reflection of the fact that the EU is still being built, which makes it quite different from the national states covered in the rest of part 2. In some areas (for example, trade), European institutions and practices are fairly well developed; in others (for example, defense and social policy), they are not.

### *Deepening and Broadening*

There is not likely to be much deepening of the EU's powers in the next few years. The EU will create a rapid



The European Parliament meeting in its new building in Brussels. The EP actually meets in both Brussels and Strasbourg, France. Note the large number of empty seats, which is typical of EP sessions.

AP/Wide World Photos

reaction force to serve as peacekeepers, but no one expects tremendous progress toward the overall goal of a **Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)**. This is the case because the EU already faces three major burdens that affect its abilities to take on new powers. The first is the transition to a single currency, which we will discuss shortly. The second involves public qualms about the EU, which all but rules out any expansion that would have to be put to most countries' voters in a referendum. The third is the difficulty in expanding the EU's powers, because it will have a hard enough time adjusting to as many as 13 new members in the next three to seven years. (See table 7.6.)

The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam laid out three main criteria that countries have to meet before being eligible to begin negotiations to join the EU:

- Establishment of a functioning and stable democratic regime
- Adoption of a market-oriented capitalist economy
- Acceptance of the *acquis communautaire*, the 80,000 pages of laws and regulations already on the EU's books

The Treaty of Nice then established a timetable for completing negotiations with the thirteen countries that had been allowed to submit formal applications for "accession" since 1997. The plan is to reach agreements with the first wave of countries by the end of 2002 so that they

can begin the transition to membership by 2004 or 2005. The goal is to complete the process for the rest by the end of the decade.

However, it is by no means certain that enlargement will proceed this quickly or that all of the applicants will be admitted. The negotiations are complicated, and as of mid-2002, only three countries had reached an agreement with the EU on how they will accept even half of the thirty-one chapters of the *acquis communautaire*.

Adding so many new members will not be an un-mixed blessing. If they all join, the EU will increase its territory by a third and its population by almost 30 percent. However, at current rates, its total GNP will rise by only 9 percent, and its GNP per capita will actually fall by 16 percent. And the EU admitted poorer countries without long-standing democratic track records, such as Greece, Spain, and Portugal, in the 1980s. In any case, this enlargement will add more countries and people who are less wedded to liberal democracy, economics, and cultural norms.

As of mid-2002, the populations of Britain, Germany, France, and Austria were, on balance, not in favor of enlargement. That reluctance stems from multiple factors, from doubts about the likely increase in the use of English as a common language, to concerns that agricultural and regional funds will head eastward, to fears of a massive wave of immigrants from the east.

For leaders in the west, admitting countries in the east makes sense for two basic reasons. First, they expect

**TABLE 7.6** Pending Applications to the EU

COUNTRY	POPULATION (IN MILLIONS)	GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA, 1996 (AS PERCENTAGE OF EU AVERAGE)
Bulgaria	8.5	18.5
Cyprus	0.7	82.0
Czech Republic	10.3	50.9
Estonia	1.5	24.8
Hungary	10.1	32.1
Latvia	2.5	16.8
Lithuania	3.7	18.1
Malta	0.4	49.3
Poland	38.6	32.1
Romania	22.7	23.6
Slovakia	5.3	39.1
Slovenia	1.9	34.6
Turkey	60.8	31.7

Source: Adapted from John Peet, "Europe's Mid-Life Crisis," *Economist*, 31 May 1997, 5.

it will expand the prosperity the west has enjoyed to poorer countries that suffered through nearly half a century of communist rule after up to a decade of occupation by the Nazis. Second, they assume it is needed to guarantee peace and security in all of Europe.

For their counterparts in the east, the appeal is even more obvious. Joining the EU means integration into the entire western European economy, with the jobs and markets it offers. Joining the EU and NATO will also enhance their security, especially should Russia ever again try to extend its influence westward.

As a result, the prevailing assumption is that some group of countries—perhaps Slovenia, Malta, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland—will be admitted in 2002. And Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia probably will follow in due course. But the admission of Cyprus and Turkey is much less certain. Cyprus is likely to be added only if a resolution of the decades-old division between the Greek and Turkish portions of the island is reached. Turkey will not be allowed in until the member states are convinced that it is truly a stable democracy, which probably will not occur for years to come.

### *The EU and National Sovereignty*

It is tempting to follow the lead of most international relations experts and argue that the EU has not undermined national sovereignty very much. This certainly is true if we focus on core questions of national security and the "high politics" that have long been at the heart of that branch of political science. To see that, recall how much trouble the EU has had in developing a common

foreign policy on such burning issues as the fighting in various parts of the former Yugoslavia since it fell apart in the early 1990s.

However, if we focus instead on economic or social policy, the EU seems a lot more powerful. In those areas, its powers certainly limit the freedom of member states to make and enforce their own policies.

The study of the EU can become quite complex, and exploring its powers in many areas requires mastering a welter of acronyms and technical detail. To illustrate, let us consider two policy areas dealing with food, which may not seem all that important but which do reveal the kinds of day-to-day power the EU can exercise over its members.

The first involves chocolate. As part of its goal of creating a single market, the EU has devised common standards for thousands of goods and services. In 1973 it therefore issued Directive 73-241 on the "harmonization" of chocolate recipes. As one British observer put it:

**This directive was drawn up in the early, heady days of European integration, when European leaders believed that all products must be harmonised in every member state if the single market was to operate properly. All food had to be made to the same specification. Drawing up a European chocolate recipe meant agreeing on rules on such ingredients as vegetable and cocoa fat. Directive 73-241 declared that chocolate shall be: "the product obtained from cocoa nib, cocoa mass, cocoa powder and sucrose, with or without added cocoa butter, having, without prejudice to the definition of chocolate vermicelli, gajnduja nut chocolate and converture chocolate, a minimum total dry coca solids content of 35 percent—at least 34 percent of non-fat cocoa solids and 18 percent of cocoa butter—these weights to be calculated after the weight of the additions provided for in paragraph five and six have been deducted."**<sup>2</sup>

Chocolate became a problem because candy manufacturers in Britain and a few other countries did not meet those standards, and British consumers liked their chocolate with less cocoa nib. After a brief tiff, the European bureaucrats allowed the British to "opt out" of these requirements, and there was something of a two-tiered chocolate market for the next twenty years.

In the mid-1990s, the chocolate controversy reared its ugly head once again. French and Belgian chocolatiers claimed that inferior British candy was undermining their markets. They threatened to go to the ECJ

<sup>2</sup>Sarah Helm, "The Woman from Mars," *Prospect (UK)*, March 1986, 21.

and demand a ruling forcing the British companies to use the term “vegolate” instead. The court put an end to the case by invoking the mutual recognition principle to allow the British to continue selling their products as chocolate.

Finally, in one of the most controversial recent moves, the EU banned the export of British beef in 1996. Over the previous decade, thousands of British cows had come down with BSE, known to most citizens by its nickname—mad cow disease. That March the British government published research findings that linked BSE with Creutzfeld-Jakob disease (CJD), which is fatal to humans. The announcement touched off a furor on both sides of the English Channel. Within days the Council voted to ban the sale of British beef first in the other fourteen EU countries and then in the rest of the world. The British government was furious, because no more than fifteen people had come down with CJD. Moreover, British agriculture minister Quentin Hogg (the pundits had great fun with that name) vainly tried to devise a plan to slaughter up to a million cows in an attempt to eradicate the disease and the political and public reaction to it. Meanwhile, governments on the Continent began insisting on instituting every safeguard imaginable before allowing British beef back on the market.

Negotiations dragged on into 1999 even though there was virtually no chance that anyone could actually contract CJD. The British had introduced new regulations in late 1980s that protected its herds. Nonetheless, politicians on the Continent, leery of public opinion at home, kept the ban in place. Finally, when the cull of the herds had been completed so that no cow born before 1996 could enter the food chain, the Commission lifted the ban.

## Public Policy in the EU

The EU has pursued a wide range of policies, from supporting research on high technology to sponsoring student exchanges. Here, we will focus on four of its policies that are most central to the goals of this book, because they demonstrate the degree to which the EU can limit (or not limit as the case may be) what member states and citizens do.

### *The Internal Market*

The EU's most significant accomplishment has been the creation of what is, for all intents and purposes, a single

internal market. Economics has always been a top priority for the EU, because its architects assumed that economic cooperation would be the lynchpin to all their other policy goals.

The most important policy and strategy for creating the single market has been the removal of tariffs and other barriers to trade. The Treaty of Rome began a decade-long process of elimination of all internal tariffs. The Single European Act (SEA) did the same for the other remaining obstacles.

Most of those barriers were technical in nature and very easy for the average consumer to see. Truckers, for example, could spend hours filling out paperwork or having their cargoes inspected before they were allowed to enter another country. Although it may be hard to believe, such administrative rules and regulations added as much as 10 percent to the cost of transporting goods across national borders.

Similarly, each country imposed its own standards of quality on goods sold in its market, which frequently blocked imports from other EU countries despite the elimination of all tariffs. The same held for professional licenses, which meant that doctors, lawyers, beauticians, and so on could work only in the country in which they were trained. National governments themselves erected barriers to free trade by following procurement policies that gave the edge to domestic firms and accounted for nearly 10 percent of the EU's total production of goods and services.

The SEA eliminated all internal border checks, although this practice has not been fully implemented given some countries' fears regarding immigration and drug trafficking. Most goods that meet the standards of one country are assumed to meet the standards of all—as in the case of the chocolate/vegolate dispute. The same is now true for most professional licenses—though not for lawyers, reflecting the continued differences among national legal systems. Financial institutions are free to invest and loan money throughout the EU.

The reasons for moving to a fully open internal market were most clearly laid out in a report for the Commission prepared by the economist Paolo Cecchini in 1988. Cecchini and his colleagues predicted that these and other policies would lead to a more dynamic pattern of increased private investment, lower costs, and reduced prices. European industry, in turn, would be more profitable, stimulating more growth, jobs, and government revenue.

In the short run, “Europe 1992” fell short of those expectations. The recession of the early 1990s slowed growth everywhere. Cecchini could not have anticipated

## Liberalization in the EU

**THE EU has long been a champion of liberal economic policies. It has never had to deal with privatization directly, because it has never owned any businesses. Moreover, it has never urged member states to sell off the ones they own.**

**That said, it has regularly pushed for more open and competitive economies, which, of course, is in the very nature of a common market. Throughout its history, it has pursued antimonopoly policies that would be familiar to Americans who have studied their country's antitrust laws. In recent years, it has required states to cut subsidies to their companies, especially state-owned monopolies such as national airlines and telecommunications systems.**

the political changes that would sweep Europe and divert billions of dollars from the EU and its member states eastward. Still, there seems to be little question that the removal of all barriers in the longer term will have the kind of impact the framers of the SEA had in mind.

This impact is evident in the explosion of transnational enterprises facilitated by the easing of these restrictions. The EU is not always a major actor in these endeavors, but the opening of the market itself has made the ones described here and dozens of others feasible in the first place. Airbus, for example, is a joint effort on the part of French, German, Spanish, and British companies that make commercial jet airplanes and now represent Boeing's only serious competitor. In the automobile industry, Fiat forged close links with Peugeot, and in 1999 Ford bought Volvo. In 1985 the Commission established Eureka, a joint research and development program aimed at creating technologies to compete with Japanese and U.S. firms in computers, telecommunications, and other high-tech areas. By 1991 the Commission had funded over five hundred projects involving more than three thousand companies in nineteen European nations.

The internationalization of European firms within the EU seems to have led them to be more aggressive globally as well. The most notable example is the tremendous increase in European investment in the United States. To cite but a few prominent examples: Renault has bought Mack Trucks; Michelin has acquired Uniroyal Goodrich, making it the largest tire manufacturer in the world; and Britain's Martin Sorrell has pur-

chased two of America's largest advertising agencies, the Ogilvy Group and J. Walter Thompson, and public relations giant Hill and Knowlton.

For our purposes, though, the important thing to understand about the policies creating the single market is that they have had a tremendous impact on both European governments and their citizens. States now have far less control over what is made and sold within their borders. Of course, policy differences remain from country to country. Britain, for example, still imposes higher taxes on liquor than France and has strict rules regarding the import of pets into the country. Such examples aside, the national governments have ceded much of their control over microeconomic policy.

The single market has expanded the options available to consumers. German supermarket shoppers can now purchase French wine, Italian pasta, and Spanish oranges more cheaply than before the trade barriers came down. French consumers find that Rovers, Fiats, or Volkswagens are now as affordable as comparable Renaults, Citroëns, or Peugeots. In the early 1990s, thousands of unemployed British construction workers fled their recession-plagued country and found work rebuilding the infrastructure of the former East Germany.

However, the single market has not benefited all Europeans. Increased competitive pressures have forced dozens of inefficient firms into bankruptcy, leading to at least temporary unemployment for their workers.

Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the EU has made a considerable contribution to economic growth since 1957. Among other things, a 1999 Commission report suggested that the single market was responsible for creating as many as 900,000 jobs, adding as much as 1.5 percent to per-capita income, reducing inflation by a similar amount, and increasing trade in goods and direct foreign investment in the EU by about 15 percent each.

Its contribution may be even more important in some less visible policy arenas, as we saw in the discussion of the Bosman ruling. I was fortunate enough to live and teach in England from 1995 to 1998. Because of the EU, I was able to have any major European newspaper delivered to my doorstep each morning. According to the owner of the corner store that supplied these papers, citizens of fourteen of the fifteen member states were living in our village of less than three thousand residents. Because EU students pay the equivalent of in-state tuition anywhere in the Union, I had students from France, Greece, Spain, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, and Belgium, as well as the

United Kingdom, in my classes, which made teaching highly enjoyable.

### *The Common Agricultural Policy*

Not everything the EU has done has been that successful. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in particular, is now the subject of virtually universal criticism. *The Economist* went so far as to call it the “single most idiotic system of economic mismanagement that the rich western countries have ever devised.”<sup>3</sup>

The CAP also reflects two important political dynamics. First, it demonstrates how pressure put on member states can lead to policies that tend to impede a free market and that also make the EU resistant to change. Second, we will see that some of the more recent reforms to the CAP have been forced on the EU by the Global Accord on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which are, of course, even larger international organizations.

In the 1950s there were about 15 million farmers in the six countries that created the EEC. Although their numbers were declining rapidly, they were still a major political force, especially in France, where they lobbied heavily to keep small, inefficient family farms alive. Meanwhile, countries with small agricultural populations needed to import food and wanted to keep prices as low as possible.

Not surprisingly, agriculture was a divisive issue from the beginning and almost destroyed the EEC in the early 1960s. The members finally reached a compromise in 1966 and created the CAP, which had two main components. First, it took steps to modernize inefficient farms so that they could be more competitive in the European market. Second, to ease the fears of farmers whose livelihood was threatened by that modernization, the EC established the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), which gave them subsidies and guaranteed the purchase of surplus goods at artificially high prices.

Over the years, the modernizing side of the CAP went by the wayside. Payments to farmers, however, consumed more than half of the EC budget. By the early 1970s, food prices in Europe were two to four times higher than they would have been had they been determined by market forces. Imposition of CAP provisions in

Britain was a major source of that country’s objections to the EC’s overall budgetary process. In 1991 alone, the EC purchased 25 million tons of cereal grains, 800,000 tons of butter, and 700,000 tons of other dairy products. Pundits joked about its butter mountains and wine lakes.

The CAP was also a major stumbling block in the Uruguay round of the GATT negotiations, which led to the creation of the WTO. American objections to the EAGGF payments almost led to a trade war between the United States and Europe in late 1992—even though the United States still heavily subsidized its own farmers at the time. In the end, the EU and the other parties reached a compromise in which the Union agreed to scale back subsidies and guaranteed payments by about a third. Nonetheless, the continued political clout of farmers’ groups have kept the CAP alive, leaving Europe with an extremely inefficient agricultural sector and burdening the EU’s budget in the process.

It will not, however, be able to survive EU enlargement in its current form. Given the number of farmers in eastern Europe and their even more inefficient production and distribution systems, extending the CAP to the new member states in the next decade would bankrupt the EU. Therefore, the EU will not provide CAP funds to eastern European countries, which may well lead to further reductions in its expenditures in the west.

### *Monetary Union*

From the Treaty of Rome on, the more visionary European leaders looked to monetary union as the next big step toward a more integrated Europe. To see why, think about what the United States would be like if the states had their own currencies. It would be all but impossible for the federal government to coordinate economic policy, and it would be costly and complicated for companies to carry out transactions across state lines.

Monetary union, however, was a long time coming. The first significant steps were taken in 1979 with the creation of a European Monetary System (EMS) with two broad features. First, it created the ECU (European Currency Unit), which was used in international business transactions. A consumer could not withdraw ECUs from a bank and use them to buy, say, a new compact disc player. The ECU existed purely for accounting purposes and enabled companies to avoid paying the commissions charged for converting funds from one currency to another. It also established the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), whereby all the currencies floated

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Helen Wallace and William Wallace, eds., *Policy-Making in the European Union*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 182.

together in global markets. In its “snake,” no currency was allowed to move more than 5 percent above or below the ERM average. If a currency was heading in that direction, the national central banks would intervene in financial markets to bring it back into line.

The two reforms did help. The ECU simplified business dealings and reduced the not insubstantial costs that accompany frequent currency conversions. The ERM gave a degree of predictability to European financial markets so that, for example, Fiat in Italy could be reasonably certain how many francs or pesetas, as well as how many lire, it could get for its cars.

The actual creation of a single currency took another twenty years. The key is not simply that the national currencies were replaced by the euro in 2002. In addition, the **European Monetary Union (EMU)** will give the EU and its new central bank tremendous new levers over national governments.

Previously, governments determined their own fiscal and monetary policies—in particular, setting basic interest rates for lenders and savers. Now that power will be transferred to European authorities, which will set a common rate for countries with economies as diverse as Germany's and Portugal's.

So far, debate on the EMU has focused largely on whether it makes sense economically—an issue far beyond the scope of this chapter. Here, it is enough to see that it will have a tremendous impact on the balance of political power in at least two ways. First, it will strengthen the EU as a whole, because the euro will be one of the world's leading currencies. Second, it provides yet another area in which national governments are de facto ceding some of their sovereignty to a supranational body over which they will have relatively little day-to-day control.

This is one of the reasons opposition to the EMU grew during the mid-1990s. For many political leaders, especially in Britain, the local currency is an important symbol of national pride, and abandoning it is seen as an unacceptable loss of national sovereignty.

Perhaps most importantly, now that the EMU is in place, there may be no going back. Nothing in political life is irreversible or permanent. Nonetheless, it is hard to see how the twelve initial members, at least, could go back and reintroduce their own currencies.

### ***Political Union***

Far more uncertainties exist for further political integration. The early functionalists wanted economic ties to be the first step toward a broader political union, which

## **Globalization and the EU**

**THE EU is one of the best vehicles we have for illustrating the impact of globalization and regionalization.**

**It is, of course, a major architect of both. Critics have properly noted that European economies and cultures would have opened up to some degree without the EU. There can be little doubt, however, that it has sped up the flow of people, information, goods, and money within its borders. It has generally been a major advocate for liberalizing trade as well.**

**It also demonstrates that even the strongest powers are vulnerable to global pressures. As these lines were being written, the EU (and the rest of the international community) was both feeling the impact of the attacks of 9/11 and the resulting economic downturn.**

they knew they had to defer at the time. It remains the area in which the EU has had the most difficulty to this day.

The Maastricht Treaty formalized the EU's move toward more cooperation in foreign and national security policy, but the EU has actually accomplished very little on that score. There were, to be sure, some areas in which it enjoyed some success, usually those with economics at their core. Thus, the EU is a major participant in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which has channeled billions of dollars in aid and investment to eastern Europe. Similarly, the EU as a whole—and not the member states—represents the Union in all international economic negotiations.

Outside of economics, the results have been less impressive. Some governments, especially the French, did look to the EU in all the foreign policy crises since the collapse of communism. But when it came to actually committing troops to hot spots such as the former Yugoslavia, the decisions had to be made on the national level. That may change when the multilateral rapid deployment force is created.

If nothing else, this lack of progress toward political union has kept political integration on the EU's agenda. Supporters point to the pressures increasingly put on the EU and its difficulties in meeting them as evidence that it must develop institutions and resources that enable it to play a geopolitical role commensurate with its economic clout. Skeptics, of course, are just as quick to

point out that any movement in that direction will even further erode national sovereignty and is thus not likely to happen.

In all likelihood, further political integration will be more difficult to achieve than the creation of the single currency. The prospect of political union raises fears among both citizens and politicians, who object to ceding more sovereignty to bodies they cannot easily control. And any significant increase in the EU's political integration will bring it into conflict with existing bodies with geopolitical responsibilities, most notably NATO.

In the short run, we should not expect major new steps toward political integration. This is one of the areas in which new initiatives still require unanimity, something that is all but impossible to achieve given the post-Maastricht malaise.

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## Feedback

**F**eedback in the EU illustrates the importance of things that do *not* happen in political life. Put simply, there is very little feedback because of the way the EU is structured and the way people participate (or don't, as the case may be) in the Union.

As noted in the section on its origins, the EU has always been primarily of interest to elites—and until now, only economic ones at that. Polls routinely show that people pay little attention to things European. Turnout in European elections is usually much lower than in national ones. Coverage of the EU in the press is spotty and, as in most of political life, concentrates on its problems, not its accomplishments. There is, for instance, only one English-language weekly that concentrates on the EU, and it struggles to survive. When people are drawn to events in the EU, they tend to focus on the often demagogic claims about “faceless bureaucrats” in Brussels stealing their power. By contrast, as also noted earlier, very few people think of themselves primarily as Europeans, even though the number of people living, working, and even marrying across national borders is growing rapidly.

This lack of feedback overlaps with the notion of the democratic deficit. Critics properly point out that the size of the EU, as well as the fact that the European Parliament has relatively few and weak mechanisms for enforcing accountability, makes it difficult for average people to have much of an impact on decision making within it. In other words, the perceived lack of political clout magnifies the sense of distance and disinterest evident in most polls.

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## Conclusion: A Balance Sheet

**O**n balance, it is hard not to be optimistic about the EU on two levels. First, it has made a major contribution to the peace and prosperity that western Europe, at least, has enjoyed since the end of World War II. Obviously, no one factor can account for this, and scholars are still trying to determine just how important the EU and its predecessors have been. Nevertheless, it is impossible to deny the EU's role in turning western Europe into what Max Singer and Aaron Wildavsky have called a “zone of peace” in which war has become virtually impossible. It will be another major accomplishment if, working with NATO and other bodies, it is able to extend that zone eastward.

Second, it has demonstrated that the nation-state is not the end point in political evolution as many realists in international relations believe. Jacques Delors once claimed that EU policies determine or to some degree shape 80 percent of social and economic policies enacted in European capitals. Although that is an overstatement, the EU certainly has more power than the states in a number of critical policy-making arenas. In the language of international relations, the EU provides concrete evidence that states can and do cede some of their sovereignty to international organizations.



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## Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
<i>Acquis communautaire</i>	Delors, Jacques	CAP	Commission
Broadening	Monnet, Jean	CFSP	Committee of Permanent Representatives
Deepening	Prodi, Romano	COREPER	Common Agricultural Policy
Democratic deficit	Santer, Jacques	EC	Common Foreign and Security Policy
Qualified majority voting	Spaak, Paul-Henri	ECJ	Common Market
Subsidiarity		ECSC	Council of Ministers
Supranational		EEC	Euro
Three pillars		EMS	European Coal and Steel Community
Unanimity principle		EMU	European Community
		EU	European Court of Justice
		SEA	European Economic Community
			European Monetary System
			European Monetary Union
			European Parliament
			European Union
			Maastricht Treaty on European Union
			Marshall Plan
			Single European Act
			Treaty of Amsterdam
			Treaty of Nice
			Treaty of Rome

## Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of EU politics presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the “right direction” or is on the “wrong track.” If you were asked such a question about the EU, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?
3. Given what you learned in chapters 4–6, why would European integration have seemed appealing to so many people after World War II?
4. What is the democratic deficit? Why does it exist? What difference does it make for the EU today? For possible expansion tomorrow?
5. What do the terms *broadening* and *deepening* mean? Track them both through the evolution of the EU and its predecessors.
6. In what ways does the EU limit what its member states can do?
7. How do member states limit what the EU can do?
8. What are the prospects for further broadening and deepening of the EU in the next few years?

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# JAPAN

by Roger W. Bowen

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est la Môme Chose?
- Thinking About Japan
- The Evolution of Japanese Politics
- Political Culture: Groupism Versus Individualism
- Political Participation and Elections: The End of the LDP Era?
- The Japanese State: The Iron Triangle
- Public Policy: No Longer Number One?
- Feedback
- Conclusion: The Need for a Strong Japan

0 200 400 Miles  
0 200 400 Kilometers



*Prime ministers come and go, but we  
[ministry officials] are forever.*

OFFICIAL IN THE JAPANESE MINISTRY OF  
POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

## Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est la Môme Chose?

**P**lus ça change, plus c'est la même chose (the more things change, the more they stay the same). The phrase may be French, but it applies to Japanese politics in the early twenty-first century as well.

The world's second largest economic power closed out 2001 in rough shape. Its national debt stood at 130 percent of its gross domestic product, the highest indebtedness of any industrialized nation, and was predicted to steadily worsen over the next several years. Japan's creditworthiness in late 2001 compared favorably only with that of Italy's, the perennial economic dunce of the G-7 nations—the seven largest industrialized democracies. Mired in recession for nearly a decade now, the Japanese public's mood is being reflected by a record-high suicide rate, record-high joblessness (5.5 percent), and popular new books with such titles as *The Day the Yen Disappears* and *The Depression of 2002*.

It is therefore ironic that the Japanese government is today headed by the most popular prime minister in postwar history, **Koizumi Junichiro**. A self-styled reformist and, by Japan's typically conservative standards, an arch individualist, Koizumi boasts a style and mien that starkly contrasts with his twenty-five postwar predecessors. They all dressed in dark suits, looked and behaved like bureaucrats, used empty rhetoric effortlessly, slavishly adored traditional culture, and boasted of holding provincial, even tribal values. Koizumi, by contrast, is a fashion plate, sports a hairdo imitative of Beethoven's, talks seriously about public policy, speaks adoringly of rock 'n' roll, and looks beyond Japan's shores for inspiration. Closer in style to former prime minister Pierre Trudeau of Canada, or former mayor John Lindsay of New York, or even John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Koizumi seems every bit his own man and the global bon vivant. It may, in fact, be Koizumi's differences in character and style in this economically distressed era that makes him so popular with a Japanese public that has grown weary of the terribly predictable machine-style politicians of the past fifty years.

What is not yet clear is whether Koizumi is all style and no substance. He promised to reform both the failed

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### JAPAN: THE BASICS

Size	374,744 sq. km (a bit smaller than California)
Population	126,800,000 (July 2001), growing at 0.23% per year
GNP per capita	\$32,730
Currency	131 yen = \$1 (30 December 2001)
Life expectancy	77 men, 84 women
Ethnic composition	Largest minority group: Koreans, 0.6%
Capital	Tokyo
Head of state	Emperor Akihito (1989)
Head of government	Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro (2001)

political and economic systems but has not delivered on either promise during his first eight months in office. He rants and rails against the **Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)** but remains its leader. He claims to be a "new" politician but is part of the old guard that "inherited" their father's and grandfather's seat in parliament. He eschews factional politics but was himself a member of his predecessor's faction and was elected president of the party because of factional support. He spouts feminist values but in early 2002 fired his daring, outspoken female foreign minister (herself the daughter of a corrupt prime minister from the 1970s) after she ruffled the feathers of the ministry's bureaucrats.

Koizumi may be hip, but is he politically savvy? Is his tenure a comic interlude in an otherwise dark and dismal play? Is he a weirdo (*henjin*), as so many of his colleagues assert, or is he a breath of fresh air who will revitalize Japanese democracy? These questions will no doubt be answered sooner rather than later because millions of Japanese hurting due to the seriously ailing economy will not give even a popular prime minister the luxury of fiddling much longer.

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## Thinking About Japan

### *The Basics*

Any discussion of Japanese politics inevitably focuses on government-business relations and the remarkable growth of the Japanese economy, even with the difficul-



Prime Minister Koizumi in the Diet.

AP Photo/Itsuho Inouye

ties it has experienced during the past decade. However, Japanese politics also is about the Japanese people, a wonderfully complex, highly differentiated, politically pluralistic, and tradition-bound folk. Like most Americans, they also probably care more about their own material gain than about the operations of government or the sometimes shady practices of their politicians.

### The Land and People

The Japanese people, all 125 million of them, live on four main islands that together are about the size of California—that's half the population of the United States living on only one-twenty-fifth of its land area.

Mountains dominate Japan's topography, so only about 12 percent of Japan's total land area is inhabitable. Cities are so congested that three-hour commutes are not uncommon, and the Tokyo subway system works only because people shove each other into the cars, filling up every possible square inch of space.

Japan also lacks many of the natural resources needed to sustain such a large population and advanced industrialized economy. It imports 99 percent of its oil, which left it particularly vulnerable during the two oil shocks of the 1970s and the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990–91. It also is dependent on imports for more than

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## NAMES AND LANGUAGE

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Before turning to Japanese politics, there is one important preliminary—Japanese names can be confusing. In most of Asia, what we in the West call “family” names are presented first, and “first” names come last. Thus, George Bush would be Bush George. For most of those countries, this practice does not pose much of a problem, because journalists and academics alike routinely put last names first and first names last. That's not so for Japan. Western academics usually follow the Asian practice; journalists almost never do. Because it is the form the Japanese prefer, this chapter will use the more appropriate, if less common, rendering of family name first.

90 percent of its wheat, soybeans, corn, and feed grains, as well as most of its iron ore, nonferrous metals, lumber, uranium, coal, and natural gas. Despite the frequent complaints in the U.S. Congress and the press about the Japanese refusal to allow American rice into the market, Japan relies on imports for a full 70 percent of its food.

There are scarcities at home, the most important of which is land to build houses on. Until the recent recession, for instance, the land in Tokyo occupied by the emperor's palace and gardens was worth more than the entire state of California! At the height of the real estate boom in the late 1980s, a typically tiny Tokyo house of 675 square feet cost well over \$400,000. As Marvin Cetron and Owen Davies put it, “A \$1,000 bill bought a piece of land in downtown Tokyo roughly the size of the bill itself.”<sup>1</sup> Less than 20 percent of the population can realistically hope ever to be able to buy a home. It is not unusual for banks to finance multigenerational mortgages. Children inherit not their parents' wealth but their debt.

### The Economy

Despite such scarcity, look at what the Japanese have accomplished. At the end of World War II, Japan's GNP was less than colonial Malaya's. Its industry, infrastructure, and major cities had been destroyed by Allied bombing. Unemployment and homelessness had reached epidemic proportions. Fifteen years later, the per capita income was a mere \$477. Yet, today, the average Japanese

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<sup>1</sup>Marvin Cetron and Owen Davies, *Crystal Globe: The Haves and Have-Nots of the New World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 137.

The crowded Japanese public transit system. A typical day finds so many people trying to get on subway trains that people are actually employed to shove them into the cars as tightly as possible.



© Anthony Siau/Getty Images

worker's income is \$2,000 more than the average American's. Japan has the world's second-largest economy, despite the current recession.

According to a recent prime minister's survey, a hefty 70 percent of all Japanese say that they are satisfied with their lives. Foreign visitors to Japan invariably comment on the virtual absence of slums, homelessness, poverty, and crime. Of all the industrialized democracies, only the United States has a larger share of its eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds attending colleges and universities. Japan, in fact, enjoys one of the most equitable income distributions in the industrialized world, as well as the lowest crime rate, the highest life expectancy, and the lowest unemployment rate. Indeed, Japan appears to be one big, happy middle-class family.

Japan also is one of the most homogeneous countries in the world. There are about 60,000 Ainu, the only aboriginal group left that antedates the arrival of what we now call the Japanese at least two thousand years ago. There are three-quarters of a million people of Korean origin, who emigrated when their country was a Japanese colony but who have never been granted the right to Japanese citizenship. There also are a few hundred thousand Southeast Asians working in Japan. However, they will not be allowed to stay permanently, and they give rise to some of the same racial problems we see in Europe and North America.

Japan also must cope with the same trends that are affecting all the industrialized democracies. Japanese

corporate executives are discovering, for instance, that they have to shift much of their heavy industrial production to other countries where labor costs are lower. That, in turn, means that there is not as much of the vaunted job security and employee loyalty as there used to be. In addition, Japan has more and more older people who will put an increasingly heavy burden on its social service system and, hence, on the government budget. At the same time, it is a country in which younger, well-educated people, especially women, are ever less willing to accept their traditional roles in what has always been a rather hierarchical society.

Japan's difficulties may actually prove more vexing than most states' because of the 1992 collapse of its **bubble economy**, from which it has yet to recover. Much of the spectacular growth of the late 1980s was ephemeral. Massive fortunes were made through activities that added little to the strength of the economy as a whole—most notably through real estate and financial speculation.

Some of the stories about the conspicuous consumption of newly rich Japanese were amazing. James Fallows wrote about being served chocolate mousse with shredded gold on the top (for those who are interested, he claims the gold was tasteless and had the texture of Saran Wrap).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> James Fallows, *Looking at the Sun* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994), 13.

For technical reasons we do not need to go into here, the bubble economy collapsed in the early 1990s. Combined with broader economic and political issues, which will occupy our attention for the rest of this chapter, the country was plunged into its deepest recession since the end of World War II. The stock and real estate markets plummeted. A few banks collapsed, and many others found themselves heavily in debt. The government, too, found itself running massive budget deficits while facing growing demands to bail out erstwhile successful corporations that now were in serious trouble. Not surprisingly, the political difficulties associated with forty years of LDP rule, such as government corruption and bias toward big business, took on greater public significance that culminated in the party's first defeat at the polls and its temporary departure from office. Despite repeated promises of major economic restructuring, deregulation, and a re-creation of the economy known as the "big bang" (that would cost about \$150 billion), Japan's economic malaise has persisted, and government credibility has suffered in the minds of the voters.

Over the past decade, Japan's economy has slipped in and out of recession no fewer than four times. The most recent recession, beginning at the turn of the millennium, has produced serious deflation, meaning that the prices of consumer goods—from land to food—have gone down. Consumers, therefore, are tending not to buy on the assumption that, if they wait, costs will drop even more—which, in turn, will cause manufacturers to reduce production and to cut back on their own costs by laying off workers, thereby driving up unemployment. While this cycle mires Japan in recession, consumers happy with declining prices tend to register their satisfaction with a lower cost of living by supporting the LDP-led coalition in power.

### Society

Despite its relative homogeneity, Japan has more than its share of discrimination. Some 2 million *burakumin* (so-called outcasts, whose ancestors performed "unclean" tasks), the ethnic Koreans, and the Ainu all suffer humiliating and degrading forms of racial discrimination. Similarly, Sumo officials once did everything within their power to keep an American, Akebono (né Chad Rowan), from being named the country's top wrestler because they believed that no foreigner could be a true Sumo champion.

Japanese racism is matched by Japanese sexism. Women in Japan are paid only about 56 percent of the average salary of male workers. Fewer than 5 percent of

the leadership positions in the government are filled by women. Only about 30 percent of all college graduates are women. And over 90 percent of all part-time workers—who are not protected by corporate welfare policies—are women.

But, then, nearly two-thirds of the entire workforce—male or female—is not protected by the famous corporate perks of lifetime employment, seniority, insurance schemes, subsidized housing, and vacation benefits. Furthermore, the average Japanese worker puts in over 2,100 hours annually on the job, significantly more than the typical American at 1,850 hours per year or German at 1,600 hours.

Not until thirty years ago did those Japanese not covered by employers' health insurance and pension plans begin receiving benefits provided by the state, and the coverage generally is some 10 percent lower than that in the United States. Japan's traditionally high rate of personal savings is the highest in the industrialized world, primarily because families have to take responsibility for meeting financial needs during the kinds of personal crises covered by social insurance programs in Britain, France, or Germany.

But the high savings rate also is a reflection of the high cost of living. And it's not merely the price of land. Many houses are poorly built, and only about two-thirds of all homes are linked to sewer systems. Food costs up to four times as much as it does in the United States, reflecting both the need to import food and the subsidies paid to the politically powerful farmers, who constitute only about 7 percent of the labor force.

As the economy has soured and the unemployment rate hit a historical high of nearly 6 percent in 2001, the public's confidence in its political system has declined. A recent opinion poll shows that 68 percent of the public does not trust the government, and 75 percent believe that the voters' interests are not reflected in government policy. Barely 20 percent of the public, according to another recent opinion poll, believe that democracy works well in Japan, and a plurality of those who say it is not working attribute democracy's failure to politicians and political parties.

### *Political Continuity?*

A country's strengths and weaknesses, of course, have many causes. At the top of any list for Japan is the LDP's unprecedented control of every government for nearly fifty years. On the one hand, this monopoly of control has made the strong Japanese state possible. On the other, it has reinforced qualms about Japanese democracy.

One party has dominated political life for extended periods in other countries as well. As we saw in chapter 5, the French Gaullists were in power for nearly a quarter-century after the formation of the Fifth Republic. Italy's Christian Democrats were for years the largest party in every government, and Sweden's Social Democrats had a similar record from the mid-1930s through the mid-1970s.

What sets Japan apart is that, unlike those other nations' parties, the LDP did not have to share power with anyone else for most of that time. Although it has not won a majority of the vote since the 1960s, the LDP won a working majority of the seats in the **House of Representatives**, the all-important lower house of the Diet, in every election from the 1950s until 1993, and by 1997 it was again in control.

Japan's political life also is marked by so much continuity because the bureaucracy is unusually powerful and stable. Top civil servants play an even greater role in formulating policy than in either Germany or France. Furthermore, after "retiring" in their mid-fifties, most bureaucrats go through a process known as *amakudari*, (literally, "descent from heaven"), in which they either join the senior staff of a corporation or serve as an LDP member in the Diet. All but four of the postwar prime ministers began their careers as top civil servants. In addition, the links between business, LDP politicians, and the bureaucratic elite are much stronger than they ever were in France during the heyday of Gaullist rule. The shared views of the members of these groups, as well as their ability to work together in defining public policy with little effective opposition, had a lot to do with both Japan's successes and its failures following World War II. Together, they pursued microeconomic policies that helped make Japan's economy the envy of most of the world. At the same time, they forged policies that largely ignored the disfavored social groups mentioned earlier.

If there is some uncertainty about continuity in policy making today (and hence the question mark in the subhead for this section), it is because in June 1993 a political earthquake hit Japan. Thirty-nine LDP members of parliament voted against Prime Minister **Miyazawa Kiichi** in a vote of confidence, depriving the government of its parliamentary majority. Miyazawa then dissolved parliament and called new elections for July.

Then something even more unthinkable happened. The LDP lost the elections that followed and, with it, its stranglehold on political life. For the first time in thirty-eight years, the prime minister came from another party, albeit a newly formed one consisting largely of LDP defectors.

There were many reasons the 1993 election turned out that way, but none was more important than the growing voter dissatisfaction with corruption in the LDP. In 1992 Miyazawa's predecessor, **Takeshita Noboru**, was revealed to have received millions of dollars of illegal campaign contributions from gangster Kanemaru Shin, the party's chief kingmaker. Kanemaru was put on trial for accepting hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes while allegedly also being a master briber as well.

In the month between Miyazawa's defeat and the elections, Japanese politics changed more than it had in the preceding thirty-eight years. Two groups of LDP Diet members who had voted against Miyazawa quit it to form new political parties. One sign of how confusing the party system had become was that American journalists could not even agree on how to translate the names of the new organizations. A small group of ten Diet members formed the Pioneer, or Harbinger, Party. A larger group of thirty-six, led by former cabinet member Hata Tsutomu and LDP power broker Ozawa Ichiro, formed the Renewal Party.

The politician who replaced Miyazawa as prime minister, Hosokawa Morihiro, had been a member of the LDP since 1971, when he was first elected to the upper house with the support of **Tanaka Kakuei** (the father of Koizumi's foreign minister). By all accounts, Hosokawa got the top post only because of behind-the-scenes machinations by Ozawa, Tanaka's protégé. Only in 1992 did Hosokawa break with the LDP to create his own tiny Japan New Party. Hosokawa's government was widely referred to as "non-LDP" because it consisted of all seven parliamentary parties other than the LDP and the Communists. Taking power in a climate of deep public disdain for LDP corruption, the Hosokawa government's platform was to solve "the Number 1 problem, namely the connection between politicians and business."<sup>3</sup> It failed to do so. Eight months later, Hosokawa was forced to resign because of an alleged illicit relationship with a mob-connected trucking company.

Since then, the Japanese political scene has been confusing. Hosokawa's government fell in April 1994 and was replaced by another non-LDP government, which lasted only eight weeks. Then a peculiar coalition featuring a Socialist prime minister, what was left of the LDP, and an LDP splinter party took office. In January 1996 yet another new government took power, this one also a coalition but led by the new LDP leader, **Hashimoto Ryutaro**.

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<sup>3</sup>*Asahi Shimbun*, 19 Oct. 1993.



A young proreform LDP legislator attempting to prevent conservative LDP executives from gaining access to a meeting room in party headquarters.

AP/Wide World Photos

By autumn 1997 Hashimoto's LDP no longer needed coalition partners to control the lower house. However, the economic crisis throughout Asia and the deepening recession at home emboldened the opposition parties in May 1998 to reorganize into loose coalitions, in anticipation of the July upper house election. Unhappy with Hashimoto's failure to end the recession, an angry electorate delivered a crushing blow to the LDP, whose loss of fifteen seats was interpreted by Hashimoto as a request to step down as prime minister and which led to the choice of Obuchi. But Obuchi's sudden death in office in April 1999 forced LDP insiders to quickly replace him as party president, and therefore as prime minister, with one of their own, Mori Kazu. Prone to making tasteless, off-color remarks and lacking the skills needed to repair the economy, Mori was eased out before finishing even one year in office. An LDP members' revolt in the provinces led to the selection of the suddenly popular Koizumi, an LDP outsider who had twice previously lost in his bid to become premier.

### Key Questions

Not everyone approves of the LDP's domination of Japanese political life, but it was a key cause of Japan's remarkable economic success during the postwar years. Nonetheless, some critics question whether the Japanese state is democratic or oligarchic—little more than the mouthpiece and/or partner of big business and the entrenched bureaucracy, which together with the LDP form an **iron triangle**. According to journalist Karel von

Wolferen, Japan is not democratic but “is ruled through highly informal structures of governance and bureaucratic authority which dovetail with the so-called *jinmyaku* (personal network) relations and transactions, unregulated by law, among clusters of the elite.”<sup>4</sup>

That's not the only viewpoint, of course.

Many Japan specialists in the United States, most of whom tend to be fans of Japan, and most Japanese themselves generally have reacted to growing criticism of “their” country and its trade practices by claiming that Japan is really more democratic and commercially fair-minded than most Americans appreciate. T. J. Pempel, for example, declares simply that “Japan is a political democracy,” pointing to its free elections, the peaceful transfer of power, the existence of competing political parties, and the array of personal freedoms guaranteed to every citizen by its constitution. However, many critics who study Japan professionally see these academic declarations as facile attempts to defend the indefensible.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, what you read about Japan depends on who is doing the writing—American Japanologists and Japanese officials on the one side, and journalists and the odd Japanese or American critic on the other. Neither side has a monopoly on the truth, nor can either side's arguments be completely dismissed. On some issues of contention, it is even possible to argue that both sides are correct, depending on how one interprets the evidence.

Such differences of opinion exist for the economy as well. Admittedly, this issue is not as hotly debated now in light of the recession following the collapse of the bubble economy. But this does not mean that Washington, in particular, will stop criticizing Japanese business practices and the government policies that underlie them. Those critics still believe that the Japanese state somehow has “loaded the dice,” giving its businesses an unfair advantage in global trade while restricting the access of foreign companies to its own markets. Such criticisms are still common even though foreign direct investment, and U.S. investment especially, has grown considerably over the past five years—with the result, for example, that seven of Japan's nine auto manufacturers are now partially foreign owned. Yet as the Japanese economy rebounds, as it most certainly will, and as U.S. trade deficits with Japan mount, as they most certainly will, Washington no doubt will again apply pressure on

<sup>4</sup>Karel von Wolferen, “The Japan Problem Revisited,” *Foreign Affairs*, 69 (1990), 47.

<sup>5</sup>T. J. Pempel, *The Dilemmas of Success* (New York: Foreign Policy Association Headline Series, 1991), 137.

Japan to make its economy less protectionist, more open, and less regulated.

Finally, at first glance, Japan's political system seems to resemble those we saw in Britain, France, and Germany, and its economy is clearly capitalistic, if by that we mean that it is dominated by profit-seeking private corporations. Once we dig a little deeper, however, we find the hierarchical institutions, overlapping networks of power, and cultural values that stress group loyalty ahead of individualism or the kind of short-term profit-maximizing behavior typical of American or British corporations.

In short, the trends we have already seen, and the debates over them, have led scholars to ask two sets of questions about Japan. The first set draws our attention to the specifics of Japanese politics:

- Can Japan escape the corruption of money politics and restore public confidence, which has eroded considerably?
- Will the bureaucrats and big-business leaders who, with the LDP, form the rest of the iron triangle retain all or most of their long-standing influence?
- What about consumers, women, and other “new” groups that have been clamoring for more of a say?

These questions lead to a second set of queries that allow us to use Japan as a springboard to reconsider broader themes and that make it an ideal country to use in bringing part 2 to an end:

- What minimal criteria must a country meet before we are comfortable calling it democratic?
- Why are some states more directly and extensively involved in economic policy making than others?
- Why has economic performance generally been better in countries with more interventionist states? And why has it been declining since the end of the cold war?
- How do global social and economic changes affect what governments try to and can accomplish?
- Are we in the midst of a period in which those changes will produce profound alterations in political life, including sharp reductions in the power and perhaps the sovereignty of the nation-state itself?

## The Evolution of Japanese Politics

It should already be clear that Japanese capitalism and democracy are quite different from what we saw in the countries covered in chapters 3–6. Japanese society as

**TABLE 8.1** Key Events in Japanese History

YEAR	EVENT
660 B.C.	Traditional date given for first emperor
1192 A.D.	First shogun, Minamoto Yoritomo
1603	Establishment of Tokugawa shogunate
1853	Arrival of Admiral Perry
1867–68	Meiji Restoration
1894–95	Sino-Japanese War
1904–05	Russo-Japanese War
1939–45	World War II
1945–52	Occupation of Japan

a whole is far more hierarchical, and the state plays a more active role in steering the economy than is the case anywhere in Europe or North America. Our goal here is try to understand why Japan is different by exploring the way the state evolved, which stands in sharp contrast to what we saw in western Europe and the United States.

### *Before the West Arrived*

The Japanese like to point out that they have the oldest continuous monarchy in the world. To this day, they celebrate Foundation Day on 11 February, the day in 660 B.C. when Jimmu was enthroned as Japan's first emperor. (See table 8.1.)

Obviously, much has changed over the past 2,662 years. Nonetheless, some characteristics that continue to shape Japan were already in place that long ago. Social life revolved heavily around the community and rice cultivation. Although the population was far more diverse ethnically than it is today, almost everyone spoke the same language, derived from Chinese. For centuries the Japanese had been studying in and trading with China and Korea. Chinese cultural influence was also significant, including the introduction of Confucian and Buddhist values, which reinforced existing Shinto beliefs, most notably respect for one's superiors. (Also see chapter 11.)

Over the next several centuries, the Japanese developed a form of feudalism that shed the centralized, meritocratic rule that was the basis of China's strong state. The emperor was essentially a figurehead, and the royal family became a symbol of Japanese unity rather than the country's actual rulers. Power was decentralized and was held by feudal lords. Like their European counterparts, the Japanese lords offered their vassals protection in exchange for their subservience and a share of what they produced. Feudal rule was sustained by a class of warriors known as samurai. In 1192 the leader of one of those feudal clans, Minamoto Yoritomo, seized control

of much of the country and declared himself the supreme military leader, or **shogun** (which literally means “barbarian-subduing generalissimo”), which gave Japanese feudalism a distinctly militaristic bent.

For the next seven centuries, Japan was ruled under a gradually evolving system that combined feudal and military elements. Military prowess became more important than birth in determining the power of feudal lords, who codified the laws regarding the ownership and use of land. The Japanese, or Zen, version of Buddhism, with its emphasis on self-discipline, tied warriors to their lords. Historians argue that the most important cultural value was the *bushido*, or the way of the warrior. It obligated the samurai to carry out his lord’s wishes, and, should he fail and thereby bring on shame, a samurai was expected to commit *seppuku*, Japan’s ritualistic form of suicide.

During the thirteenth century, Japan faced an attack by Koreans under the command of the great Mongol, Kublai Khan. After a ferocious two-month battle, the invaders were repulsed, a victory that had two important consequences. First, the descendants of the Minamoto were so weakened that there was no longer any semblance of central rule. Second, Japan spent most of the next six hundred years in all but total isolation from the rest of the world, which makes its history dramatically different even from that other venerable island nation, Great Britain. Although Britain has not been invaded since 1066, British soldiers fought in the Crusades, on the Continent, and in the New World; its merchants traded abroad; and its elite, in general, had regular contact with counterparts on the Continent.

By the sixteenth century, feudalism had taken on a new form. Independent military lords, or **daimyo**, had gained control of vast areas and operated with virtually no oversight or control from above. A civil war broke out as one after another daimyo tried to recentralize the state. That struggle finally ended when Tokugawa Ieyasu took power as shogun in 1603, creating a new regime that would last until the Americans arrived 250 years later.

The **Tokugawa shogunate** (1603–1867) ruling style has frequently been called “centralized feudalism.” The daimyo grew more important as they consolidated their control over ever larger territories. At the same time, the Tokugawa family established its capital in the backwater fishing village of Edo—today’s Tokyo. As with the nobility in the France of Louis XIV, the shogun required the daimyo to spend much of the year in the capital and used them to enforce central rule. The emperor was relegated to an exclusively symbolic role, remaining in the traditional capital city of Kyoto while real political power shifted to Edo.

Tokugawa Japan was structured along widely accepted, strictly hierarchical lines. The nobility, of course, was at the top. Just below them were the samurai, who lost much of their military role during these centuries of relative calm. Many attended one of the more than two hundred academies scattered around the country and became civil administrators for both the shogun and the daimyo, in the process becoming Japan’s first bureaucrats.

There was a huge gap between the samurai and the next group down the social ladder—the peasant-cultivators. Although Confucian principles valued agriculture, in practice the farmers had a difficult life. There was no chance for upward mobility or even a comfortable standard of living. Symbolically, the peasants’ low social position is most evident in the fact that they were not allowed to have family names.

Below them were two other groups. Next to last were the artisans—self-employed individuals who manufactured what commercial goods there were. Last, and definitely least, were the merchants. By the nineteenth century, many lords and samurai found themselves heavily in debt to the growing merchant class, but these merchants made few moves to gain political power or even to enhance their social status, and they were still largely viewed as social parasites.

By the nineteenth century, the Tokugawa family and the social system had declined dramatically. As a result, when the West first arrived in the form of Admiral Perry in 1853, the shogunate was vulnerable.

### ***The Meiji Restoration and the Rise of Imperial Japan***

Most scholars agree that the modern Japanese state has its roots in the **Meiji Restoration**, beginning in 1867–68, when the Tokugawa bureaucratic-military dictatorship was toppled by imperial forces after several years of civil war. The civil war itself had been set in motion by the arrival of Westerners in the 1850s and the resulting dissent.

When U.S. Commodore Matthew C. Perry’s fleet of ships steamed into Tokyo Bay in 1853, the Japanese were forced to abandon their almost 250-year-old policy of isolation and open their borders to trade. Sword-swinging samurai, who were wedded to a feudal social, economic, and political order, found themselves ill-equipped to ward off modern Western troops. Prudence and military impotence combined to force the shogunate to open Japan. This effectively burst the bubble of island consciousness that had long nurtured provincial feelings of national greatness.

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 JAPAN AND THE WEST IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
 

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It is worth underscoring just how different the Japanese experience was from what we saw in Europe. On the one hand, Japan developed a semblance of national unity and centralized government earlier and more easily than any of the European democracies. On the other hand, it was far “behind” the European democracies in terms of most of the other factors considered in chapters 2–6.

For example, by the nineteenth century, individualism had taken root everywhere except in parts of Germany. The industrial revolution was transforming not just the economy but society as a whole. The British were well on the way toward consolidating a democratic regime, and democratic forces had staged revolutions in France and much of present-day Germany.

Western nations did not attempt to colonize Japan as they did with China. Yet their very presence forced Japanese leaders to confront their powerlessness as never before. Japanese leaders felt obligated to play “catch-up” with the West.

The last Tokugawa shogun gave up power in 1868. As in past regime changes, the victorious oligarchs seized power in the name of the emperor, ostensibly “restoring” the sixteen-year-old Meiji ruler to power. In fact, the emperor had little or nothing to do with the revolution carried out by the young, rural samurai and never played a significant role in the dramatic changes that followed.

Because Tokugawa rule was undermined by aristocrats of the old order, many of its dominant institutions survived. The feudal notion, for example, of “government praised, people despised” (*kanson mimpi*), which reflected aristocratic dominance, continued to be central to the ruling ideology of the new Meiji order (1868–1912). Feelings of insularity also survived, nurtured no doubt by the differences in language, religion, and customs. Also surviving was the custom of a hidden hand behind the throne. The emperor himself had no real power; it was the government bureaucrats, in fact, who made policy and conducted affairs of state. The latter, known as the Meiji oligarchs or **genro** (senior statesmen), held real, but less than absolute, power in Japan until the First World War. A dozen or so names stand out, including Okubo Toshimichi, Yamagata Aritomo, and Ito Hirobumi.

In Japan, by contrast, the themes of national unity and centralized government we saw at play at the beginning of the millennium were at the heart of its culture. Ardath Burks sums them up well: “Values are achieved in groups (the family, the community). These values are endowed with an almost sacred Japanese quality and are best implemented by, or in the name of, symbolic heads of family-style groups. Individual Japanese receive a continuous flow of blessings that establish obligations—in this way individuals demonstrate morality. Social, political, ethical, and religious norms are of value only as they are valuable to the group.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Ardath Burks, *Japan: A Postindustrial Power*, 3rd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991), 48.

Together, these men fashioned a system of rule that bears most of the vilification or the praise, depending on where one stands, for Japan’s speedy rise to international prominence by the end of the nineteenth century. Anti-democratic, elitist, and rabidly nationalistic, the *genro* tolerated no opposition to their rule and were single-minded in their efforts to make Japan into a rich country and to create a strong military (*fukoku kyohei*). In important respects, they measured progress in terms of the state’s ability to silence dissenters at home, generate capital through onerous taxation, and expand militarily abroad. In short, their policies were repressive, exploitative, and imperialistic.

The Meiji leaders reformed Japan by toppling almost every feudal and anticapitalist institution. They engineered a legal end to the 250-odd feudal domains that had constituted decentralized administrative units in the Tokugawa period and replaced them with one-fifth as many centralized units, known as prefectures. To further symbolize the centralization of power, the boy-emperor Meiji was moved from the ancient imperial capital of Kyoto to Tokyo. Along with the destruction of feudal domains came the elimination of samurai privileges, which was accomplished by abolishing the feudal practice of supporting them financially simply because they were samurai. The government converted their stipends into bonds that would serve for many as start-up capital to finance new businesses or farms. However, vainglorious and proud of their traditional warrior status, thousands of samurai rebelled



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One of the most important of the Meiji-era genro, Ito Hirobumi.

against the destruction of class privileges. But by 1877 the government's new and modern peasant conscript army had easily suppressed the last of the samurai rebellions.

Samurai class privileges were not the only obstacle to building a modern state. In the feudal era, peasants had not been allowed to own land, nor were they permitted to change residence or occupation. Rightfully, the oligarchs saw these feudal institutions as impediments to industrial development. Hence, shortly after dispossessing the lords of their domains, the Meiji oligarchs instituted land reform, giving peasants ownership of the land that they once merely worked for their lord's pleasure. In so doing, the oligarchs transformed peasants living on the margins of subsistence into tax-paying farmers who now produced a surplus for the market.

Further, the oligarchs implemented educational reforms both to spur economic development and to facilitate the spread of nationalistic values. Another reform with educational implications was the military draft,

which represented an attempt to turn peasants into patriotic upholders of law and order at home and abroad.

After centuries of isolation, the new elite recognized that it had a lot to learn from the outside world. So, groups of young Japanese were sent on study missions abroad. The genro used their findings to create an educational system based on France's and a bureaucracy based on Germany's. Industrial know-how came from the United States and Britain. In as clear an example as we have seen in this book, the Japanese effectively responded to changed global conditions, something they were to do again after World War II.

In short, the genro reached the same basic conclusion that Bismarck and his colleagues did in the newly unified Germany in the late nineteenth century. Both countries found themselves lagging behind the great powers. Both realized, too, that they could not rely on "natural" market forces to industrialize and close the gap. Instead, both decided to use the state to forge a more rapid **revolution from above**. If anything, the Japanese went further than the Germans, perhaps because they had a larger gap to close.

The new Meiji institutions and policies did not come about without objections. As mentioned previously, some of the reforms incited tradition-bound samurai to rebel. Indirectly, the reforms also contributed to farmer rebellions, which had a distinctly democratic bent. Peasants-turned-farmers had benefited from the Meiji government's land reform, but by the late 1870s and early 1880s, the economy was sinking into a depression. Property taxes became onerous for small and middle-level farmers, forcing many into bankruptcy and/or tenancy. By the early 1880s the newly dispossessed farmers started allying themselves with ex-samurai intellectuals and reformers who had adopted American, British, and French notions of "natural rights" as an oppositionist ideology. Demanding "no taxation without representation," they agitated for a more democratic form of government in which elected officials were held accountable to the governed.

Japan's first political parties, the Jiyuto (Freedom) Party and Kaishinto (Progressive) Party, gave organizational force to growing popular discontent. The oligarchs responded by forming their own Imperial (Teiseito) Party. They also used the secret police to break up opposition party meetings and the regular police and even the army to smash local party branches that threatened to invoke the "natural right" of rebellion in defending their "God-given" right to own property. Wide-scale repression and cooptation of larger landowners served to destroy the two opposition parties by 1885. Nonetheless,

the precedent of a popular linkage of property rights with political rights had been established, showing that even in a nation with no real democratic traditions, capitalism (or liberalism) invariably produces some popular movement toward demands for democratic government.

The Meiji oligarchs hedged their bets that the incipient democracy had been nipped in the bud by taking the initiative and bestowing an imperial constitution on the people in 1889. In effect until after World War II, the so-called Meiji Constitution was famous for its feudalistic emphasis on the people's duties and for its omission of any notion of their democratic rights. It did establish a bicameral legislature—the (**Diet**)—with a lower house of elected commoners and an upper House of Peers of appointed noblemen. But the government restricted the franchise to about 1 percent of the male population. Not surprisingly, the oligarchs reserved all executive powers for themselves, not the least of which were the appointment of the prime minister and the power to settle budgetary matters without parliamentary approval, much as in imperial Germany.

The use of political levers to generate capital and to build a modern military characterizes the antidemocratic genius of Japan's ruling oligarchs. These two features also describe what Chalmers Johnson has called the "developmental state." Meiji leaders employed the state's wealth, obtained through taxation, to finance both public and private enterprises. Because the Meiji leaders feared the West, they directed state capital toward creating and developing military-related industries, such as shipbuilding, armaments, steel, mining, railroads, and the telegraph. Once these industries began showing a profit, the state sold them to private entrepreneurs who had personal connections with Meiji leaders, connections that were further cemented as the state and private interests did more business together. This policy, designed to produce a "rich state and strong military," necessarily discriminated against rural common people, whose taxes financed such development.

The freedom to make money was not matched by freedom for the Japanese to express themselves politically. This antidemocratic imbalance, akin to the German notion of a faulted society, gave the oligarchs broad latitude to carry out their policies without worrying about being held accountable by the citizenry. Indeed, so successful were the education and conscription reforms that in a generation's time the oligarchs could win wars against China (1894–95) and Russia (1904–05), colonize Korea (1910), violently suppress political dissidents at home, and be hailed by a sufficiently socialized, jingoistic public as national heroes.

In 1912 the Meiji emperor died, and his mentally deficient son ascended the throne. Although his reign lasted only until his death in 1925, socioeconomic change during this period helped usher in significant democratizing trends that together spawned what historians call **Taisho democracy**.

By the close of World War I, Japan had become more than a nation of peasants and samurai. A new middle class and an industrial working class, with little truck for the elitist class values of Japan's political rulers, had developed. Japan's new underclass felt totally unrepresented by the state and consequently began agitating for democratic rights, especially the franchise.

Japan entered the First World War on the Allied side, which, according to President Woodrow Wilson, wanted "to make the world safe for [liberal] democracy." Japan's reasons for siding with the Allies, however, had more to do with an imperialist desire to seize control of German colonial territory in China than with any democratic leanings.

In the last years of the war, however, events in Russia had the curious effect of prompting moves toward greater democratization in Japan. In 1917 the Bolshevik revolution toppled an ancient monarchy—one not as old as Japan's but still thought to have been as firmly entrenched—in the name of "peace, land, and bread." Meanwhile, in Japan, labor strikes increased in number as workers began to appreciate that they enjoyed a measure of power by denying exploitative factory owners the fruits of their labor. A growing tenant class, dispossessed of family land, followed the workers' example by mounting strikes of its own. And social democrats and communists started preaching to and organizing lower-class people who were dissatisfied with the conservative status quo, even though the members of such illegal organizations risked arrest.

These developments frightened the rigid oligarchs ruling Japan. When the so-called rice riots engulfed almost the entire nation in 1918, the authorities feared a popular revolution.

The riots helped to discredit the militarist regime of General Terauchi and ushered in the first commoner prime minister, Hara Kei, head of the Seiyukai Party. Hara dealt with popular pressure for expanding the franchise by reducing, but not eliminating, the tax requirement for voting. His successors, however, expanded the franchise in 1925, permitting all adult males to vote in national elections.

Universal male suffrage, however, did little more than force the military, genro, bureaucracy, big business, and aristocracy to expand the oligarchy to include the so-called established political parties in their state al-



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Hiroshima shortly after the first atomic bomb was dropped in August 1945.

liance. For their part, the established parties reasoned that if you can't beat them, join them. Hence, they were easily co-opted by the ruling oligarchy. Although many new, more popular political parties were formed as a result of universal suffrage, they lacked the funds, organization, and networks to compete with the established parties. Also, even as the franchise was extended, the state imposed a draconian piece of legislation—the Peace Preservation Law—prohibiting any political party or person from advocating fundamental changes in the state's composition. Censorship and police repression were used to stifle democratic dissent.

In 1926 the reign of Emperor **Hirohito** (called the era of *Showa*, meaning “enlightened peace,” which lasted until his death in 1989) began with a sharp contraction in Japan's commitment to democracy. The situation only worsened when the Great Depression struck in the late 1920s. Japanese military aggression increased in the early 1930s, in turn producing new threats to national security from anti-Japanese nationalist movements abroad, especially in China. The state sought to deal with these twin enemies of a worsening economy and threats to security by tightening controls. The result was something akin to European fascism, with the state attempting to incorporate virtually every pluralist group

into a totalitarian or corporatist state. Religious, educational, journalistic, academic, agricultural, business, and most other interest groups came under state control. The establishment by 1938 of a one-party state under the emperor system, followed in 1940 by a military-political alliance with Hitler's Nazis and Mussolini's fascists, indicated that democracy in Japan had died—if, indeed, it had ever been truly alive.

Like its fascist allies, Japan flexed its muscles abroad as well. Interwar Japanese imperialism began with the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, leading to its annexation the following year. By 1937 Japan was fighting a full-scale war with China. On 7 December 1941 Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor, bringing the United States into World War II. At the height of its power, Japan conquered much of the eastern half of China and all of Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indochina, Malaya, Thailand, Burma, and Indonesia.

But its empire proved to be one of the world's most short-lived. By 1944 Japanese troops were being pushed back toward the home islands. In early 1945 U.S. planes began bombing Japanese cities, utterly destroying Tokyo with fire bombs and, of course, destroying Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the first (and so far, only) two atomic bombs used in combat.

## *Occupation and the Contemporary Japanese State*

Once again, a shock from the United States was one of the most important turning points in Japanese history, leading to the adoption of the unusual versions of democracy and capitalism mentioned earlier. Like Germany, Japan was in shambles after its surrender. Nearly 3 million people had been killed, the industrial infrastructure was destroyed, some 50 percent of the population was unemployed, and agricultural production was down by two-thirds. The psychological damage done to Japan's historical sense of racial and cultural superiority is nearly impossible to measure, but clearly the damage was substantial. As Ienaga Saburo put it, "Defeat had been unthinkable, surrender inconceivable, but the unthinkable and inconceivable had happened."<sup>6</sup> And the shock was emotional as well as physical. Defeat and destruction had exposed many of Japan's wartime leaders as liars and war criminals. Militaristic propaganda, disguised as education, had been shown to be morally bankrupt. The putative glories of conquest, imperialism, and war had been thoroughly discredited.

Japan was much like the Germany we saw in chapter 6—defeated, demoralized, and occupied. In one key respect, however, the occupations and reconstruction were carried out quite differently. In Germany the occupation was the combined responsibility of the four Allied powers: the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. In Japan, by contrast, the United States alone controlled the occupation. The United States was able to keep the other countries out. France and Britain had not played a major role in the Pacific theater, and the Soviet Union only officially declared war on Japan in the interlude between the two atomic bombings, during the week before Japan's unconditional surrender.

The occupation, which lasted from August 1945 until April 1952, was an American enterprise, headed during its all-important first years by the **supreme commander of the Allied powers (SCAP)**, General **Douglas MacArthur**. MacArthur saw defeated Japan as "a great laboratory for an experiment in the liberation of a people from totalitarian military rule and for the liberalization of government within." MacArthur saw his role as that of social, economic, and political engineer, and believed that his task was to rebuild Japan from the top down. Within a year of taking charge, he proclaimed that

a "spiritual revolution" under his benevolent guidance had put an end to Japan's traditional "feudalistic overlordship" and had imparted "the American democratic way of life" in once-lost Japan.

The central goals of the occupation, and the central contradictions they contained, are best summarized by American Japanologist John Dower: "Japan was to be demilitarized by the [U.S.] military, decentralized by a [U.S. military] hierarchy, democratized from above. It was to undergo a revolution from without, bloodless and without revolutionaries."<sup>7</sup> It is arguable, ironically, that in light of Japan's cultural heritage of revering hierarchy and kowtowing to authority only a military government headed by an imperious personality like MacArthur could have carried out such thorough reform so effectively.

Of the two goals, demilitarization clearly was the easiest to achieve. It began with Emperor Hirohito's broadcast on 14 August 1945 announcing Japan's unconditional surrender. Long taught to revere as a god an emperor whom they had never heard or seen, the Japanese people, including the military, accepted the emperor's pronouncement as authoritative, even as they gasped at the squeaky sound of his voice. In October MacArthur cleverly arranged a photo session with Hirohito, ordering the diminutive emperor to call on him and then releasing the photo to the press. The public was shocked to see just how short the emperor was, standing beside MacArthur, who was a full head taller. The process of demystifying the fallen "god" had begun, clearing the way for additional steps of demilitarization.

These steps consisted of the following:

- Purging almost all military officers, colonial officials, wartime politicians, and *zaibatsu* (financial clique) leaders—202,000 people in all
- Disbanding all wartime right-wing associations and parties, along with the repressive legislation they had sponsored
- Prosecuting war criminals, including a Nuremberg-like international war crimes tribunal in Tokyo for twenty-five wartime leaders
- Dismantling all war industries
- Liberating every political criminal—primarily socialists, communists, and religious leaders who had been imprisoned because of their antimilitaristic views

<sup>6</sup>Ienaga Saburo, *Pacific War: 1931–1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), 232.

<sup>7</sup>In Edward Friedman, *America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), 147.



General Douglas MacArthur and Japanese officials signing the formal surrender documents aboard the USS *Missouri*, 2 September 1945.

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- Including the Peace Clause, Article 9, in the constitution, in which Japan “forever” renounced war as a sovereign right

The occupation’s second goal—democratization—was not expected to come as easily. The U.S. officials assumed that they would have to implement sweeping reforms in all areas of Japanese social and economic, as well as political, life, which meant going far beyond simply drafting a new constitution. Very high on MacArthur’s initial political agenda was breaking up the *zaibatsu*. Roughly a dozen *zaibatsu* had controlled 80 percent of all productive and financial enterprises in prewar Japan. MacArthur and his advisers worked on the American presumption that trusts, conglomerates, and monopolies of any sort were undemocratic; that concentrations of wealth were as dangerous to the health of a democracy as concentrations of political power; and that the prewar *zaibatsu* had used their economic leverage to encourage and then profit from imperialist conquest. Hence, some 250 *zaibatsu*, as well as a thousand or so smaller companies, were scheduled to be broken up, including Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Sumitomo.

However, as in Germany, cold war pressures forced a change in occupation policy. Idealism gave way to the political and strategic necessity of rebuilding the Japanese economy. Only nine *zaibatsu* were significantly

“deconcentrated,” and they reconstituted themselves once the occupation ended.

For similar reasons, the occupation authorities targeted the concentration of land ownership in a few hands. Inspired by the Jeffersonian notion of the yeoman-farmer as the backbone of a democracy, the authorities redistributed about 5 million acres of land from landlords to their former tenants.

The tenant farmer’s urban counterpart, the factory worker, was likewise empowered. Before the war, less than 10 percent of the industrial workforce was organized by unions because of government laws and restrictions that protected only factory owners. SCAP’s labor reforms, modeled after the 1935 U.S. National Labor Relations Act, gave workers the right to organize and engage in collective bargaining.

SCAP left no area of Japanese life untouched. Education, law enforcement, and even family inheritance practices were democratized. By the end of the occupation in 1952, the Japanese legal, social, economic, and political orders had been radically refashioned, making Japan, on paper at least, one of the most democratic nations in the world. As with the *zaibatsu*, political realities often conflicted with, and took precedence over, the law, thereby revealing inherent limits to how much political engineering one society can impose on another.

For example, liberating the industrial laborer had unintended consequences in the form of rising labor militancy. As economic conditions worsened, employers usually rejected union demands for higher wages. When railway workers threatened a general strike in early 1947, MacArthur answered by threatening to use military force. That draconian measure was followed by an outright prohibition on strikes by government employees in 1948. After the Korean War began in 1950, leftist labor union leaders were purged, even though the Communist and Socialist parties were legal. These events caused many to question the seriousness of the SCAP and the Japanese government's commitment to the constitutional right of workers to organize and engage in collective bargaining.

A second example of the limits of reform concerns the effects of international developments. Mao Zedong's communist victory in China brought the cold war to Asia. U.S. strategists increasingly viewed Japan as a crucial link in the "arc of containment" being constructed around the Soviet-Chinese Pacific Rim. Then, when the Korean War broke out, U.S. leaders began urging Japan to creatively reinterpret Article 9 by reconstituting a military force. Before long, a National Police Reserve of 75,000 troops was converted into a Self-Defense Force (SDF) that is currently one of the best-funded, most technologically sophisticated and well-armed military forces in the world. Some observers also believe that the existence of the SDF violates the constitutional prohibition against maintaining ground, air, and sea forces.

In sum, by the time the American occupation forces returned national sovereignty to Japan in 1952, two seemingly contradictory political patterns had emerged. First, Japan was to be governed by one of the world's most democratic constitutions, designed to eliminate the oligarchical rule that had led to legislation like the Peace Preservation Law and the militaristic governments of the 1930s and 1940s. Second, the "pragmatic necessities" of the cold war world were pulling Japan in a less democratic direction, making it possible for the postwar equivalents of the old elites to assume power.

When the American occupation formally ended, the new Japanese regime faced the same uncertainties we saw in Germany. Economic recovery was well under way, but no one knew if it would continue, and many worried about what would happen when and if there was a sharp and sudden slump.

Even more importantly, no one knew what the political future would hold. The Japanese constitution, like the Basic Law in Germany, called for a regime that would be clearly democratic, given the conventional definitions developed in chapter 3. But it was too early to tell if

## Democratization in Japan

**THERE ARE important parallels between Japan and Germany as far as the history of democratization is concerned. Both countries had inauspicious histories until the end of World War II. Neither had strong individualistic cultures, which historians have discovered are important for the development of both democracy and entrepreneurial capitalism. Both spent nearly three-quarters of a century under authoritarian regimes—and worse.**

**Both, however, developed strong democratic regimes after the war as a result of three overlapping factors: new regimes imposed by the victorious allies, the political consequences of long-term economic growth, and generational change.**

**Japan is different from Germany, however, in the sense that its democracy has developed without much in the way of individualism as we know it in the West, though that, too, may be changing as the twenty-first century dawns.**

either regime would take root. Both countries had had significant prodemocratic parties and interest groups before the fascist takeovers in the 1930s. However, they both had had far stronger antidemocratic and authoritarian forces and traditions, which had by no means disappeared as a result of defeat and occupation.

Again, as in Germany, most of those uncertainties were resolved rather quickly. Economic growth continued, and Japan became one of the world's leading economic powers before the 1960s were out. And, although there have been flaws in Japanese democracy (as there have been in all the industrialized democracies), the politicians and bureaucrats created a strong state that sustained the economy and enabled Japan to respond even more successfully to global pressures than the Germans were able to do.

## Political Culture: Groupism Versus Individualism

**T**he other chapters on liberal democracies traced the link between certain cultural values and the survival of representative government. Although political scientists disagree about what exactly those values entail, any list of them would prominently feature individualism. It would appear, as well, in any similar attempt to come to grips with what makes a capitalist economy succeed. As we also saw in those chapters, in-

dividualism and other cultural values associated with democracy and capitalism have their roots in the broad sweep of history, especially in the way earlier generations dealt with conflict over the emergence of the state, the role of religion, the structure of the state, and the state's role (or lack thereof) in the economy.

History and its reflections in today's value system are equally as important in Japan. But just as the history we have presented is quite different from that of Britain, France, Germany, or the United States, so Japanese culture is different as well. Individualism as we see it in the West is simply not as important in Japan. Indeed, among Japan's features that leap out at westerners, whether they study its economy, society, or politics, is the importance of group attachments at the expense of individualism.

To be sure, polls have shown that the Japanese are as supportive of their regime as the British or Americans are of theirs. They believe that the individual liberties guaranteed by democratic constitutions are important for protecting their rights and promoting their interests, just as people do in France or Germany. What is different is that, if we dig deeper than the pollsters can go and extend our analysis beyond daily politics, we see the centrality that loyalty to, and cooperation within, groups holds in Japanese life.

Therein lies much of the confusion and controversy regarding Japan. If Japanologists are to be believed, the nation has broken the Western paradigm in which individualism is a *sine qua non* (essentially, a requirement) of both capitalism and democracy. But if the critics are right, this so-called **groupism** represents little more than an acceptance of arbitrary authority that allows elites to manipulate and dominate everything from public opinion to foreign markets.

The cultural values themselves are straightforward enough that we can dispose of them quite quickly. To see them, though, it is probably best to take a step back from politics and consider culture as a broader phenomenon.

Ask a Japanese friend how he or she is doing, and the answer invariably will be *isogashi* (busy), usually preceded by a deep sigh of exasperation. "Busy as bees" seems to describe the Japanese way of living, and "work ethic" describes the existential basis of their value system: "I work, therefore I am," or "I am, therefore I work." Imagine living every day as if it were the day before final exams.

Although work is, of course, an individual activity, in most settings it is a collective enterprise, requiring maximum cooperation and communication. Japanese tradition and culture lend ideological support to cooperative efforts, extolling group harmony and demeaning

egoistic behavior: "We work, therefore I exist." Most westerners, coming from a highly individualistic cultural background, find this collectivist feature of Japan either troubling, because it lends itself to anti-individualistic behaviors, or is repressive, because it puts the good of the group over that of the individual. As a result, they either fail to understand how successfully it supports enterprise or condemn it as "unnatural" or at least nondemocratic.

Most Japanese easily accept their role in social hierarchies. Indeed, most of them only feel comfortable when they know where they stand in relationship to everyone else. They take comfort in taking orders from superiors but also in being indulged by superiors whose socially sanctioned role is to take care of inferiors. Most relationships are **patron-client relationships**, known in Japanese as *oyabun-kobun* (literally, "parent role, child role"). These relationships also reflect the continuing importance of the feudal past in today's value systems. These relationships are rather complex, but in each case the patron is superior to the client, is given support by and loyalty from the client, and in return provides money, protection, or other tangible benefits. Hence, the relationship rests on reciprocity and mutual support. *Oyabun-kobun* links also have a strong psychological component, with the patron looking after a client and with the client basking in the emotional warmth that dependency on a superior provides.

Similarly, critics point to the fact that the group traditionally has been more important than the individual in Japanese life. Clyde Prestowitz put it especially bluntly: "There is virtually no life outside groups, which define a person's existence."<sup>8</sup> As evidence of this, Prestowitz cites the tendency of people to respond to a question about the kind of work they do by citing the name of their company, not their individual professions.

In this view, society is seen as a series of hierarchical but interdependent groups, starting with the family, continuing upward to the company, and culminating with Japan as a whole. Each group has a leader in keeping with the tradition of hierarchy discussed earlier. Each also puts a lot of emphasis on building strong interpersonal relationships in order to ensure harmony and cooperation through conflict avoidance and conformity with group expectations.

These relationships are important because they permeate Japanese society. Political parties, labor unions,

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<sup>8</sup>Clyde Prestowitz, *Trading Places: How We Are Giving Our Future to Japan and How to Reclaim It* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 193.

sports clubs, student groups, university faculties, and most other Japanese organizations operate according to this basic sociological dynamic.

The *Washington Post's* T. R. Reid has perhaps best summed up the impact of groupism, which he links to Confucian traditions and values. In *Confucius Lives Next Door*, he documents dozens of ways in which group loyalty contributes to the social and economic success not just of Japan but of much of East Asia. These start with the amazingly low crime rate, such that he allowed his ten-year-old daughter to take public transportation to Japan's Disneyland, something he would never have dreamed of in the United States. Similarly, the teachers in his children's school told him not to worry about how they would do, because group loyalty among their classmates would ensure that they passed with flying colors. Finally, he relates the remarkable tale of Wild Blue Yokohama, Japan's immensely popular chain of indoor beaches. In the late 1980s the NKK corporation's icebreaker manufacturing business collapsed because of competition from countries in which labor costs were much lower. Instead of laying off the workers who built icebreakers, as American or British corporations would have done, NKK executives told them to take the time to develop new products it could sell for a profit. Because the workers had tested models of their ships on simulated oceans, they knew how to make waves and other features associated with beaches. And because getting to the beach is time consuming and expensive in heavily urbanized Japan, they had the brilliant idea of adapting that technology to make beaches in huge warehouselike buildings, with sand, pulsing surf, and blue sky painted on the ceiling. Not only did they invent Wild Blue Yokohama, they also harnessed their ability to make small, simulated icebergs to create the technology that made indoor ski slopes possible—in this case taking those same warehouse structures, turning them on their ends, and putting in chairlifts.<sup>9</sup>

Herein lies the controversy. Group loyalty, cooperation, and hierarchy are seen as critical for Japan's economic success but also as a central reason for doubting the legitimacy of its democracy. Critics, in particular, note that these are the kinds of values that led most Japanese to accept the antidemocratic and then fascist regimes before the war.

If all human relationships in Japan can be so characterized, then how can democracy work? In the West,

we assume that democracy is premised on the notion of individualistic human relationships among equals, structured horizontally—one person, one vote, whether rich or poor, whether company president or assembly line worker.

The *oyabun-kobun* relationship, in contrast, is a vertical one. Verticality fosters dependency on the superior by the inferior and paternalism by the superior toward the inferior. It discourages individualism and encourages collectivism or groupism. The individual sacrifices for the sake of the group. Such features would seemingly militate against the development of a democratic consciousness.

Nevertheless, these aspects of Japanese political culture may not be that important as far as essential democratic rights and procedures are concerned. After all, basic civil rights and competitive elections have effectively been guaranteed since the constitution went into effect after World War II. In other words, although it is hard to generalize on the basis of a single and unusual case, individualism may *not* be a necessary precondition for a functioning and stable liberal democracy.

That said, it is important to note that there are signs that the "groupist" side of Japanese culture is eroding, especially in the youngest segments of the population. We also have to remember just how much Japanese society has changed since 1945. Since the mid-1930s the population has nearly doubled, but the number of people involved in agriculture, forestry, and fishing has decreased by nearly two-thirds. Japan is an overwhelmingly urban society. Even people still living in the countryside have easy access to the bustling cities. Almost everyone has at least a high school education, and the educational system now puts less emphasis on indoctrinating students into conformity. The Japanese no longer are isolated but are as much a part of the global cultural and economic systems as the Europeans. Two whole generations have grown up under these conditions of affluence and openness. As in Europe, the best educated and the young tend to be most affected by these social changes. There is little hard evidence on the spread of postmaterial values in Japan. But the strength of the environmental and women's movements, the growing dissatisfaction with the money politics we will soon encounter, and the mushrooming interest in Western culture all suggest that Japanese young people, like their counterparts in Europe and North America, are becoming more individualistic.

It is by no means clear how such social changes will play out politically. Cultures typically change more slowly than other parts of a political system. And, even when values do change, it often takes quite a while be-

<sup>9</sup>T. R. Reid, *Confucius Lives Next Door: What Living in the East Teaches Us About Living in the West* (New York: Random House, 1999).



## USEFUL WEB SITES

Despite its success in many high-tech industries, Japan has not been a leader in use of the Internet. Still, there are a number of good sources on Japanese politics, though most of them are maintained outside the country, primarily in the United States and Great Britain. These include the Japanese Window project, the National Clearing House for U.S.-Japan Studies at the University of Indiana, Professor Leonard Schoppa at the University of Virginia, the Asian Studies program at the University of the Redlands, and the Virtual Library at the Australian National University.

[www.jwindow.net](http://www.jwindow.net)

[www.indiana.edu/~japan/](http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/)

[www.people.virginia.edu/~ljs2k/webtext.html](http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ljs2k/webtext.html)

[newton.uor.edu/Departments&Programs/AsianStudiesDept/japan-pol.html](http://newton.uor.edu/Departments&Programs/AsianStudiesDept/japan-pol.html)

[coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html](http://www.coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html)

In Japan, useful academic material is provided by the University of Tokyo. Weekly news feeds are available from the *Japan Times*.

[www.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp](http://www.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp)

[www.japantimes.co.jp/](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/)

fore the new ones are manifested in the concrete realities of day-to-day political life.

In short, we can probably reach only two tentative and not very satisfying conclusions about Japanese political culture. First, it is far less individualistic than we are used to in the West, and the so-called groupism has much to do with both the country's economic might and the long-term success of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Second, it is probably changing in ways that reflect the weakening of the LDP's political domination, if not the difficulties the country faces following the collapse of the bubble economy.

## Political Participation and Elections: The End of the LDP Era?

**W**hen analysts raise doubts about Japanese democracy, they usually focus on the Liberal Democratic Party's almost total control of power since the mid-1950s. It isn't merely that the LDP

won all but one election, but the way it used its dominant position to create the iron triangle for making public policy, which we will focus on for most of the rest of this chapter.

However, as we begin by exploring the roots of the LDP's success, keep one caveat in mind. The LDP is still Japan's dominant party, having won 233 of the 480 seats in the lower house of the Diet (parliament) in 2000. However, it now stands little chance of winning an outright majority in election after election, so it will normally have to rule as part of a coalition government. That said, it is also not likely to lose power any time soon, because as we will also see, the opposition is fragmented.

### *The LDP: Money Politics, Factionalism, and the Electoral System*

There was no such uncertainty about party politics prior to 1993. This provides us with by far the clearest example we will have in this book of what can happen when a single party dominates a country's politics for two generations.

The LDP ([www.jimin.jp/jimin/english/](http://www.jimin.jp/jimin/english/)) was formed in 1955 when the Liberal and Democratic parties merged to ensure center-right control of the government. From then until 1993, it won every election, earning a majority in the all-important House of Representatives each time except 1979 and 1983. (See table 8.2.)

Ideologically, the LDP has a lot in common with the other powerful conservative parties we saw in chapters 4–6. It is resolutely procapitalist and receives the bulk of its ample funding from big business. The LDP also is consistently pro-American in its foreign policy.

The similarities are not merely ideological. Despite some of the LDP's organizational peculiarities, which we will consider later, it is very much a catch-all party. At first, it had a limited appeal, drawing heavily, for example, on farmers. Since the 1970s, however, the LDP has done well with almost every social group in the electorate.

Above all else, the LDP shares one characteristic with the other catch-all parties: Its top priority is to stay in power. It has adapted its positions and changed its leaders whenever it thought doing so would help bolster its support at the polls.

Even though it never won a majority of the popular vote after 1963, the LDP was always able to win a majority of the seats in the Diet for the next thirty years, although twice it had to rely on a handful of independents to do so. In 1993 all that changed so dramatically that we

**TABLE 8.2** House of Representatives Elections in Japan, 1958–90 (major parties only)

YEAR	LDP		JCP		JSP <sup>a</sup>		DSP		KOMEITO	
	Percentage of Vote	Number of Seats								
1958	57.8	287	2.6	1	32.9	166	—	—	—	—
1960	57.6	296	2.9	3	27.6	145	8.8	17	—	—
1963	54.7	283	4.0	5	29.0	144	7.4	23	—	—
1967	48.8	277	4.8	5	27.9	140	7.4	30	5.4	25
1969	47.6	288	6.8	14	21.4	90	7.7	31	10.9	47
1972	46.9	271	10.5	38	21.9	118	7.0	19	8.5	29
1976	41.8	249	10.4	17	20.7	123	6.3	29	10.9	55
1979	44.6	248	10.4	39	19.7	107	6.8	35	9.8	57
1980	47.9	284	9.8	29	19.3	107	6.6	32	9.0	33
1983	45.8	250	9.3	26	19.5	112	7.3	38	10.1	58
1986	49.4	300	8.8	26	17.2	85	6.4	26	9.4	56
1990	46.1	275	8.0	16	24.4	136	4.8	14	8.0	45

<sup>a</sup>After 1991, SDPJ.

need a different table here, because so many new and different parties were involved in the election that marked the LDP's first defeat. (See table 8.3.)

The LDP is often portrayed as little more than a front group for big business. Although we will see plenty of evidence for that point of view when we consider public policy toward the end of the chapter, the LDP has to be much more than that electorally. Because Japan has a competitive party system, the LDP could only stay in power by appealing to a far broader segment of Japanese society, including farmers, small-business owners, middle-class "salarymen," and even blue-collar workers.

Critics argue that the real—and nondemocratic—side of the LDP is the most important aspect of the party and reflects the ways in which Japan is dissimilar to the other countries considered in part 2. They often start with the quip that the Liberal Democratic Party is neither liberal nor democratic.

That it is not liberal, as we have been using the term in this book, is not particularly worrisome. After all, none of the leading conservative parties in Europe are unquestioning supporters of free-market-oriented policies either.

The more important concerns revolve around the other part of the quip. It should be pointed out that political scientists have long argued that no party, like no government, is wholly democratic. That said, there are related trends that the critics believe make the LDP—and to some degree the other Japanese parties—particularly undemocratic.

Historically, the most important of these are the **factions** within the LDP. Many of the other parties considered earlier have factions, which reflect the ideological divisions within them. In Japan, however, factional divisions have little to do with ideology. Rather, the LDP's

leadership consists of the heads of the four or five major factions. Each has its own organization and sources of funds. In this respect, the party is really a coalition of smaller parties that differ not in terms of ideology—all are conservative—nor in terms of goals—all seek to capture the prime ministry and the patronage powers that go with that office. The only significant difference between the factions is the identity of the faction heads.

Faction leaders maintain the support of their membership by providing campaign funds, political favors, and cabinet positions. They are, in brief, the most prominent political manifestation of the *oyabun-kobun* relationships that are such a prominent part of Japanese culture.

It is sometimes said that the four or five factional leaders in the LDP are the kingmakers, the only politicians who count in Japan. Everyone else follows the faction leaders. Political scientists are convinced that the importance of these essentially self-perpetuating factions has a lot to do with the restricted group of people who become LDP Diet members.

The LDP is the most male-dominated party in Japan, which has fewer female members of parliament than any of the other major democracies. At the end of 2001, only thirty-eight of the members of the House of Representatives were women, and only ten of these were in the LDP—even though three women were in Koizumi's original cabinet.

Even more importantly, the LDP parliamentary delegation is extremely unrepresentative. In a typical Diet, about 25 percent of the LDP members are former bureaucrats, and about 40 percent, are the sons, other relatives, or former secretaries of other LDP members. An even larger percentage of LDP candidates historically are graduates of Tokyo University, the elite national university that has been widely regarded as Japan's premier

**TABLE 8.3** House of Representatives Elections in Japan, 1993–2000

PARTY	1993 <sup>a</sup>		1996 <sup>a</sup>		2000 <sup>a</sup>	
	Percentage of Vote	Number of Seats	Percentage of Vote	Number of Seats	Percentage of Vote	Number of Seats
LDP	36.6	223	32.8	239	28.3	233
JCP	7.2	15	13.1	26	11.2	20
SDPJ	15.4	70	6.4	15	9.4	19
Komeito	8.1	51	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>b</sup>	13.0	31
Democratic Party	<sup>c</sup>	<sup>c</sup>	16.1	52	25.1	127
Liberal Party	<sup>c</sup>	<sup>c</sup>	<sup>c</sup>	<sup>c</sup>	11.0	22
Renewal	10.0	55	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>d</sup>	<sup>d</sup>
Japan New Party	8.1	35	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>b</sup>	<sup>d</sup>	<sup>d</sup>
Harbinger	2.6	13	1.0	2	<sup>d</sup>	<sup>d</sup>
Shinshinto	<sup>c</sup>	<sup>c</sup>	28.1	156	<sup>d</sup>	<sup>d</sup>
Independents, others	15.8	34	2.5	10	1.8	28

<sup>a</sup>For 1996 and 2000, these figures are for the proportional part of the ballot. The LDP did much better in the single-member-district part.

<sup>b</sup>In Shinshinto in 1996.

<sup>c</sup>This party did not exist for this election.

<sup>d</sup>This party had gone out of existence by this election.

institution of higher learning for a century and that has sent a disproportionate number of its graduates to the higher reaches of the worlds of politics, bureaucracy, and big business. This “old school tie” serves as the social cement that binds graduates into a *gakubatsu* (school clique) that acts as the social foundation of the strong state (discussed in the next section).

Some political scientists are convinced that the factions became less important during the 1990s. That does not, however, mean that the LDP has become more democratic. Instead, individual members of parliament have had to rely on their own *koenkai* (personal support groups), which extend the patron-client networks all the way down to the grassroots level. The *koenkai* resemble the old American urban “machines” that provided support for politicians and formed the local organizations that got out the vote. LDP members of the Diet act as patrons to their supporters/clients, trading money and favors in exchange for support. Clients expect rewards for demonstrating loyalty by voting for their bosses. And patrons/politicians normally deliver, providing gifts of money to a client when he or she marries or contributing to the funeral expenses of a deceased family member. Politicians also keep voter/client support by exercising influence in the Diet to secure new roads, bridges, and so forth for their constituencies. Normally, when Diet members retire, they pass on their *koenkai* to a relative or loyal staffer, making the holding of office a hereditary and obviously less-than-democratic phenomenon.

Few people join a *koenkai* out of a sense of ideological commitment to its leader. Some are local officials

seeking benefits for the citizens back home. Others try to enhance their own careers by joining fortunes with someone whom they think is a rising star. Still others are simply bought.

The price is staggering. One LDP candidate for the **House of Councillors** (the upper house in the Diet) election in 1986 felt he had to sign up as many members for *koenkai* as possible. So, he paid the party membership fees for them all—a total of nearly \$5 million.

Money is extremely important in Japanese politics—especially for the LDP. An LDP Diet candidate typically spends upwards of \$1 million. Sitting members estimate that they have to raise \$30,000–\$60,000 a month to build war chests for the next election. These figures are all the more remarkable because relatively little money is spent on advertising, by far the most expensive part of a campaign in the United States. In the 1990 lower-house general election alone, roughly \$1 billion was spent by all the candidates. Contrast that figure with the \$445 million spent in the 1990 U.S. congressional elections. Even allowing for the differences between presidential and parliamentary systems, LDP politicians have to be even better fund-raisers than their American counterparts.

Japanese election laws actually are rather strict. There are rules about what candidates can and cannot do. Door-to-door campaigning is technically forbidden, only certain kinds of leaflets and posters are allowed, and they cannot be distributed just anywhere. For instance, the law forbids dropping them from an airplane.

However, politicians find ways to exploit every loophole in the law and skirt most of its provisions. To get

around limits on campaign donations, individual politicians simply set up dozens of separate organizations, and the corporations contribute to each of them. Abe Shintaro, supposedly one of the “new” and less corrupt leaders, had twenty-seven such organizations in 1984. The most popular recent innovation for getting around the rules is to hold an officially noncampaign-related dinner party fund-raiser, charging up to \$200 a plate and having corporations each buy up hundreds of meals, the cost of which they then deduct from their taxes as business expenses. **Money politics** (*kinken seiji*) of this sort often engenders public cynicism about the ethics of Japanese politicians and has a lot to do with the plummeting support for the LDP in the polls. Even the once-popular Hashimoto garnered only a 24 percent public approval rating in April 1998. And that figure subsequently seemed relatively high, as his two successors often saw their approval rating dip into single digits.

Much of this history of LDP domination through factions and money politics can be explained by the peculiar electoral system Japan used to choose members of the House of Representatives up until 1993. Like the other industrialized democracies considered here, Japan was divided into a number of local districts or constituencies—123, to be precise. There, the similarity with other systems ended in two key ways.

First, the highly gerrymandered electoral system gave unequal weight to the conservative-minded rural population, which generally supported the LDP. The disparity in the value of one vote between the most sparsely (rural) and the most heavily (urban) populated constituencies for the lower house in the 1990 election was 3.34. This means that it took 3.34 votes by urban voters to equal 1 vote by a rural person. The supreme court ruled in 1983 and 1991 that this disparity was unconstitutional, but the LDP-controlled Diet, not surprisingly, showed little inclination to reform the system in a way that would give opposition parties a fair chance in elections.

Second, these were **multimember constituencies**. Each district elected between two and six members of the Diet. However, each voter could only cast a ballot for one candidate, and the candidates receiving the most votes were elected—five in a five-member district, four in a four-member district, and so on. Because they could realistically hope to win more than one of those seats, it was common for the larger parties to run more than one candidate in each district. This practice, not surprisingly, encouraged factionalism.

The parties had to be very well organized. First, they had to establish how many votes they were likely to win in each of the districts. Then, they had to decide how

many candidates to run in each one. If the LDP expected to win a bit more than half the vote in a four-member district, it would not run four candidates because they might split that vote evenly so that none would be elected.

Even after it decided how many candidates to run, the LDP's problems still were not over. It had to make certain that each of its candidates received the “right” proportion of the vote. Here, its organization and, especially, its very expensive *koenkai* came into play because they had the ability to deliver the right number of votes to each LDP candidate.

The system worked very much to the LDP's advantage. Although the opposition parties collectively won nearly 54 percent of the popular vote in the 1990 election, they won only 44 percent of the seats as a result of the gerrymandering and competition in the multimember constituencies. In other words, the LDP, with 46 percent of the popular vote, nevertheless controlled 56 percent of the seats in the lower house. Because a simple majority vote is all that is required to pass most legislation, the LDP's tight party discipline assured passage of its policies.

In 1996 Japan shifted to an electoral system patterned on Germany's, with 300 members chosen in single-member districts and 180 more (200 in 1996) chosen by proportional representation. The system has been used only twice, so it is far too early to tell if it will live up to the reformers' hopes by reducing the role big money plays in Japanese politics.

Nonetheless, two trends are already clear. First, the LDP's share of the proportional vote dropped to only 28 percent in 2000, or just 3 percent more than that for the opposition Democratic Party. Second, because the LDP retains the largest and most efficient grassroots organization, it won 41 percent of the single-member-district vote. This means it won a disproportionate number of those seats, allowing it to come close to a majority in the Diet with almost twice as many seats as the Democratic Party.

In a system in which money is so important, it is hardly surprising that Japan has had more than its share of scandals and corruption. All industrialized democracies have some corrupt politicians. In none, however, does the corruption touch the partisan electoral process as often and as extensively as it does in Japan. The first major electoral scandal occurred in 1948, when Showa Denko, Japan's leading fertilizer manufacturer, was accused of giving bribes to nearly fifty leading politicians. In the early 1970s, former prime minister Tanaka Kakuei's officeholding career, but not his political power, was ended when he was indicted and convicted for tak-

ing nearly a \$1-million bribe from the U.S. aviation giant Lockheed. During the late 1980s, dozens of leading LDP politicians, including several prime ministers, were implicated in an insider trading scandal involving the Recruit Cosmos Corporation. Almost every leading LDP politician, including eighteen of twenty-six postwar prime ministers, has been touched by one or another scandal.

The LDP's fall from power in 1993 was precipitated by scandal when the leading LDP kingmaker, the late Kanemaru Shin, was convicted of corruption, stripped of his party and parliamentary positions, and assessed a nominal fine in 1992. Early the next year, he was jailed when investigators uncovered about \$50 million in cash and securities in his house (his parliamentary salary was about \$200,000 a year).

It turns out that Kanemaru was a briber as well as a bribee, as it was next revealed that he personally had received over \$4 million in illegal campaign contributions from the mob-related Sagawa Kyubin corporation. There was so much money involved (cash, naturally) that it had to be delivered in a grocery cart. When the scandal broke, there were new revelations that in 1987 Kanemaru had paid \$25 million to Kominto (a group with a reputation no better than that of the Ku Klux Klan) to get it to stop criticizing Takeshita Noboru, then a candidate for the prime ministry.

Kanemaru was not the only one involved, of course. The best estimate is that Sagawa paid as much as \$630 million to 130 Diet members over the years, and it obviously wasn't the only company giving gifts. Abe Fumio, a former cabinet minister and a leader of Kanemaru and Miyazawa's faction, was arrested in his hospital bed (where implicated politicians often try to take refuge) after he was accused of accepting \$800,000 from another corporation.

Despite these difficulties, by 1996 the LDP had recovered most of its lost support, almost all of it at the expense of the new parties created three years earlier. Hashimoto Ryutaro, LDP bon vivant, succeeded the Socialist Murayama Tomiichi in January 1996 as head of a coalition government. Despite optimistic predictions that the new electoral laws would produce a "normal" two-party system, the October 1996 election disappointed pundits and prognosticators alike by returning electoral politics to the pre-1993 status quo. "One strong [LDP], five weak [opposition parties in a loose alliance]" was how the press characterized this newest form of a one-party-dominant system.

The major difference between the last two elections and the pre-1993 situation was the effect of a faltering economy. Prior to 1993, one-party LDP rule

rested on a vibrant, rapidly expanding economy. Voters would cast ballots for the LDP because it "delivered the goods," as we will see. After 1993 all optimism that the recession would be transitory faded. Voters therefore temporarily withdrew support from the LDP, only to learn that the other, opposition politicians were equally corrupt and ambitious, and to discover that the inexperience and divisiveness of the opposition parties made it even less likely that they could lead Japan toward recovery.

As a result, voters have been sending mixed signals in recent elections. In 1998 they turned their backs on the LDP in balloting for the weak upper chamber. However, they continue to vote the LDP back into power in elections for the all-important House of Representatives.

One of the consequences of this has been a succession of weak prime ministers. Hashimoto resigned in response to the poor showing in 1998. The colorless Obuchi was chosen by party insiders to replace him, and party chiefs likewise chose Mori to follow Obuchi. But Hashimoto, Obuchi, and Mori all were tainted by ties with corrupt practices of the past—Recruit Cosmos in the cases of Hashimoto and Mori, and an insider stock trading scheme in the case of Obuchi.

The current premier, Koizumi, appears to be clean, but by the same token he appears to have few insider connections that can serve as an independent power base. The longer Koizumi manages to remain in office, the greater the likelihood that he will become indebted to moneyed interests.

### *The Other Parties*

In modern democratic theory, the existence of a competitive multiparty system is one of the criteria political scientists pay the most attention to. As tables 8.2 and 8.3 show, Japan has had a functioning multiparty system since the Occupation.

However, the parties in opposition to the LDP have been quite different from what we saw in Britain, France, or Germany. With the single exception of 1993, they have been too fragmented and too at odds with each other to pose a credible threat to LDP rule. Although the various opposition parties are more effective today than they were even a decade ago, they are still far from offering Japanese voters a true alternative government.

Overall, the opposition parties can be placed in two categories. First are the ones that have been in existence for all or most of the postwar period. Second are newer ones that were created as a result of the LDP's difficulties and that consist largely for former LDP politicians.

## *The Traditional Opposition*

Chief among the traditional opposition was the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), which renamed itself the **Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ)** in 1991. Formed in 1945, it was strengthened in 1955 when the two wings of the progressive camp combined in hopes of recapturing control of the government, something they had done briefly in 1947–48. The Socialists' electoral fortunes peaked in the lower-house election of 1958, when they captured 166 of 467 seats, with 32.9 percent of the popular vote. Afterward, their popularity steadily declined.

The reasons for the Socialists' declining popularity are not difficult to discern. Factionalism along ideological lines has resulted in numerous splits within the party. From 1947 to 1960, five such splits occurred. Then, in 1960, the less ideological wing broke permanently to form the **Democratic Socialist Party (DSP)**.

Another reason for the failure of the Socialists to capture control of the government was their narrow electoral base in organized labor, which continued to shrink as union membership steadily declined to the point that in the 1990s only one in six factory workers were union members. An additional reason was the socialist message, essentially a negative oppositionist platform that centered around rejection of the United States–Japan Security Treaty (discussed later in the chapter) and, for many years, repudiation of capitalist development. During the 1950s the Socialist Party went through none of the moderation processes that made the British Labour or German Social Democratic parties competitive at the national level. A final reason for the party's failure was the LDP's "creative conservatism," which fashioned successful public policies appealing to an ever wider circle of voters, regardless of their social class or economic background.

For these reasons, the Socialists were considered a "permanent opposition" party, having little or no chance of winning a Diet majority. One-party dominance by the LDP, in brief, made the Socialists an electoral irrelevancy, more adept at factional infighting than at designing a successful strategy to capture power.

To its credit, the Socialist Party began to change in the late 1980s. It tried to give itself a new image by abandoning orthodox Marxism and opposition to the United States–Japan Security Treaty. It also selected a new and dynamic leader, Doi Takako, the first woman to head a major Japanese party. The party did dramatically better in 1990, but voters abandoned the Socialists in record numbers in 1993.

Immediately after the 1993 election, some observers expected to see dramatic changes in Japanese public

policy. With the defeat of the LDP, one of the cornerstones of the iron triangle seemed critically weakened. In fact, however, the damage was quickly repaired. By early 1996 the LDP had joined a government nominally headed by a Socialist and forced its newfound ally to re-define itself largely in the image of the LDP. This tactic had the effect of exposing the Socialists' leaders as power-hungry opportunists rather than the principled pacifists their following had believed them to be. As a consequence, another massive voter defection ensued, with the Socialists' share dropping to an all-time low of 6.4 percent. Although it added 3 percentage points to its total in 2000, the party is but a shadow of its former self and has nearly been eliminated from electoral politics as a credible force.

It wasn't just the Socialists. Historically, they were but the largest party in an opposition whose fragmentation all but ensured LDP success. To their right was the DSP, which once was a large faction in the old JSP. The party began with high expectations. Its first leader brashly predicted that it would come to power within five years of its creation in 1960. It had considerable support in the Domei, the more moderate of the trade union confederations, as well as among anticommunist intellectuals.

But the DSP was caught between the larger Socialist Party on its left and the LDP on its right, and has never been able to define a platform that would expand its appeal. The DSP won only 8.8 percent of the vote in the first election it contested and never did even that well afterward. In the 1990 lower-house election, it captured only 4.8 percent of the vote. The DSP has often cooperated with the LDP in the Diet, including joining with it on such critical votes as the one on Japan's involvement in the American-led alliance against Iraq. Today the party is defunct.

Also on the left is the somewhat larger **Japan Communist Party (JCP)** ([www.jcp.or.jp/english](http://www.jcp.or.jp/english)).  The party originally was formed after the Russian Revolution, but government repression prior to World War II and American purges afterward kept it from gaining a serious popular base of support until the 1960s. At that time, it was able to expand on its core of support among young intellectuals by being one of the first communist parties to separate itself somewhat from the Soviet Union and pursue its own strategy.

The JCP peaked in the 1970s, when several of its more populist leaders hit upon an antigrowth message that appealed to a pollution-plagued citizenry that had grown increasingly disenchanted with the problems associated with economic growth. But since the 1980s, despite adopting more moderate domestic and foreign policies, the JCP's electoral fortunes have stagnated.

With the evisceration of the other left-wing parties since 1993, the JCP's electoral fortunes have improved, almost by default, as it remains as the only viable leftist party in the nation. Votes that once would have gone to the Socialists or Democratic Socialists now go to the Communists. In early 1999 the JCP had almost fifty members in both chambers of the Diet, but in the June 2000 general election, it was unable to win even one seat in any of the three-hundred regional single-seat constituencies.

The final major opposition party is the **Komeito**, or Clean Government Party ([www.komei.or.jp](http://www.komei.or.jp)). It is the only one not to have roots in the prewar party system. Komeito was founded in 1964 as an arm of the Buddhist Soka Gakkai sect. Soka Gakkai appeals to those segments of the urban population that have benefited the least from Japan's remarkable economic growth, much like the politicized fundamentalist churches in the United States.

Unlike other Japanese religious movements, the Soka Gakkai always has actively proselytized and has never shied away from political involvement. Thus, at first, Komeito took populist and progressive stands not terribly different from the Socialists' on most issues. It staked out its own turf by claiming that it wanted to "clean up" politics and defend the interests of the common people.

By the end of the 1960s, nearly 10 percent of the adult population belonged to the Soka Gakkai. Komeito was able to build on that support to become Japan's third largest party, capturing 8–11 percent of the vote in every election after 1967. But Komeito leaders realized early on that the party's identification with the Soka Gakkai limited its popular appeal. It therefore broke all formal ties with the sect. Nonetheless, most of its campaign workers, candidates, and funds came from the Soka Gakkai, and the party was never able to overcome the public perception of it as the political wing of the Soka Gakkai.

Komeito's support has been remarkably consistent, normally hovering around 10 percent. In 1996 it joined the Shinshinto coalition and almost disappeared as an independent entity. However, with that coalition's demise (see the next section), Komeito has enjoyed a renaissance and actually won the most votes in its history in 2000.

Finally, at this point, Komeito is not even part of the opposition. In early 1999, along with the tiny Conservative Party, it entered into a coalition agreement with the ruling LDP, a coalition that remains in place today under Koizumi.

### *The New Parties*

The political forces that culminated in the LDP's 1993 defeat also disrupted the party system. In particular,

they contributed to the creation of a number of new parties, almost all of which were formed by prominent faction leaders who quit the LDP. These have included Hata Tsutomu, who headed the commission that revised the electoral law, and the party's behind-the-scenes kingpin, **Ozawa Ichiro**. These politicians talked as if they were serious reformers. Thus, Ozawa claimed that the Japanese social, economic, and political systems all needed sweeping reforms. In practice, however, these parties did not offer clear policy alternatives to the LDP and gained little popular support. They also proved unable to govern effectively in the two non-LDP cabinets that came to office after the 1993 election.

An attempt to unite most opposition parties—with only the Communists and the LDP's coalition partners demurring—occurred in December 1994 when they all dissolved their own organizations to join the **Shinshinto**, or New Frontier Party. Several former prime ministers, including Hata and Hosokawa, tried but failed to gain permanent control over the new party. They were no match for Ozawa, who patiently but persistently garnered sufficient support to assume leadership in late 1995. Ozawa hoped to transform Japan's electoral politics into something modeled after the American two-party system. He might have succeeded if this drama had played out in the United States, where strong, aggressive, reformist leaders can rise to the top of the party hierarchy. Unfortunately for Ozawa, in Japan his aggressiveness and self-promotion served only to cause rifts within the Shinshinto, and party followers abandoned him and gravitated toward the several faction leaders within the party.

Personalities proved more important than issues. Ozawa and the Shinshinto in 1996 had the same opportunity as presidential candidate Bill Clinton had in 1992. Ozawa had only to utter, "It's the economy, stupid," to galvanize support against the LDP and its failed economic reforms. But the voters went with the devil they knew, the LDP, rather than chance being further bedeviled by a badly fractured Shinshinto led by an egoist who showed little sensitivity to Japan's traditional collectivist values.

Shinshinto's election loss splintered the party into thirteen opposition parties by the summer of 1997. Party size in the Diet ranged from a pitiful three representatives—hardly even a faction—to a credible seventy or so members (in both houses) as in the case of the newly formed Democratic Party.

This party ([www.dpj.or.jp/english/index.html](http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/index.html)) was led by the charismatic insider-turned-outsider Kan Naoto, the former minister of health who blew the whistle on his own ministry's complicity in approving the

## Conflict in Japan

**POLITICAL SCIENTISTS have never developed reliable ways of measuring the impact of political conflict across cultures. That said, there has been little radical protest in Japan during the past half-century, and its absence has to be due, in part, to the groupism of its culture.**

**However, do not read this as meaning that there have been no protest movements. Japan was home to one of the longest and most bitter environmental movements of our times (against the Narita airport outside of Tokyo) and has even spawned one of the most notorious terrorist organizations of the 1970s, the Red Army Faction.**

transfusion of HIV-tainted blood. Other party mergers followed, only to experience dissolution before new mergers took place. At the end of 2001, the only opposition party with any clout was the Democrats, now headed by Hatoyama Yukio (grandson of the prime minister from 1954 to 1956). It has only 127 lower-house members, too few to challenge the LDP, which has 233.

## The Japanese State: The Iron Triangle

The state is the central component in all the varied interpretations of what makes Japan so powerful economically and so different from the other industrialized democracies. At first glance, this may seem odd, because the constitution provides for many institutions and practices that are quite similar to those discussed in chapters 2–6. However, once we peek below the surface, the distinctiveness of the Japanese state—with its iron triangle of bureaucracy, LDP, and big business—shines through. This drives home one of the most important lessons about comparative politics—that constitutions are not always a good guide to what political life is really like.

### *Constitutional Basics*

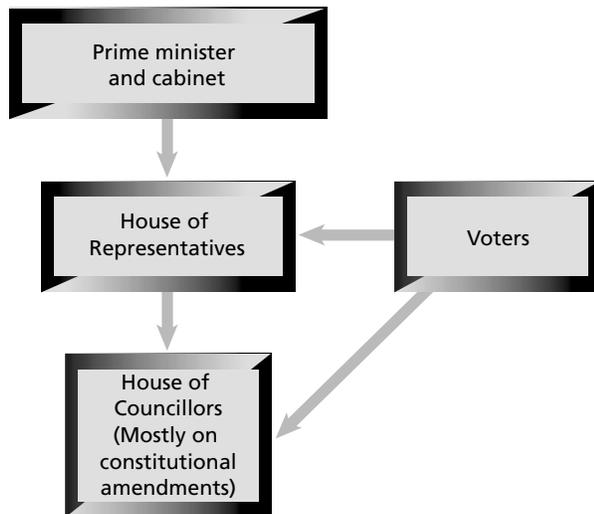
Japan's basic institutional arrangements should be familiar enough that we can dispense with them quickly. They are laid out in its constitution, which was drafted during the postwar occupation in March 1946 and which went into effect in May 1947. Like the German Basic Law, the Japanese constitution was largely written by Americans, who imposed standard parliamentary and other

arrangements on Japan as part of their broader efforts to stanch any reemergence of fascism. The constitution does have a few distinctive features, none of which has proved more important and popular than **Article 9**, the so-called **Peace Clause** in which Japan “forever” renounces war as a sovereign right of the nation, as well as “the threat or use of force” in settling disputes with other nations. The second part of the clause promises that Japan will not maintain “land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential.”

On paper, at least, the constitution is also one of the most democratic in the world ([www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/ja00000\\_.html](http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/ja00000_.html)). For example, it includes an equal rights amendment for women that is rarely found elsewhere. Otherwise, the constitution is similar to the ones found in other parliamentary systems. It guarantees citizens a wide array of political and personal rights, including equality before the law; the right to vote and to petition the authorities; freedoms of thought, religion, assembly, association, speech, and press; equal education; “minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living”; and even the right to a job.

These rights represented a radical departure from the Meiji constitution. However, the postwar constitution's American authors respected Japanese customs in some critical ways. For instance, they retained a bicameral parliamentary system—a lower House of Representatives ([www.shugiin.go.jp/itdb\\_main.nsf/html/index\\_e.htm](http://www.shugiin.go.jp/itdb_main.nsf/html/index_e.htm)) and an upper, but relatively powerless, House of Councillors. But they certainly broke with tradition by demoting the emperor to merely “the symbol of the state and the unity of the people” and by making the people sovereign through their elected representatives in the Diet. In addition, the prime minister is elected by the Diet, rather than being chosen behind closed doors by the “senior statesmen” as in the prewar system. The prime minister, moreover, is now accountable to the people's representatives. He (always a he) loses his job if the Diet passes a motion of no confidence, and he, as well as his cabinet ministers, must appear before parliament to answer questions about policy. In short, as is the case elsewhere, the constitution made the lower house of the Diet sovereign as the elected representatives of the people, giving it the sole power to make or break governments. (See figure 8.1.)

The House of Councillors has little power, but it occasionally flexes its few constitutional muscles. In the July 2001 election for the upper house, the LDP picked up 7 seats, which, when added to its coalition partners' 29 seats, gave it a bare majority in the 252-seat chamber. To understand the importance of having a majority, we



**FIGURE 8.1** Decision Making in Japan

need only recall that the opposition parties, nine in all, combined forces in October 1998 to pass a motion of censure against a cabinet member for the first time in postwar history. They cited the minister for complicity in an arms procurement overcharge scam. Although the vote was nonbinding, the embarrassment to the government prevented Prime Minister Obuchi from securing parliamentary approval for the new United States–Japan defense cooperation guidelines. The lesson: A weak prime minister presiding over a divided government at a time of economic crisis cannot afford to ignore the normally impotent House of Councillors.

Other features of the new constitutional order bear an American imprint. For example, it abolished the aristocracy. The judicial system was made independent and was modeled on the one in the United States, topped by a supreme court having the right of judicial review. Even though a unitary system was retained local governments were granted some autonomous powers.

### *The LDP in Power*



As in any parliamentary system, the most important government official is the prime minister ([www.jwindow.net/category/lgove8.html](http://www.jwindow.net/category/lgove8.html)). (See table 8.4.) Strictly speaking, according to the constitution, the Diet chooses the prime minister by a simple majority vote. Practically, this means that the party having a majority in parliament elects its party president as prime minister. And, as with so much of Japanese politics, informal practices are far more important than the rules laid out in the constitution and other legal documents.

**TABLE 8.4** Japanese Prime Ministers Since 1945

START OF TERM	NAME
May 1946	Yoshida Shigeru
May 1947	Katayama Tetsu
March 1948	Ashida Hitoshi
October 1948	Yoshida Shigeru
December 1954	Hatoyama Ichiro
December 1956	Ishibashi Tanzan
February 1957	Kishi Nobusuke
July 1960	Ikeda Hayato
November 1964	Sato Eisaku
July 1972	Tanaka Kakuei
December 1974	Miki Takeo
December 1976	Fukuda Takeo
December 1978	Ohira Masayoshi
July 1980	Suzuki Zenko
November 1982	Nakasone Yasuhiro
November 1987	Takeshita Noboru
June 1989	Uno Sosuke
August 1989	Kaifu Toshiki
November 1991	Miyazawa Kiichi
August 1993	Hosokawa Morihiro
April 1994	Hata Tsutomu
June 1994	Murayama Tomiichi
January 1996	Hashimoto Ryutaro
August 1998	Obuchi Keizo
May 2000	Mori Yoshiro
April 2001	Koizumi Junichiro

How are prime ministers chosen? The LDP changed its selection procedures over the years, in every case to give the appearance of being more democratic. In fact, party elders have always made the choice behind closed doors. And who are the party elders? They usually are strongmen who are leaders of their own personal factions, with the leaders of the largest factions having the most influence. The elders have a history of lengthy service in the Diet, served as cabinet ministers, and developed excellent personal connections with big-business leaders. The factions themselves consist of LDP Diet members who demonstrate unswerving loyalty to the faction head, much as the samurai once behaved toward feudal lords. At any one time, the LDP is divided into four or five factions, whose sizes range from quite large (one had 111 members in 1993) to quite small (another had 35 members in 1986).

The factional balance at a given moment determines who becomes president of the LDP and, hence, prime minister. But, in one form or another, that is the case in many other parties in parliamentary systems. What makes Japan different is the fact that LDP rules require party presidential elections every two years and normally prohibit any individual from holding the presidency (and hence being prime minister) for more than

two, two-year terms. As a result, even with the LDP's dominance, there is unusually rapid turnover in top cabinet posts, making the shifting strength and preferences of factional leaders all the more important. Individual prime ministers in Japan rarely leave as big a mark on their country as, say, Margaret Thatcher or Helmut Kohl did. Factional size is also important because of an unwritten rule of proportional representation that gives the largest factions the greatest number of cabinet positions.

Until the election of Tanaka Kakuei in 1972, every postwar prime minister had been an ex-bureaucrat. Ex-bureaucrats also occupy about 25 percent of the LDP's Diet seats, and usually about half of the cabinet. Since 1972, however, more professional politicians (*tojin*) have become prime minister than have former civil servants. Nevertheless, in each of the twelve main ministries represented in the cabinet, an administrative vice minister—a senior civil servant and hence not a political appointee—has day-to-day control, a power that is enhanced in light of the high turnover rate of cabinet ministers and vice ministers, whose average tenure on the cabinet is less than one year. Politicians come and go, but the bureaucracy seems to go on forever.

In recent years, professional politicians have begun acquiring the expertise and organizational skills to challenge bureaucratic control of the government. So-called *zoku* (policy tribes) consisting of LDP and other Diet members with particular areas of expertise, such as construction, agriculture, and commerce, are not timid about challenging bureaucrats in the making of policy. As often as not, however, such *zoku* ally themselves with their bureaucratic counterparts and with interest groups—construction companies, agricultural cooperatives, and trading companies, in the case of the three examples cited here—to secure government support for favored groups. In such cases, politicians act as equals rather than as subordinates to bureaucrats. Regardless, the effect of such collaboration is, in one view, to create an even tighter bond between the LDP, its corporate sponsors, and the bureaucracy. From another view, the increased role of party politicians in making policy reflects greater democratization or, according to one specialist, “patterned pluralism.”

If the people's elected representatives are gaining more power at the expense of the unelected bureaucracy in the making of policy, there nevertheless exist other trends within the electoral arena indicating that undemocratic forces remain formidable. The Tanaka government (1972–74) serves as a fair, if extreme, example. A self-made millionaire who earned his fortune in the scandal-ridden construction industry, Tanaka took the

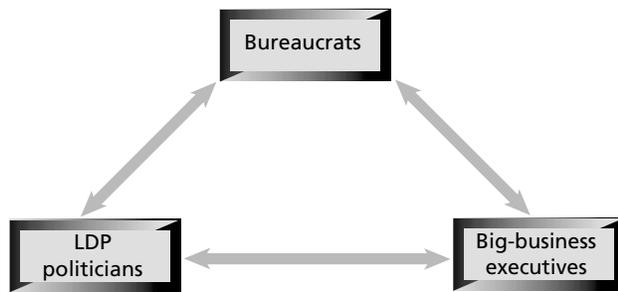
political world of LDP politics by storm when elected LDP president, and hence prime minister, in 1972. Within two years of taking office, however, it was revealed that he had been guilty of financial irregularities. Two years later came the further revelation that he had taken bribes from Lockheed. Although indicted, he was still reelected by a constituency long favored by his pork barrel policies. Even more importantly, Tanaka, known as the “shadow shogun,” continued to exercise control over the largest faction within the LDP. Effectively, this meant that Tanaka controlled the selection of the prime minister, even after he was convicted, for nearly another decade until he was disabled by a stroke in 1985.

With Tanaka's fall from power, leadership of his faction was up for grabs. One of his more politically astute lieutenants, Takeshita Noboru, assumed the mantle, only to take the prime ministry for himself in 1987. Takeshita was forced out by the publicity growing out of yet another bribery case, the so-called Recruit scandal, an influence-peddling scheme in which the Recruit Cosmos Corporation bribed leading LDP politicians. But he still had sufficient power to anoint his successor. Uno Sosuke lasted only two months in office before an embarrassing press disclosure, revealing that he physically abused his mistress, appeared just as the House of Councillors election resulted in a loss of LDP majority control. His successor, Kaifu Toshiki, survived for two years as prime minister (1989–91) only because Takeshita, the new shadow shogun, supported him. Takeshita's decision not to renew his support for Kaifu in 1991 resulted in the elevation of ex-bureaucrat Miyazawa Kiichi. If Takeshita, who died in 1999, has an obvious successor today, it is former premier Hashimoto, who now heads the largest LDP faction. There is mounting evidence that Hashimoto is attempting to undermine Koizumi just as Takeshita did to Kaifu.

### *The Iron Triangle*

The most distinctive characteristic of the Japanese is not included in the constitution or any laws—the informal links between senior civil servants, top business executives, and LDP politicians, which are far more extensive than those we saw in France. (See figure 8.2.) In 1979 Ezra Vogel of Harvard published *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America*.<sup>10</sup> Although Vogel is careful to avoid attributing Japan's economic success to any single factor, he gives major credit to the state, which consists of

<sup>10</sup>Ezra Vogel, *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).



**FIGURE 8.2** The Iron Triangle

“two key groups of decision makers, the top politicians and leading bureaucrats.” Of the two groups, the bureaucrats dominate—“the top politicians have little leverage over the bureaucracy”—if only because “most of the legislation is in fact drafted by bureaucrats rather than by Diet members.” In other words, bureaucrats, not politicians or big business, generally have set the policies that have made Japan an economic giant.

Few Japanologists quarrel with Vogel’s basic point about the centrality of the bureaucracy in setting policy or the fact that it continued even when the LDP was out of power. However, many scholars offer less positive interpretations about the significance of this fact for the health of Japanese democracy. Scholarly differences, however, are less important in coming to grips with the Japanese state than are answers to two interrelated questions. First, how has the bureaucracy combined with the LDP and its business allies to form the strongest state in the democratic world? Second, does it matter that the bureaucracy has so much influence, both for the formation of public policy and in any assessment of the degree to which Japan is democratic?

To understand why the bureaucracy is so powerful, some background is needed. The occupation authorities did not allow electoral politics to resume until April 1946. When it appeared that the Liberal Party’s leader, Hatoyama Ichiro, who was tainted by wartime activities, would be chosen prime minister, the SCAP had him purged on the eve of the election. This cleared the way for the occupation’s favorite, Yoshida Shigeru, a bureaucrat, to assume the office. Yoshida remained prime minister well beyond the end of the occupation and cemented the link between upper-level bureaucrats and conservative politicians.

The occupation authorities had retained most of the prewar and wartime bureaucrats in office, largely because there were too few Americans who spoke Japanese or knew much about its history and culture to take their places. On the one hand, the continuity in management kept the government working smoothly during this diffi-

cult time. On the other hand, bureaucratic power became even more deeply entrenched at the same time that Japan was struggling to democratize its political and electoral systems. Hence, in comparison with the badly fragmented political parties in the Diet, where power was supposed to be lodged, the bureaucracy remained fairly coherent, well organized, and powerful. This is not to say that the bureaucracy ruled then or rules now. Rather, it is to point out that at the beginning of Japan’s political reconstruction the bureaucracy possessed more power than did the politicians.

Before describing the bureaucracy and its rule, it is important to dispel one common misconception—that the strength of the Japanese state means that it has a large bureaucracy. In fact, the Japanese state is rather small. It spends a smaller proportion of total GNP on domestic programs than do any of the other liberal democracies, including the United States. It employs only about 4.5 percent of the total workforce, compared with 6–9 percent in the other liberal democracies.

The Japanese bureaucracy is, however, extremely powerful. About 90 percent of all legislation originates in the administration, which, as we have seen, is now common practice everywhere. In Japan, however, the legislation that is finally adopted in the Diet usually merely outlines basic principles and includes few details about how the bill should be enforced. Those rules and regulations are only later spelled out by the bureaucrats, which gives them an unusual source of power compared to their counterparts in Europe.

As in most other liberal democracies (but not the United States), the bureaucrats are also quite influential in part because they are so highly regarded by the public. The civil service traditionally has been the most prestigious of all careers and consequently has attracted the best and brightest from Japan’s major universities. Entry into it is based on highly competitive exams, with over fifty hopefuls competing for every opening. The meritocratic nature of the system based on examinations, however, is somewhat mitigated by the domination by graduates of Tokyo and Kyoto universities, who together produce about half of the top bureaucrats. Their overrepresentation clearly makes the system parochial and elitist, recruiting from an even narrower social base than France’s ENArques.

Organizationally, the bureaucrats’ power is based in the ministries into which the Japanese government is divided. Today there are twelve main ministries plus the prime minister’s office. Each is headed by the minister who is a member of the cabinet and who also has one or two other Diet members who serve as vice minister. Everyone else is a civil servant.

In these respects, Japan is little different from the European democracies. The Japanese bureaucracy is distinctive, however, because of the way it functions. Because few ministers stay in their jobs for more than a year, real expertise and hence much power within the ministries lies with the senior civil servants. Typically, the administrative vice minister has between twenty-five and thirty years of service in a single ministry.

The individual ministries also have rather broad areas of responsibility and clear lines of authority. The most famous of them is the **Ministry of International Trade and Industry**, or **MITI** ([www.meti.go.jp/English](http://www.meti.go.jp/English)). (Officially, it became the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry at the end of 2000, but we will continue to use its more familiar acronym.) The MITI has been in charge of virtually all microeconomic policy, including foreign trade, resource management, the development of new technology, and much of commerce. In the United States, these responsibilities are scattered among many departments and agencies, and many are not even part of the government at all. As Clyde Prestowitz put it, "A hypothetical U.S. version of MITI would include the departments of Commerce and Energy, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Export-Import Bank, the Small Business Administration, the National Science Foundation, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and parts of the departments of Defense and Justice."<sup>11</sup> Even in France, there is far less coordination, especially between domestic and foreign economic activity.

MITI and the other ministries do not exercise their power by granting or withholding large sums of money to individual companies. Rather, the bureaucrats try to provide "guidance" to help companies make the "right" decisions. Fully 80 percent of the top civil servants surveyed in one study readily acknowledged that they—and not the elected politicians—were most in charge of solving the country's problems. In no other country did the figure reach 25 percent.

It's not only MITI. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) has equally far-reaching control over the treasury and macroeconomic policy. The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) plays a critical role in the vital telecommunications industry and also runs the country's largest savings bank through the postal service. The reorganization of Japan's central government in early

2001 reduced the number of central ministries through consolidation, but a year later it is far from clear whether this "reform" has produced any significant changes in how the government does business.

The bureaucrats have never ruled as dictators. The various ministries disagree among themselves. Some times, the LDP has made concessions in the Diet; other times, the "guidance" has not produced the desired results, especially outside big business. Still, on balance, the Japanese bureaucrats are far more powerful policy-makers than their counterparts in other industrial democracies are, and they are likely to remain so whatever happens in the party system.

Bureaucratic power is buttressed by the way bureaucratic careers develop and end. Promotion during the first twenty-five years or so of a bureaucrat's career is determined almost exclusively by seniority. Civil servants develop close ties with people in their "class" who entered the ministry with them, as well as with fellow students from their university who ended up in other ministries.

At about age fifty-five, a final cut is made. A very small number of people make it into the limited number of positions at the top of each ministry. The rest retire from the civil service, but not from professional life. They engage in what the Japanese call *amakudari* (descent from heaven), which is reminiscent of the French *pantouflage*, and retire to second careers in either big business or partisan politics.

The former bureaucrats have been at the heart of policy-making power within the LDP. Even more important, perhaps, are the ex-civil servants who are to be found at or near the top of most major corporations. The ministries help retiring civil servants find these jobs, and the "old boy" ties are used to build strong but informal links between the remaining bureaucrats and their former colleagues in big business.

The last piece in this puzzle is the unusual way in which Japanese big business is organized. Again, the popular American notion of tightly organized monopolies offering their employees lifetime employment in exchange for all but fanatical devotion is rather overstated. At most, the big groups, or *keiretsu*, employ about one-third of the Japanese workforce. But they include the most important firms and the ones that have been most responsible for Japan's remarkable economic performance since the end of the war.

Those groups include a remarkable number of interconnected businesses that share management, resources, and markets. The Sumitomo group, for example, includes a bank, a metallurgical company, and a chemical firm at the top. They, in turn, have links to

<sup>11</sup>Clyde Prestowitz, *Trading Places: How We Are Giving Our Future to Japan and How to Reclaim It* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 238.

other firms in construction, trading, real estate, finance, insurance, warehousing, machinery, electronics, forestry, mining, glass, cement, rubber, and more. Although these firms do not do all their business within the Sumitomo group, that is where they receive the bulk of their financing, buy most of the materials they need for manufacturing, and sell most of what they make. Together, they hatch new business ideas and do much of the needed research and development.

In sum, the Japanese state is based on an elite that is far more integrated than any of the others we saw earlier. Unlike France, which has its own iron triangle, the LDP has provided far more continuity in personnel (except at the very top) and policy. The bureaucrats exert a more powerful influence over both partisan politics and big business than their counterparts do in any other industrialized democracy. The bureaucrats themselves form the most unified civil service in the industrialized world in terms of their policy goals and self-definitions. And Japanese big business is the most integrated, and thus most able to act in a coherent and coordinated way.

These informal mechanisms have not changed very much since the dramatic political events of 1993 or the East Asian economic crisis of 1997–98. The iron triangle may not be as strong as it was in its heyday. By 1993 career politicians were already challenging the former bureaucrats for power in the LDP, and today the bureaucrats themselves are being subjected to more criticism. The business elite is probably less homogeneous because the leaders of small companies, who do not have bureaucratic experience, have gained more leverage and visibility. Still, all the signs suggest that the bureaucrats—current and former—remain very powerful and may have become even more so in the short run, given that they are the one source of certainty and continuity at a time when the party system and the economy are in flux.

### **Public Policy: No Longer Number One?**

**A**s elsewhere, public policy in Japan represents the state's most concrete link with its citizenry. Again, as in any country, public policy comes in a variety of forms in Japan, ranging from industrial policy (largely absent in the United States), to monetary and fiscal policy, environmental policy, land use policy, social (educational, medical, welfare) policy, and foreign policy.

The focus here will be on the two areas of public policy in which Japan is most distinctive. We will use economic policy to demonstrate the importance of the

iron triangle in helping to produce the Japanese economic miracle (and claims of Japan as number one) that lasted into the 1990s, and to illuminate how it is one of the main forces retarding recovery from the slump following the collapse of the bubble economy in 1992. Then, we will turn to foreign policy—the one area in which the postwar Japanese state has always been weak, however one chooses to interpret the iron triangle.

Far more than in the other chapters, however, we will see sharp differences between domestic and foreign policy in Japan. At home, we will see the strong state with its tightly integrated elite as both an asset and a liability. Abroad, we will see a Japan that is far less master of its own destiny.

### ***Economic Policy***

Even with the downturn of the last decade, Japan has one of the world's most dynamic economies, for many reasons. Near the top of any list has to be effectiveness of the iron triangle in shaping economic policy for more than forty years after the end of World War II.

### **Japan as Number One**

Unlike the United States, where business leaders frequently see the government as an adversary, Japanese elites believe that cooperation between the state and the private sector is the best path to economic growth. The product of this cooperation is what has been called “state-led capitalism,” or “Japan, Inc.” to its many American detractors. They see Japanese capitalism as different, perhaps unfair, and more successful than it has any natural right to be.

However, such theories of a government-bureaucracy-business link that are all but conspiratorial miss the central point. What we really have are two very different models of what capitalism should be like. In the United States and, to a lesser degree, in Great Britain, the preference is for government to keep its distance from private enterprise. By contrast, in Japan, as in Germany and France, key public and private actors collaborate and thus can often cooperate more effectively and efficiently than Western theories would predict. What seems unfair in the West seems quite normal in Japan.

Thus, the first thing to understand is that Japan, unmistakably, has a capitalist economy. Japanese executives may pay more attention to planning for long-term growth and to increasing their company's share of the market than do their American counterparts, who are preoccupied with quarterly profit-and-loss statements.

Still, Japanese corporations and their managers have profit as their bottom line every bit as much as any American executive does.

What is different is that in France, Germany, and Japan there is no equivalent of the American cultural dictum that the government that governs best governs least. Quite the opposite. The state is expected to play a key role in shaping the economy by helping business make the “right” decisions. Government assistance to business is often called “industrial policy,” meaning that the state plays a relatively intrusive role in shaping and/or guiding economic development. Central to that policy are two key institutions discussed earlier: the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and the *keiretsu*.

Ironically, when the economy was in shambles during the immediate postwar period, it was the occupation itself that set the stage for much of what followed. The Americans backtracked on the policy of breaking up the *zaibatsu* (financial cliques) largely because they wanted Japan to rebuild quickly in order to spare American taxpayers the burden of subsidizing its economy in the new cold war environment. To no one's surprise, Japanese bureaucrats, whom the occupation chose not to purge, renewed prewar practices of collaborating with business to create high-speed economic growth policies. Additionally, the occupation decided to spare Japan the economic burden of rebuilding its defenses. In part, that reflected a desire to demilitarize a country that had been so aggressive in the first half of the twentieth century. However, the Americans also wanted the new government to focus its efforts solely on economic development.

Moreover, during the 1950s and 1960s, the United States did not complain about Japan's protectionist policies, designed to shield Japanese corporations from outside competition. For reasons of global strategy, America wanted an economically secure Japan and therefore encouraged a kind of “hothouse capitalism” that would give Japan free access to U.S. markets, while at the same time defending Japan's policy of protecting its own industry from foreign competition.

The Japanese quite reasonably took advantage of the situation, with MITI taking the lead in directing development of heavy industry, especially steel, shipbuilding, and petrochemicals. MITI used its powers to ensure that private corporations in these targeted industries received adequate financing through preferential bank loans, instead of having to raise scarce capital by selling stock. MITI also restricted competition to prevent costly battles within these selected industrial sectors. The effect of such industrial policy was to cement government-

## Liberalization in Japan

**JAPAN PROVIDES us with a very different view of the liberalization issue from the ones we saw in the other chapters in part 2.**

**In Britain and France in particular, the debate has been over whether publicly owned companies should be privatized. That has not been a major issue in Japan, because the state has not owned many companies—at least not since the end of World War II. There were some exceptions, including the NTT telephone monopoly and the country's largest savings bank, which is part of the post office. However, compared with the other countries covered in this book, there was simply less to privatize.**

**This does not mean we can ignore liberalization issues in Japan. If its critics are to be believed, it has a lot farther to go than any other industrialized democracy in opening its markets both to new companies at home and, especially, to competition from abroad.**

business ties, strengthen already large corporations, and speed up economic growth.

How was this accomplished? The government imposed discriminatory tariffs to protect Japanese corporations from overseas competition. It also reduced the tax rate on domestic corporations that were competing with foreign firms and imposed currency controls to prevent overseas investors from capturing strategic sectors of the Japanese market.

Those measures were largely negative. On the positive side, the Japanese government encouraged banks to make low-interest loans to promising enterprises. In addition, it subsidized certain firms needing extra help, waived import duties on foreign-made equipment that was crucial for domestic corporate development, used public tax monies to build industrial parks and an infrastructure for private businesses, and provided information and other services to corporations whose chances of success seemed bright.

The policy of favoring producers meant that corporations benefited more from development than did consumers. A poorly developed infrastructure, inadequately funded public works, and dangerously high levels of pollution all meant that the average citizen paid a price for this high-speed growth.

By the early 1970s, citizens' movements began emerging throughout Japan. These groups called on the government to adopt policies that would improve the

quality of their lives. The Tanaka government responded by spending more on housing, roads, pollution abatement, education, and welfare. Simultaneously, MITI began shifting its attention away from heavy industry and toward high-tech and capital-intensive industries, such as computers, telecommunications, and robotics, all sectors of production that would pollute less, use less energy, and improve working conditions for labor. MITI also adjusted its relationship with big business to accommodate these changes. Now, instead of directing business, it relied on administrative guidance or inducements, informal persuasion, and only occasional legally binding ordinances, all of which encouraged business to move in the direction the LDP and the top civil servants wanted.

Later, MITI played yet another role, that of facilitator in the internationalization of the Japanese economy. Specifically, MITI tried to help resolve “trade friction,” especially with the United States, by encouraging more imports of foreign goods and by eliminating trade barriers.

Because MITI has directed Japan’s remarkably successful industrial policy since the Second World War, albeit sometimes with a heavy hand, it is widely assumed that MITI epitomizes government-business collusion as the all-powerful puppeteer, with corporations acting as the pliable puppet. In fact, this picture is a gross distortion of reality. In the early 1960s, for instance, when MITI was at its most powerful, it pressured Mazda and Honda to “rationalize” the automobile industry by merging with Nissan and Toyota. MITI assumed that the international automobile market could not sustain four major Japanese manufacturers. At considerable risk, Mazda and Honda defied MITI, much to Detroit’s chagrin and to MITI’s delight later on.

However, MITI’s industrial policy generally worked not because the ministry has enormous resources—it gets only about 1 percent of the government’s annual budget—or because it has been invested with wide-ranging legal powers. Rather, MITI enjoyed success because it recruited top graduates from Japan’s best universities, devised long- and short-term strategies with the cooperation of business, and used its information-gathering capabilities to steer industry into promising markets.

Japanese industrial policies have been consistent enough that we can focus on a single example here—the manufacture and sale of semiconductors. These tiny chips are an essential part of almost any electronic product. Although many people assume that Americans dominate the industry, given the near monopoly Intel

has in personal computers, Japanese firms actually produce far more semiconductors. This is, in large part, a function of the close links between the state and the highly concentrated world of big business.

Early on, most semiconductors were developed in U.S. labs. In the 1980s, though, Japanese manufacturers began making dramatic inroads in production of state-of-the-art chips. With the help of MITI, they were able to cut manufacturing costs. Most producers were also able to take advantage of the close links they already had with suppliers, which were part of their *keiretsu*.

The Japanese goal was not to maximize short-term profit, as is typically the case for American and British firms, but rather to build its market share for the long haul. In the short run, this meant that Japanese firms were willing to sell chips below cost and thus incur charges of dumping from their American and European competitors. MITI was also committed to protecting the market share of Japanese companies by making it hard for foreign companies like Intel or Motorola to locate production facilities in Japan. The upshot was that Japanese firms were seizing an ever larger share of the global market while American firms were selling only about 9 percent of the chips sold in Japan, or not even half of U.S. firms’ share of worldwide sales.

What is important here is to see a rather common pattern. American or European firms may develop new technologies, but their reliance on the market and the “arm’s length” distance between private companies and the state mean that they often do not develop these technologies very efficiently or effectively for commercial purposes. In Japan, however, such efficiency has often resulted because close links among companies, and between them and the state, facilitate rapid improvements in manufacturing technologies and comparable development of marketing strategies for the long run.

### No Longer Number One?

For more than a decade, this image of smoothly operating, state-led capitalism has not been accurate. Since 1992 the Japanese economy has endured two sharp recessions with, at best, sluggish economic growth in between. As with its postwar success, these recent difficulties have many causes. But again, as with the success, chief among them has to be its continued reliance on the iron triangle at a time when global and domestic forces favor more market-oriented and open economies than Japan’s. Indeed, articles about the Japanese political economy today are more likely to stress the state’s

weakness, not its ability to spark the kind of economic surge that could threaten the well-being of the United States or the European Union. As the economist William Overholt recently put it in the prestigious American journal *Foreign Affairs*:

**A major historical era is ending in Japan. Institutions that created the country's economic miracle a generation ago have now brought Japan to the verge of an economic debacle. The question today is no longer whether the country will reform its economy. Tokyo no longer has any choice. The question, rather, is how Japan will manage such radical change.<sup>12</sup>**

In retrospect, it is easy to see how the problems with the iron-triangle-led economy developed, though it was by no means clear at the time. The international political economy was rapidly integrating, which meant, among other things, that multinational corporations were increasingly forced to compete at the global level.

The Japanese companies that were most integrated into the global economy typically did that—most notably, the automotive and consumer electronics industries. But they often did so by moving their manufacturing operations to countries in which costs were lower (in Southeast Asia) or that were closer to their markets (in the United States).

Other companies that saw their markets undercut came up with innovative approaches to creating new markets, as NKK did with its indoor beaches and ski resorts. However, there were surprisingly few such Wild Blue Yokohamas. Instead, most “hid” behind the protectionist walls created by MITI and the rest of the iron triangle. As their costs soared, their efficiency plummeted.

At the same time, for economic reasons we do not need to get into here, the Japanese stock and real estate markets soared. At one point in the late 1980s, the Japanese stock market was worth just about half of all the world's equity markets combined. Banks that were desperate to earn money underwrote mortgage loans that drove the price of domestic and commercial real estate through the roof. In so doing, they undermined the ability of consumers to buy the goods and services that could, in turn, fuel the kind of growth Japan had experienced since the 1950s. In 1992 the bubble economy collapsed. And a second recession set in as a result of the general crisis that hit all of East Asia in 1997.

Overall, the Japanese economy grew, on average, by 1.4 percent per year in the 1990s. This compares most

**TABLE 8.5** Japanese Economic Performance, 1998–2001 (percentage change)

INDICATOR	1998	1999	2000	2001
Growth of GDP at market prices	-1.1	0.6	1.7	1.0
Change in employment rate	-0.7	-0.8	-0.2	-0.1
Employee compensation	-1.0	-1.6	0.5	0.3

unfavorably with its own track record, which included an average growth rate of 9.6 percent per year from 1953 to 1981, and with that of the United States, whose 1990s growth rate was 3.4 percent. Japan's performance was particularly weak in the last years of the 1990s and the early 2000s. (See table 8.5.)

The iron triangle obviously cannot be blamed for the growing global pressure on the Japanese economy. It is accountable, however, to the degree that it contributes to the inertia in Japanese economic policy making that, in turn, delayed the country's adaptation to the new international reality.

The iron triangle's support for huge and largely nationally based companies worked rather well as long as the Japanese economy could rely heavily on the export of manufactured goods and close much of its own market off to imports. However, in the new global economy, Japanese manufactured goods are becoming prohibitively expensive, and Japanese industries are not producing the consumer and industrial goods the country needs. What's more, the iron triangle has long favored the large integrated cartels like Sumitomo, whereas the companies that sparked the high-tech-driven boom of the 1990s typically were small, innovative start-ups.

In other words, following the bubble economy collapse in 1992, economists and some political leaders argued that Japan needed political reform to make the system more market oriented. However, because people with roots in the iron triangle remained in power, and because the crisis was not as severe as the one that hit South Korea in 1997, the dominant political elite was able to keep the pace of reform to a trickle.

Prime Minister Koizumi, by contrast, has fewer such roots, and he has promised to stake his premiership on eliminating or reforming, for example, most of the 150-odd state-owned corporations and on privatizing the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications' postal savings system. It will not be easy. The old guard within the LDP continues to resist the prime minister's attempts to reduce the role of the iron triangle. And the power of the old vested interests remains strong. For instance, the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs (renamed the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts, and Telecommunications in the 2001 ministry reorgani-

<sup>12</sup>William Overholt, “Japan's Economy at War with Itself,” *Foreign Affairs*, 81 (Jan.–Feb. 2002), 134.



Fujiphoto/The Image Works

Japanese students at a *juku*, or “cram school,” getting ready to take university entrance examinations.

zation) controls nearly one-third of all individual savings deposits.

### ***Foreign Policy***

There is no question that Japan is an economic powerhouse. Japan produces 15 percent of the world's GNP, second only to the United States. Until recently, it has been running huge trade surpluses with, and making massive and profitable investments in, both Europe and the United States. Japan is the most generous provider of foreign development assistance, the largest exporter of capital, and the leading creditor nation.

This economic strength once led many (mostly frightened) observers to call Japan a superpower and to talk about the dawn of the “Japanese century.” Although Japan no doubt will remain a power in a world that increasingly defines national security in economic terms, there is another side to the story.

This is well illustrated by Japan's behavior during the Gulf War. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the United States and the European Community nations immediately imposed an embargo on Iraqi goods and on oil from occupied Kuwait. Japan waited three days before following suit. At the very end of August, Japan finally announced its policy—to donate \$1 billion in non-military aid to the allied coalition and in economic assistance to Middle Eastern nations hurt by the war. The United States dismissed the amount as insufficient

“checkbook diplomacy.” Two weeks passed before Japan announced a \$3-billion increase. The prime minister took the additional and unprecedented step of promoting a “United Nations Peace Cooperation Corps” consisting of two thousand unarmed or lightly armed—Tokyo couldn't decide which—soldiers to help the UN coalition in noncombatant roles.

The proposal was met with fierce cries of “militarism” by peace groups and opposition parties in Japan. The government withdrew the proposal, knowing it would be defeated in the opposition-controlled upper house. When war began in January 1991, and anticipating criticism from the United States, Prime Minister Kaifu convinced the money handlers to add another \$9 billion to the allied war chest. Japan's foreign policy in this instance was anything but what we saw for semiconductors. It was slow, hesitating, uncertain, sloppy, and vulnerable to U.S. pressure. And that is more or less what it has been like throughout the postwar period.

Why? There are two main reasons Japanese foreign policy lacks the certainty and consistency we saw in the relationship between business and government. First, when military security is involved, Japan's foreign policy has consistently been shaped by Washington's demands. Recall that Article 9 of the Peace Clause bars Japan from maintaining a military. Although successive governments have adopted ever looser interpretations of Article 9, and Japan now has one of the most technologically sophisticated armed forces in the world, its military is

not very big in relative terms. Only once has Japanese military spending exceeded 1 percent of GNP, compared with 7 percent annually in the United States, even though in absolute dollars Japan's defense budget is one of the world's largest.

In a cold war context, the Japanese Self-Defense Force was not big enough either to protect Japan itself or to contribute to the broader containment of the former Soviet Union or China in Asia as a whole. Even though many question whether such thinking ever made sense, the fact is that the American and Japanese governments believed that the United States "had" to ensure much of Japan's defense. Upwards of 50,000 American troops still operate from more than a hundred bases in Japan. The **United States–Japan Security Treaty**, in place since the end of the occupation, put Japan under the American "nuclear umbrella." The United States has never ordered Japan around. And at times the United States has even respected Japanese sensitivities—for instance, by not placing nuclear weapons on any of its bases there. Nonetheless, as with Britain, Japan routinely has gone along with American wishes in most foreign policy arenas.

Second, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, the press repeatedly reminded Japan's noninterventionist public about its oil dependency. Some 12 percent of Japan's oil imports came from Iraq and Kuwait, provoking genuine fears of shortages if Japan joined the allies. This was but part of the larger problem of resource dependence. Because Japan has to import so many of the goods and resources it needs to keep its economy going, it has adopted a foreign policy guided not by principle, such as combating aggression, but instead by pragmatic self-interest, grounded in awareness of its utter dependency on the world's resources for its economic well-being.

During the Persian Gulf crisis, Japan had to reach a balanced, carefully reasoned judgment regarding the costs of inaction, which meant not alienating Iraqi oil suppliers, versus the costs of upsetting its chief trading partner and closest defense ally, the United States. At the time of the first oil crisis in 1973, Japan chose to risk upsetting the United States by adopting a pro-Arab stance, exactly contrary to the U.S. position on the OPEC embargo. This time, Japan depended less on the Middle East for its oil supply and quickly increased imports from Indonesia to make up for lost Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil.

Under Koizumi, who flouts nationalistic credentials, Japan's foreign policy is slowly but deliberately becoming more aggressive. Following the "9/11" terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001, Koizumi cited the United States–Japan Security Treaty to remind the public that an attack on the United States must be

## Globalization and Japan

**JAPAN ILLUSTRATES the two-edged sword globalization has become.**

**More than any industrialized democracy, it has benefited from the shrinking of the world's markets for industrial goods and financial services. To see this, simply take a glance at the number of Japanese products in your stores or at the number of Japanese corporations with outlets or offices in your area.**

**Conversely, the discussion of Japan as a fragile super-power attests to the fact that Japan is not exclusively a beneficiary of globalization. This was already apparent in most natural resource areas when the term *fragile super-power* was coined a generation ago. With the Asian financial crisis of 1998 and Japan's longer-standing economic problems, it is easy to see that any country—however strong it may seem—can be vulnerable to adverse global trends.**

regarded as an attack on Japan. The Diet agreed with Koizumi, and so in November 2001 new antiterrorism legislation permitted Japan to send Aegis destroyers to the Arabian Sea to provide logistical support for U.S. forces in the region. This unprecedented act was quickly followed by a second unusual move in December when two Japanese coast guard ships attacked and sunk what was apparently a North Korean spy boat that had been on a routine mission off the coast of Japan's southernmost island. For long-time pacifist Japan, such military moves represent a significant departure from the country's tepid response to the Gulf War just a decade before. Although Article 9 and oil dependency remain as major constraints on Japan's foreign policy, Japan's new leadership clearly is unapologetic about projecting military power as befitting a "normal" nation.

## Feedback

**T**he Japanese media are huge, even by American standards. Japan has well over 120 newspapers, and its per capita consumption of daily newspapers is the world's largest. The biggest newspaper, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, has a daily circulation of 10 million or about five times that of the *New York Times*. Indeed, the Japanese are a nation of readers.

What they read is a different story. For years the news media have enjoyed an unholy alliance with government that encourages the practice of self-censorship

or, worse, acceptance of government strictures on what can be reported. So-called *kisha* (reporter) clubs from the various media attach themselves to different ministries, political parties, or industrial associations and, in exchange for easy access, agree to publish only that which they are told to publish. To do otherwise can result in being denied access to the news makers.

Most Japanese newspapers are national, and their format and editorial slant are virtually identical. Reading, for example, the *Asahi* is virtually the same as reading the *Mainichi* on any particular day. Political neutrality on issues is common. Investigative reporting is rare because it threatens the alliance news reporters have with news makers. A similar level of uniformity characterizes television (*terebi*) programming, whether public (NHK) or private (for example, Fuji or Asahi).

More inquiring minds generally turn to the weekly or monthly newsmagazines, yet many of them also “dumb down” by including pornographic cartoons and massive sports coverage in order to appeal to a wide readership. Late-night television similarly provides what we would call “R-rated” programming. Such liberality in social programming throws into bold relief the strictly controlled and generally conservative reporting of hard news.

## Conclusion: The Need for a Strong Japan

Any assessment of Japan's predicament in the early twenty-first century produces a very mixed picture. The toppling of the corruption-ridden LDP in 1993, and the electoral reforms that followed during the interregnum, did not prevent the LDP from recapturing power, did not produce a “normal” two-party system, and did not result in strong government and party leadership or in a credible, electable opposition.

Voters appear to be disillusioned. A postwar record-low voter turnout of 59 percent in elections to the lower house in both 1996 and 1998 suggests as much, as does the only marginally better turnout of 62 percent in the 2000 election. The reasons for voter disenchantment seem obvious. The political system seems beyond reform. Private corporate leadership has been thoroughly discredited by association with Mafia-like figures in corporate boardrooms and shareholder meetings. Japan's major brokerage houses have fallen from grace because of embarrassing disclosures of misdeeds and wrongdoing. And a significant number of officials in Japan's vaunted bureaucracy, especially the Ministry of Finance, have been revealed to be as venal and self-serving as the business people whose conduct they are supposed to

regulate. In brief, the iron triangle is rather bent, disfigured, and wobbly.

Citizens have reason to despair over the faltering economy as well. Consumer confidence is broken, as witnessed by the sharp drop in retail sales and the collapse of dozens of banks. At the end of 2001, the stock market plummeted to its 1986 level. Unemployment is at a postwar high, and business confidence indices are at record lows, despite near-zero interest rates that would have Americans borrowing like crazy. Promises by politicians to effect massive reform of the economy are met with jeers or yawns.

Yet, for all the gloom and doom pervading Japan today, we should not lose sight of the fact that Japan remains the world's second largest economy. Japan, arguably, also has the world's best-educated workforce and an unmatched record of converting, judolike, weaknesses into strengths. Also, its current difficulties could well be the signs of a mature economy—one that has left behind high growth and settled into a pattern of low, sustained growth while suffering periodic readjustments.

Hence, we should be cautious about indulging in *schadenfreude*, that tendency to smirk when a worthy competitor suffers. Americans, in particular, should not want Japan's economy or polity to fail. Japan remains its second largest trading partner and is a leading investor in the American and other leading economies.

In brief, then, for the sake of America's, Asia's, and, indeed, the world's well-being, we all must recognize the need for Japan to recover its economic bearings. What remains problematic, however, is whether this can happen so long as Japan's political system is stuck in the mud. There, I fear, it will remain until democracy is taken seriously by Japan's political and economic leadership.



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## Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
<i>Amakudari</i>	Hashimoto Ryutaro	DSP	Article 9
Bubble economy	Hirohito	JCP	Democratic Socialist Party
Daimyo	Koizumi Junichiro	LDP	Diet
Faction	MacArthur, Douglas	MITI	House of Councillors
Genro	Miyazawa Kiichi	SCAP	House of Representatives
Groupism	Ozawa Ichiro	SDPJ	Japan Communist Party
Iron triangle	Takeshita Noboru		Komeito
<i>Keiretsu</i>	Tanaka Kakuei		Liberal Democratic Party
<i>Koenkai</i>			Meiji Restoration
Money politics			Ministry of International Trade and Industry
Multimember constituency			Peace Clause
<i>Oyabun-kobun</i>			Revolution from above
Patron-client relationship			Shinshinto
Shogun			Social Democratic Party of Japan
Taisho democracy			Supreme commander of the Allied powers
			Tokugawa shogunate
			United States–Japan Security Treaty

## Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of Japanese politics presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the “right direction” or is on the “wrong track.” If you were asked such a question about Japan, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?
3. Japan’s political history is very different from those of the Western nations discussed in chapters 2 and 4–6. What are the most important of those differences? How are they reflected in Japanese political culture and the rest of its political life today?
4. One party, the LDP, has dominated Japanese political life for almost half a century. How has it been able to do so? What impact has it had on political, economic, and social life in Japan?
5. Many people argue that Japan really can’t be democratic because it does not have an individualistic political culture. Do you agree? Why (not)?
6. What is the iron triangle? How does it contribute to policy making in Japan? What are its implications for democracy there?
7. Few people would claim that today Japan is “number one.” But do you believe that Japan could once again achieve preeminent status economically? Why (not)?
8. Why is Japanese foreign policy so different from its domestic policy?

## Further Reading

- Bowen, Roger. *Rebellion and Democracy in Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980. One of the more comprehensive treatments of the early antecedents of democracy in Japan.
- Burks, Ardath W. *Japan: A Postindustrial Power*, 3rd ed. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991. A brief but interdisciplinary look at Japan. The best short introduction to Japanese life.
- Curtis, Gerald L. *The Logic of Japanese Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. One of the most insightful of all such overviews, replete with solid data.
- Emmott, Bill. *Japanophobia: The Myth of the Invincible Japanese*. New York: Times Books, 1994. The second book by the editor of the *Economist*; discusses the weaknesses and the strengths in the link between the Japanese state and its economy.
- Fallows, James. *Looking at the Sun*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1994. A look at the economic successes of a number of Asian countries, not just Japan, with a strong emphasis on both political culture and economic policy.
- Gough, Leo. *Asia Meltdown: The End of the Miracle?* Oxford: Capstone, 1998. The first (but by no means the last) analysis of the Asian economic crisis that began in 1998.
- Hoye, Timothy. *Japanese Politics: Fixed and Floating Worlds*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1999. The best single textbook on Japanese politics.
- Johnson, Chalmers. *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987. The best book on the MITI (and its predecessors) and on the way the Japanese economy developed before and after World War II.
- Katz, Richard. *Japan: The System That Soured. The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Economic Miracle*. Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1998. A rigorous treatment of changes in the Japanese economy.

- Prestowitz, Clyde. *Trading Places: How We Are Giving Our Future to Japan and How to Reclaim It*. New York: Basic Books, 1989. A polemical book by one of the United States' leading experts on Japanese trade.
- Reid, T. R. *Confucius Lives Next Door*. New York: Random House, 1999. By far the most accessible (and enjoyable) book on how political culture in general and Confucian values in particular have contributed to the remarkable economic growth and social stability in Japan and most of the rest of East Asia.
- Schlesinger, Jacob M. *Shadow Shoguns: The Rise and Fall of Japan's Postwar Political Machine*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. An experienced journalist's critical view of the LDP's systemic corruption and its harmful effects on Japanese democracy.
- Tyson, Laura d'Andrea. *Who's Bashing Whom? Trade Conflict in High Technology Industries*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1993. The best book on the U.S.-Japanese trade dispute, which appeared just as Tyson took office as the first chair of President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers.
- Vogel, Ezra. *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979. Two decades old, but still a useful—and provocative—analysis of Japanese politics and economics.

**EXPLORING with the CD-ROM**

Parts 2–4 end with brief discussions of how you can use the CD-ROM that accompanies this book to deepen your understanding of comparative politics. You can use the study guide, map exercises, and the other materials to go further than the book does in exploring individual countries. These brief passages in the book focus on how you can use the CD-ROM to understand the similarities and differences among the countries covered in each part of the book—in this case, the industrialized democracies.

For parts 2–4, the MicroCase exercises operate on two levels. First, they help you see how the types of countries covered in each part differ from the others. Thus, for part 2, the MicroCase data show you that the industrialized democracies both are wealthier and enjoy more political freedom than either the former communist countries or those in the third world. Because they also use different electoral systems and vary on other political criteria, they differ in terms of how many people bother to vote and how many women there are in their national legislatures.

The CD-ROM also contains the constitutions of all the countries covered in part 2 except for Great Britain, which, of course, does not have a written constitution. After reading them, note the political features stressed in each chapter that are not covered in the constitution. Ask yourself how or why those “nonconstitutional” practices and procedures came into existence and remain an important part of political life.

Of all the InfoTrac College Edition articles listed, two are particularly important as you think about the cultural underpinnings of democracy. The first is E. J. Dionne’s 1997 article “Why Civil Society? Why Now?” In it, this award-winning political scientist and journalist reviews the literature on why such cultural norms are so important. Just as I was putting the finishing touches on the book, Robert Putnam published “Bowling Together,” which looks at how reactions to the events of September 11 have helped restore political confidence and trust in the United States, at least in the short run. Dionne and Putnam cover only the United States in their articles; however, both have implications for all democracies and are thus worth your serious attention here.

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# CURRENT AND FORMER COMMUNIST REGIMES

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The Relevance of “Postcommunism”
- Thinking About the Current and Former Communist Regimes
- Socialism, Marxism, Leninism
- The Evolution of Communist Regimes
- The Marxist-Leninist State
- The Crisis of Communism: Suicide by Public Policy
- Transitions
- Feedback
- Conclusion: The End of an Era



## CURRENT AND FORMER COMMUNIST REGIMES: THE BASICS

Country	Population in Millions	GDP per Capita (1999) (in \$U.S.)	Percentage Growth of GDP (1998–99)	Percentage of Population from Minority Groups
Russia	145	2,700	1.3	18.5
Belarus	10	2,630	3.7	18.8
Ukraine	49	750	-0.4	27
Moldova	4	370	17.0	35
Lithuania	4	2,620	-4.0	19
Latvia	2	2,470	1.3	43
Estonia	1	3,480	2.4	35
Georgia	5	620	3.8	30
Armenia	3	490	2.3	7
Azerbaijan	8	370	3.3	10
Kazakhstan	17	1,230	1.6	47
Kyrgyz Republic	5	300	1.7	48
Uzbekistan	25	720	1.5	20
Tajikistan	6	290	2.0	35
Turkmenistan	5	660	13.5	23
Poland	39	3,960	3.3	2
Hungary	10	4,650	5.8	10
Czech Republic	10	5,060	-0.3	19
Slovakia	5	3,590	0.9	14
Romania	22	1,528	-2.8	10
Albania	3	870	-0.1	5
Yugoslavia	11	900	NA	37 (1991)
Croatia	4	4,580	0.5	22
Bosnia	4	230	8	56
Slovenia	2	9,890	3.5	12
FYROM	2	1,690	2.3	33
China	1,250	780	6.3	8
Laos	5	280	1.5	1
Cambodia	12	260	2.2	10
Vietnam	78	370	2.9	10–15
North Korea	22	1,390	-3.0	0
Mongolia	3	350	1.2	15
Cuba	11	1,650	5.6	NA

Sources: Unless otherwise noted, population, GNP, and GNP per capita are from the World Bank, *World Development Report, 2000/2001*, [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org), accessed 6 February 2002. Minority group figures from the CIA *World Factbook*, [www.odci.gov](http://www.odci.gov), accessed 6 February 2002. Bosnia, Cuba, North Korea, and Yugoslavia GNP statistics from Dorling Kindersley, *World Reference*, [www.travel.dk.com/wdr/BA/mBA\\_Econ.htm](http://www.travel.dk.com/wdr/BA/mBA_Econ.htm), accessed 6 February 2002. GNP growth rate statistics for Bosnia, Cuba, North Korea from CIA *World Factbook*. There are no reliable growth statistics for the former Yugoslavia for this period.

*Ten years after the collapse of the Soviet empire, one thing is clear. The word “postcommunism” has lost its relevance. Indeed, it is striking how vastly the different outcomes of the democratic transitions have been in Central and Eastern Europe. The fact that [these countries] shared a communist past explains very little about the paths they have taken since.*

JACQUES RUPNIK

### The Relevance of “Postcommunism”

The other chapters in this book start with brief case studies following the opening quotation. In most, the case sets the stage for the chapter, and the quotation touches on a theme that recurs in the pages that follow.

Here, however, the quotation by Jacques Rupnik of France’s National Foundation of Political Science performs both functions. It does so because on one level he is right on target, but on another his comment is seriously misleading.

He limited his attention to eastern Europe—and there he is probably right. How can a common communist past explain the fact that one former Yugoslav republic (Slovenia) is a thriving democracy poised to join the European Union, whereas another (Serbia) has suffered from four wars, authoritarian rule, and a disintegrating economy? Or how can it explain why the Czech Republic has reelected the anticommunist hero Vaclav Havel as president, whereas neighboring Poland has reelected Aleksander Kwasniewski, head of its reformed Communist Party?

But if we cast our net more broadly, as we will in this chapter to consider all countries that had and the few that still have communist systems, we see even more diversity than Rupnik suggests. Most of the former Soviet republics, for example, are run by veterans of its old Communist Party. China, Cuba, and North Korea make up a tiny group of countries that are still run by traditional communist regimes, though some of them, such as China, have undertaken major economic if not political reforms.

That said, all of these countries have something in common that shapes their social, economic, and political lives to a greater degree than Rupnik suggests—a legacy of **Marxist-Leninism**. Whatever paths toward change these societies have adopted, they all have a common and powerful tradition whereby the communist party tried to control everything from the government to the economy to social life. At some times and in some places, this amounted to what political scientists call **totalitarianism**.

In other words, there are two important common denominators to the countries that fall into this second category. First, their states had much more in common with each other than do the industrialized democracies we covered in part 2. There is nothing close to the differences between presidential and parliamentary systems or between federal and unitary states in the fifteen or so countries that at one point or another had Marxist-Leninist regimes.

Second, their admittedly very different policies and trajectories since the late 1980s were all unprecedented. As we will see in part 4, dozens of countries have attempted to become more democratic and to adopt more market-oriented economies in the past two decades. However, none of the others have had to make as complete and as rapid a change as those in the former Soviet bloc.

Reactions like the one shown in the *Economist* cartoon, reproduced here, reflect the widespread sense that



Paul B. Davies

Rupnik may have gone too far except for the most successful countries in eastern Europe, such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Estonia. Although few observers envision a return to the tensions of the cold war years, every time one of these countries returns former Communists to office, suffers from ethnic conflict, or goes through an economic downturn, we realize just how difficult the transition away from that common communist past is.

## Thinking About the Current and Former Communist Regimes

Writing about communism in the early twenty-first century is like trying to shoot at a rapidly moving and even more rapidly receding target. As recently as 1984, President Ronald Reagan used American fears of communism as a major campaign theme in his landslide victory over Walter Mondale. Barely seven years later, the Soviet Union—Reagan’s “focus of evil in the world”—had collapsed.

Reagan could hardly be blamed for a lack of foresight. At the time, no serious observers predicted that the Soviet Union and its allies would abandon communism in a few short years.

From the end of World War II on, the cold war, pitting the industrialized democracies against the Soviet bloc, had dominated world politics. By the 1980s, it had become clear that the communist regimes were neither as strong nor as ruthless as the alarmists had argued in the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the Eastern European countries had been rocked by protest movements. Even the Soviet Union had loosened some of its more repressive policies. And factional disputes had divided the Chinese Communist Party on several occasions. Nonetheless, virtually everyone assumed that the communist regimes would remain in power and that the cold war would continue indefinitely.

But then, the impossible happened. The unraveling of the communist world began shortly after the selection of **Mikhail Gorbachev** as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in March 1985. Terms like *perestroika* and *glasnost* became almost as familiar to Americans as baseball and apple pie. New York department stores sold pieces of the Berlin Wall and marketed shoddy Soviet consumer goods as the latest trendy fads.

“Gorbymania” was not to last, however. The reforms he introduced opened a political Pandora’s box. By the end of 1989, every communist regime in eastern Europe had disintegrated. Then, less than a year after being

named *Time*’s “man of the decade,” Gorbachev and his Soviet Union were gone.

The transition from communist rule has been anything but smooth. Each of the eastern European and former Soviet states declared itself a democracy. But each found that creating a regime that bore more than a fleeting resemblance to those we covered in part 2 is easier said than done. Meanwhile, they also had to accomplish something that had never been done anywhere before—shift from a centrally planned command economy to one dominated by private ownership in a reasonably free market. In addition, the former Yugoslavia and several of the former Soviet republics experienced some of the bloodiest wars in recent memory.

China, North Korea, Cuba, and a few others nominally remained communist. With the exception of North Korea and Cuba, however, these countries, too, adopted sweeping economic reforms that outstripped anything Gorbachev anticipated when he spoke of *perestroika*. To be sure, the Communist Party remains securely in control in China and in Vietnam. But these societies seemingly have little in common with the egalitarian socialism Marx and Engels predicted a century and a half ago.

More and more analysts are also coming to the conclusion that it will be all but impossible for these regimes to remain communist. Even if their regimes do survive, they almost certainly will face growing pressure from below, as evidenced by the upsurge of interest in the Falun Gong sect in China and the authorities’ stern reaction.

## The Basics

### What Is/Was the Communist World?

As with the liberal democracies, there is some ambiguity about which countries should be considered in part 3. The criterion used here is simple. The thirty-three countries highlighted in the map at the beginning of this chapter were all part of one of the sixteen regimes that once explicitly adopted the Marxist-Leninist model.

The most important of them, by far, was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), or Soviet Union. The first communist regime came to power there following the October revolution of 1917 and the civil war that followed. After World War II the Soviet Union imposed regimes that were all but carbon copies of its own on Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the eastern part of Germany—which became known in the West as the **satellite** countries. Communist regimes came to power on their own in Yugoslavia and Albania. None of these countries has a communist regime today.

Most of the other communist countries were in Asia—as are most of the remaining ones. Mongolia went communist in the 1920s. Perhaps because it was always under Soviet influence, it abandoned Marxism-Leninism in the early 1990s. The settlement at the end of World War II divided Korea, and the northern half became the communist Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Chinese Communist Party won its revolutionary war against the Nationalists in 1949, thus bringing the world's most populous country into the communist camp. Also after World War II, a communist insurgency broke out in the French colony of Indochina. After the French were finally defeated in 1954, it was split into four independent countries: Laos, Cambodia, and North and South Vietnam. Of the four, only North Vietnam was communist at the time. Another two decades of fighting ensued in which half a million U.S. troops could not defeat the communists. By 1975 Marxists were in power in Laos, Cambodia, and a united Vietnam. Laos and Vietnam still had communist regimes as of this writing.

The last country on the list is Cuba. It was granted its independence after the Spanish-American War in 1898. For the next sixty years, the United States was for all intents and purposes in charge of a country whose government was officially in the hands of a series of weak and corrupt dictators. The last of them, Fulgencio Batista, was overthrown by revolutionaries led by **Fidel Castro** in 1959. Relations with the United States quickly deteriorated, and Cuba became a Soviet ally and adopted Marxism-Leninism in 1961.

Several other countries are sometimes included in lists of communist regimes, such as Nicaragua, North Yemen, Angola, and Mozambique. These countries all had distinctly left-wing governments at one point or another. However, they are not included here because they never fully adopted Marxist-Leninist principles.

### The Leninist State

The first and most important characteristic these countries had in common was a form of leadership devised by **Vladimir Lenin** for the prerevolutionary Bolshevik Party in Russia. We will explore its characteristics in detail later in this chapter and the next. Here, it is enough to note two things.

First, the Communist Party totally controlled political life. In a few countries, other parties were allowed to exist, but they were never anything more than pawns of the Communists. The party dominated the government, the media, the economy, the educational system, and even most social and leisure time activities. The parties were run according to the principle of **democratic cen-**

**TABLE 9.1** The Collectively Owned Portion of the Economy in 1967 (in percentages)

COUNTRY	AGRICULTURAL LAND	INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION	RETAIL SALES	NATIONAL INCOME
Bulgaria	99	99	100	95
Hungary	94	99	99	96
Poland	15	100	99	76
East Germany	95	88	79	94
Romania	91	100	100	95
Czechoslovakia	90	100	100	95
Soviet Union	98	100	100	96
Yugoslavia	16	98	NA	77
Weighted average	92	99	98	95

Source: Adapted from Bernard Chavance, *The Transformation of Communist Systems: Economic Reform Since the 1950s*, trans. Charles Hauss (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 28.

**tralism.** But they were democratic in name only and were in reality ruled by a tiny group of party officials at the top of the hierarchy.

Second, until the late 1950s, the Soviet Union dominated the rest of the communist world, as well as the USSR itself. New communist regimes not only adopted Marxism-Leninism but submitted to Moscow's leadership in determining how their countries were run. In the late 1950s, the communist world did begin to splinter. The Chinese leaders came to oppose a Soviet Union they found too moderate and complacent. The two states soon became bitter enemies, and their troops occasionally fired at each other along their four-thousand-mile-long border. Still, most communist regimes remained loyal to Moscow until the very end.

### Command Economies

Until the late 1980s, the communist countries also relied on a **command economy**, in which the government owned almost all industrial enterprises and most retail sales outlets. Only in Poland and Yugoslavia was much private farming allowed to continue. (See table 9.1.) The economies were managed by a party-dominated state planning committee (Gosplan in the Soviet Union). It devised detailed blueprints for what was to be produced, exported, and sold, typically for a five-year period. Individual enterprises, run by managers appointed by the party, were then issued instructions about what to produce and how to produce it.

Early on, central planning helped produce rather rapid growth. By the 1950s some of the communist countries were among the world leaders in the production of steel, ships, and other heavy industrial goods. Major improvements were made in the average person's standard

of living. Homelessness was eliminated in Eastern Europe, and starvation in China.

However, by the late 1980s the benefits of centralized planning had evaporated, and the communist countries found themselves in deep economic trouble. Planning and coercion could help stimulate growth in the early stages of industrialization, but they were of little or no use when it came to the vitally important high-tech sectors of the economy, for reasons that will become clear later. The macroeconomic problems were reflected in the people's poor living conditions. To be sure, most people were far better off than their parents or grandparents had been. However, everything from housing to health care was mediocre at best—a fact that was driven home to the millions of people who gained access to Western mass media or who met Western tourists visiting Eastern Europe or the USSR.

### **Key Questions**

Later in the chapter, we will explore exactly how and why the crisis of communism hit. For now, simply note that it did occur and that it forced these countries to all but completely change their political course. In other words, the stakes of political life in the current and former communist countries are much higher than anything we saw in part 2, as are the obstacles.

As noted earlier, the Eurasian countries are struggling through a social, political, and economic transition for which there are no real precedents. Their leaders are simultaneously trying to build a democratic state on the ashes of the old Leninist one, a market economy based on private ownership, and a new culture stressing such values as individualism and personal initiative, which have never been prominent features in their cultures.

Any one of those challenges would be difficult enough, and together, they have proved all but impossible to overcome. Almost all highly trained people in these countries have been touched by the communist past, which leaves many of them politically and socially suspect. The collapse of the Leninist state has unleashed new political forces. Millions of people are impatient with the pace of reform. Old ethnic and other antagonisms have been rekindled. And all this is happening without as much Western economic aid as many in these countries had expected.

The stakes are different, but no lower, in the countries that still cling to the Leninist model—and “cling” is probably the most telling verb to use in describing them. All are in the midst of a high-risk political balancing act. All have acknowledged the need for economic reform. However, all have resisted political reform and have tried

to retain unfettered Communist Party rule. As we will see in chapter 11 on China, most observers do not think this state of affairs can continue indefinitely. Further, they believe that if these Communist parties hold on to power they will have to adopt significant democratizing reforms as well.

Studying the current and former communist countries also requires us to shift intellectual gears. We will ask many of the same questions posed in part 2:

- What contemporary and historical, domestic and international forces shaped their development?
- How are decisions made in these countries?
- What role do average citizens play in making decisions?
- What are their public policies?
- How is political life affected by global forces?

But we will also have to ask some new questions:

- How could regimes that seemed so strong collapse so quickly?
- Why have some communist systems survived?
- What are the political implications of economic reform in countries that have kept and in those that have abandoned communism?
- Why are they all facing much more serious domestic and global challenges than any of the countries covered in part 2?

Examining the current and former communist countries will make comparative analysis easier by allowing us to look back at the industrialized democracies and put both types of regimes in a broader perspective. This will be particularly helpful with concepts such as legitimacy, stability, and the distinction between the government of the day and the regime. These are all open to debate in such countries as Russia and China but not in the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, or Japan. By that same token, the current and former communist countries are also struggling with issues of democratization and economic development, which will top our agenda when we move on to the third world in part 4.

### **Socialism, Marxism, Leninism**

**A**s the communist regimes aged, socialism in general, and Marxism and Leninism in particular, mattered less and less to their leaders and people alike. However, both because the three doctrines gave rise to these governments and because they were so

frequently misunderstood by critics in the West, it is still important to consider them here.

## Socialism

Historians have traced the origins of socialism back to the radical Levelers of the seventeenth-century English Civil War, who advocated social, political, and economic equality. And, as you would expect with an idea that old, there are dozens of interpretations of what socialism means, making it impossible to present any single, universally accepted definition here. For the purposes of an introductory course, it is good enough to think of **socialism** as involving four characteristics.

First, all socialists believe that capitalism and the private ownership of the **means of production** are flawed. They are convinced that private ownership leads to unacceptable levels of inequality. Not all socialists are convinced that the central government has to control the entire economy. Nonetheless, all believe that representatives of the people as a whole, and not a small group of capitalists, should determine how the economy is run.

Second, whereas most liberals are satisfied if a society can achieve equality of opportunity—which, in theory, offers everyone the same chance to succeed—socialists go further and demand substantial equality of outcome as well. They believe that, to be truly “free to” do the things that capitalist and liberal democratic societies offer, people must also be “free from” hunger, disease, and poverty.

Third, socialists are convinced that the democracy practiced in liberal, capitalist society is too limited. Most believe that the personal freedoms and competitive elections that are at the heart of liberal democratic theory are vital. However, they would extend democracy to include popular control over all decisions that shape peoples’ lives, most notably at work.

Finally, socialists claim that providing for public ownership and control of a substantially more egalitarian society will improve human relations in general. In one way or another, all are convinced that capitalism keeps most of us from reaching our potential. In other words, if we could remove the fetters of capitalism, we would all be better off.

## Marxism

Since the late nineteenth century, socialists have been divided into two main camps. The first includes the various social democratic parties that played such a major role in the industrialized democracies discussed in part 2. They believe that social and economic change can and must be achieved by working through a democratic, rep-

resentative system. Here we will concentrate on the second camp, consisting of parties and politicians who believe that significant political and economic progress can occur only through revolution based on principles and procedures derived from the writings of **Karl Marx**.

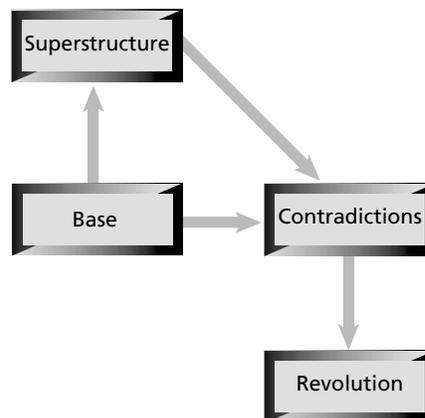
As with socialism in general, there is no universally accepted view of Marxism. What follows is a brief version of the theory that stresses its key principles, most of which ended up being honored only in the breach by those leaders who thought of themselves as Marxists.

Like most intellectuals of his generation, Marx believed that societies go through stages, evolving from primitive groups of hunters and gatherers, and culminating in the industrial society he lived in. Indeed, what set Marx apart from most socialists of his time was his understanding that industrial capitalism is but one (irreversible) step along the path of social development.

Marx also agreed with the German philosopher Hegel, who believed that societies shift from one stage to another in a wrenching process he called the **dialectic**. Societies do not change in fundamental ways as a result of incremental reform. Rather, major shifts occur only when their basic values and principles are challenged and new ones are adopted.

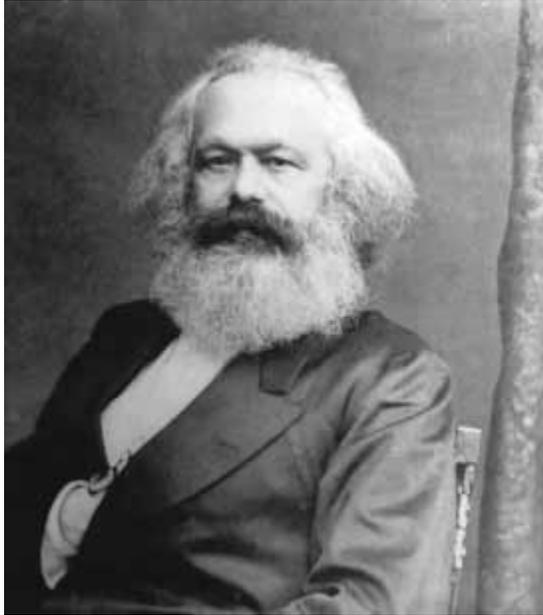
Unlike Hegel, Marx believed that progress occurs as a result of changes in the distribution of economic power, which he called **historical materialism**. Any society can be broken down into social classes determined by who owns—and who doesn’t own—the means of production or the key institutions through which wealth is created.

Thus, according to Marx, progress occurs as a result of conflict between these classes. He was convinced that the ruling class had to exploit the rest of the population who did not control the means of production and that the relationship between them constituted the economic **base** of any society. (See figure 9.1.) Any society



**FIGURE 9.1** Base, Superstructure, and Contradictions, According to Marx

## KARL MARX



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Karl Marx was born in 1818 in Trier, Germany, to a family of wealthy, assimilated Jews. While a university student, Marx was exposed to the democratic and revolutionary ideas sweeping Europe at the time. In the early 1840s, Marx moved to Paris, where he worked for a number of fledgling radical journals. He started reading British capitalist economic texts, as well as the philosophy that had so stimulated him while a student. He also met **Friedrich Engels**, the son of a rich industrialist and author of one of the first detailed accounts of what life in the new factories was like.

As revolutions swept Europe in 1848, Marx and Engels began writing about a new version of socialism that was later to be called alternative Marxism or **communism**. Their ideas were first set out in a tract, *The Communist Manifesto*, which they published that winter. Over the next forty years, the two wrote dozens of volumes, the most important of which was Marx's three-volume historical and theoretical study of capitalism, almost always referred to by its German title, *Das Kapital*.

Karl Marx.

based on private ownership also has built-in **contradictions**, because people will not long accept being exploited and will eventually rise up in opposition. To slow the rise of rebellion, the owners create a **superstructure** of other institutions, such as the state or religion. The former runs the bureaucracy, police, and army to maintain law and order, capitalist style, while the latter offers false hopes and expectations. It is from Marx's discussion of the superstructure that we get two of his most commonly cited statements: "Religion is the opiate of the masses" and "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." But, said Marx, with time the oppressed would be able to organize, rise up, overthrow their oppressors, and usher in a new pattern of class relations.

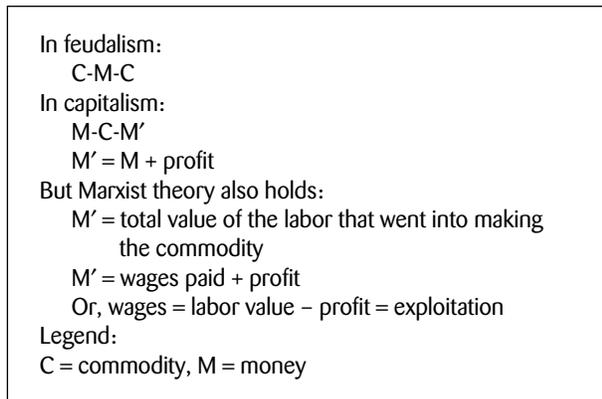
From Marx's perspective, capitalism was both a step forward, replacing feudalism, and a system fraught with fatal contradictions precisely because capital is at its core. (See figure 9.2.) In capitalism, the wealthy use money primarily as a vehicle to buy the commodities—goods and services—they want (the C and M of figure 9.2). For example, they sell grain or wine and use the money to buy clothes or spices. In capitalism the pursuit of money becomes the driving force of the entire system. Capital-

ists are less interested in the goods and services they produce than in the money they can make from a transaction  $M'$ , which places the profit motive at the heart of the economy for the first time.

This makes capitalism exploitative by its very nature. In feudalism money was used to facilitate the purchase or sale of goods. In capitalism it became the driving force behind the entire economic system. Capitalists were different from the leading classes of earlier societies because they were less interested in the goods and services they produced than in the money they could make.

This drive to earn a profit also makes capitalism exploitative by its very nature. Here Marx drew on one of his most controversial assumptions. He was convinced that the real worth of any good, as well as the price capitalists could sell it for, was equal to the value of all the labor that went into making it (also  $M'$  in figure 9.2). The problem was that the price capitalists set for their commodities had to include both the wages they paid their workers and their own profit. This meant that, to make money, capitalists had to pay workers less than they deserved.

According to Marx, the constant need to open new markets to make more profit would, in turn, lead to



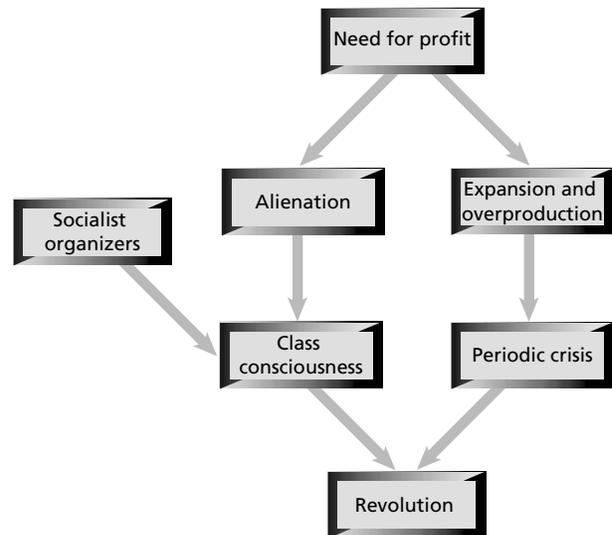
**FIGURE 9.2** The Role of Money in Feudalism and Capitalism

alternating periods of booms and busts. (See figure 9.3.) As capitalism expanded and competition intensified, more and more businesses would fail as weaker capitalists proved unable to deal with the competitive pressures of the market. As that happened, the **bourgeoisie**, or capitalist class, would grow smaller and smaller, while the working class, or **proletariat**, would swell until it included the vast majority of the population.

As in any society based on inequality, workers would resent their exploitation. Their alienation and, later, class consciousness would be enhanced by two of capitalism's own innovations—the spread of mass education and the political freedoms of liberal democracy.

Marx assumed that the contradictions of capitalism could only be resolved through revolution. However, most analysts are convinced that he did not expect a long and bloody struggle. Instead, he seems to have thought that, once the proletariat took on such massive proportions, a wave of strikes and demonstrations would lead to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie with a minimum of violence. Marx also believed that the revolution could not be confined to one country but would spread internationally. The revolution would be followed by a transitional period that, unfortunately, he chose to call the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” The means of production would be taken over and run collectively, the cultural vestiges of capitalism would be destroyed, and resources would be redistributed in an egalitarian manner.

Afterward, society would move into communism. At this point, there would be no need for government or any other part of the superstructure because people would no longer be exploiting each other. Instead, they would work freely and efficiently precisely because they were freed of the fetters of ownership in a society organized by Marx's famous dictum “from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.”



**FIGURE 9.3** Expansion and the Collapse of Capitalism

### *Marxism-Leninism*

As an evolutionary thinker, Marx also believed that socialist revolutions would first break out in advanced industrialized societies. Unfortunately for Marxists, that is not where revolutions inspired by Marx's ideas occurred. Rather, they came to power in countries in which industrialization and capitalism had not developed very far. All had small working classes and socialist movements, and most had repressive governments that made the organization of broadly based socialist movements impossible.

To come to power in these circumstances, Marxists had to adopt a very different strategy. Although there was considerable variation in the way Marxists won in these sixteen countries, all relied heavily on an organization and strategy first developed by Lenin to help the Russian Marxists adapt to their circumstances early in the twentieth century.

Even though Marx's theory seemed to rule out the possibility of Marxism taking root in countries like Russia at the time, many intellectuals there were drawn to it. At first, orthodox Marxists urged patience, arguing that no Marxist revolution was possible until Russia became industrialized and democratic. Others, led by Lenin, were unwilling to wait for history to take its “natural” course.

Lenin got the Russian Social Democratic Party to adopt a new strategy based on a highly disciplined, hierarchical organization of professional revolutionaries. Lenin called his model “democratic centralism,” but as we will see in more detail in the next chapter, there was

next to nothing democratic about it. The leadership would run the party with an iron hand and would brook next-to-no dissent from below.

At the time Lenin developed his ideas, they had virtually no impact because he and most of his **Bolshevik** colleagues were living in exile and had little popular support inside Russia. Yet, within fifteen years, the Bolsheviks were in power, and Lenin was convinced that they had won because they had used democratic centralism and the rest of his strategy.

The tactics developed to pull off a revolution in a society very different from the one that Marx envisioned now became the model the Bolsheviks used to structure their new regime. And, even though this, too, is a point historians debate, adopting Lenin's hierarchical organization and the control over the society it allowed made the attainment of Marxist goals of human liberation and democracy all but impossible. Quite simply, too much power was concentrated in too few hands.

### Stalinism

After the Bolsheviks took power, they established a regime that they expected would provide Marx's dictatorship of the proletariat and guide the transition from capitalism to socialism. (See table 9.2.) However, something very different—and quite tragic—occurred instead.

The authoritarian features of communism became the regime's defining characteristic during the third of a century after the 1917 revolution. To some degree, the authoritarianism, if not the totalitarianism, was an outgrowth of Lenin's democratic centralism. However, most historians and political scientists assign the primary responsibility for the degradation of communism to **Joseph Stalin** and his dictatorial control over the world communist movement from the mid-1920s until his death in 1953.

It was in studying this period that Western scholars coined the term *totalitarianism*. Stalin and his colleagues used the party itself, the mass media, and systematic campaigns of terror to completely subjugate the population and then mobilize the people in pursuit of the leadership's goals.

Marx and Lenin may not have intended events to turn out that way. Nonetheless, the **party state** became as close to totalitarian as imaginable. I could go on and present statistical and other "hard" evidence about those regimes. However, as is often the case with emotionally charged material, it is easier to illustrate this point by turning to the creative arts—in this case a piece of fiction, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Orwell was part of a generation of young European intellectuals who

**TABLE 9.2** Key Events in the Evolution of Communist Regimes

YEAR	EVENT
1917	Bolshevik revolution in Russia
1924	Death of Lenin Stalin begins consolidation of power
1945–47	Start of cold war Communists seize power in Eastern Europe
1949	Chinese Communists come to power
1950	Start of Korean War
1953	Death of Stalin
1956	Secret speech and de-Stalinization Revolt in Hungary
1959	Castro comes to power in Cuba
1975	End of Vietnam War, solidification of communist rule in Indochina

were drawn to Marxism in the 1920s and 1930s. But Orwell soon became disillusioned with Stalin's dictatorial and opportunistic policies, which he criticized in his writing for the rest of his life.

In *Animal Farm* the animals rise up and throw off the yoke (literally and figuratively) of human oppression. Initially they are inspired by an ideology that reads a lot like Marxism and is embodied in the anthem "Beasts of England," which Orwell tells us was sung to a tune somewhere between "La Cucaracha" and "My Darling Clementine."

Soon, however, things turn sour. The old revolutionary leader dies shortly after the revolution, just as Lenin did. The pigs, the animal Orwell not coincidentally chose to represent the Communist Party, assume more and more power over the other animals. Then a struggle for power breaks out between the two leading pigs. Snowball (aka Trotsky), the more orthodox "Marxist," believes—as his name suggested—that the revolution must spread to all the farms and beasts of England. In the end, he loses out to the dictatorial Comrade Napoleon, who, like both his namesake and Stalin, on whom he is based, is more interested in power for power's sake than in any lofty goals.

The subtle complexities of Marxist ideology give way first to the Seven Commandments and then to the simplistic slogan "Four legs good, two legs bad." And "Beasts of England" is replaced by a new anthem, "Comrade Napoleon," which adulates the single leader. The pigs lord their power and wealth over the other animals, and become more and more like their prerevolutionary oppressors: "All animals are equal, except some are more equal than others." The pigs violate the Seven Commandments by sleeping in beds and drinking alcohol. Orwell ends the novel with a scene in which the pigs are in a house drinking and playing cards with a group of

men, their supposed “class” enemy. The other animals look in on the game from outside:

As the animals outside gazed at the scene, it seemed to them that some strange thing was happening. What was it that had altered in the faces of the pigs? Clover’s old dim eyes flitted from one face to another. Some of them had five chins, some had four, some had three. But what was it that seemed to be melting and changing? Then, the applause having come to an end, the company took up their cards and continued the game that had been interrupted, and the animals crept silently away.

But they had not gone twenty yards when they stopped short. An uproar of voices was coming from the farmhouse. They rushed back and looked through the window again. Yes, a violent quarrel was in progress. There were shoutings, bangings on the table, sharp suspicious glances, furious denials. The source of the trouble appeared to be that Napoleon and Mr. Pilkington had each played an ace of spades simultaneously.

Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.<sup>1</sup>

## Expansion

Marx also argued that the revolution could not be limited to a single country. Once revolution broke out in Germany, Britain, or the United States, it would soon spread. To speed up that worldwide uprising, two Workingmen’s International groups were created to bring together and coordinate the actions of the world’s Socialist parties. During World War I, the second of them failed to keep most socialists from joining the war effort and made no contribution to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Lenin thus felt justified in claiming that the Bolsheviks should lead the world revolutionary movement. Within months of seizing power, they established a **Third International**, or **Comintern**, to spread revolution, Bolshevik style. Most Socialist parties split (see the discussion of the origins of the French Communist Party in chapter 5), with the more radical wing supporting the revolutionary government.

But the revolution did not spread as either Marx or Lenin had expected. A few attempts to establish Bolshevik regimes were made in 1919 and the early 1920s, but

these were quickly put down. By the time Stalin had solidified his power, it was clear that no such revolutions were likely to occur in the foreseeable future. Instead, the new, weak Soviet state was vulnerable to pressures from the various hostile countries that surrounded it.

Stalin then inaugurated a new phase in Soviet policy—socialism in one country. Now, the first and foremost goal of the Soviet government, and of all other Communist parties that belonged to the Third International, was to help the world’s one Marxist regime survive, even if that meant slowing the prospects for revolution in other countries.

Following the end of World War II, communism did expand, though not in the way Marx had anticipated. As the war drew to a close, resistance forces dominated by communists drove the Germans and their collaborators out of Albania and Yugoslavia, and established Marxist-Leninist regimes. Between 1945 and 1947, the Soviets imposed communist regimes on the rest of Eastern Europe. In China, North Korea, Indochina, and Cuba, communist regimes were the result of domestically inspired revolutions.

No matter how they came to power, all these regimes were patterned after the Soviet party state. Stalin insisted that the governments in what many in the West called the “satellite” countries of Eastern Europe adopt the Soviet system. But even where communists came to power on their own, they acknowledged Soviet leadership and patterned their own new government on Moscow’s.

## De-Stalinization

Stalin died in March 1953. He was replaced by a group of men (despite their supposed commitment to egalitarian policies, as well as Marx’s opposition to the way women were treated under capitalism, communist regimes never saw fit to promote more than a handful of women to top leadership positions) who had been his collaborators and, some would say, henchmen. They ushered in a period of relaxation and, to some degree, reform that came to be known as **de-Stalinization**. Cracks in the supposedly impenetrable totalitarian wall were evident in **Nikita Khrushchev**’s 1956 secret speech to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, which documented many of the atrocities committed under Stalin in gory detail.

Political controls in some areas of intellectual life were loosened. Works critical of Stalin were published and widely discussed. Universities became politically and intellectually exciting places for their students, including Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, and most of the 1980s generation of reformers. There were, however, clear limits to the reforms. Stalin was the only acceptable object of attack,

<sup>1</sup>George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1946), 128.



AP/Wide World Photos

Protestors demolishing symbols of Soviet rule during the Hungarian uprising of 1956. Here a bust of Stalin is being used to hold a street sign.

and criticism of the current leadership, Lenin, or the party's monopoly on power was still strictly forbidden.

The Soviets cracked down whenever they felt that events in their own country or in Eastern Europe were getting out of hand. In 1956 reform Communists came to power in Hungary and formulated plans to create a multi-party system and exit the Soviet-imposed **Warsaw Pact** alliance. Meanwhile, thousands of people demonstrated in the streets of Budapest and other Hungarian cities. Finally, Soviet troops intervened, overthrowing the government of Imre Nagy and replacing it with one headed by Janos Kadar, known to be loyal to the Soviet leadership. The Hungarian uprising, like the similar one in Czechoslovakia twelve years later, made it clear that the Soviets were not willing to tolerate either an end to single-party domination or departure from the Warsaw Pact.

Still, things had gotten too far out of hand for Khrushchev's conservative colleagues, and they forced him from office in October 1964. He was replaced by a collective leadership headed by **Leonid Brezhnev**, whose hostility toward change would not only characterize his seventeen years in power but would contribute heavily to the demise of Eurasian communism in general.

This point is worth underscoring. Less than half a century after the Bolshevik revolution, the Soviet Union and most of the other communist regimes had been taken over by an aging generation of leaders more com-

mitted to stability than to change. The new leadership could not, however, put a halt to two trends that were to become ever more prominent in the quarter-century before the crisis of communism began in earnest.

First, there was no longer a monolithic world communist movement. As early as the late 1940s, Albania and Yugoslavia had effectively broken free from Soviet control. By the 1960s the same was true for the non-European communist regimes. Second, although it was difficult to see at the time, Brezhnev and his colleagues had come to power at a time when their countries needed to change—and change dramatically. That, however, was not something they were prepared even to consider.

## The Marxist-Leninist State

### *The Party State*

By the mid-1960s governments that ruled in the name of Marx had drifted far from the egalitarian goals outlined earlier. Instead, political, economic, and all other forms of power were concentrated in the hands of a small elite of full-time party leaders. Constitutions in the Soviet Union and elsewhere gave the party the leading role in government and society, which meant that it, and not the government, held a monopoly on real decision-making power.

The critical institutions were the **secretariat** and the political bureau, or **Politburo**, of the party. (The exact titles varied from country to country and from time to time.) The most important individuals were the **general secretary** and the members of the Politburo, who functioned as the equivalent of the prime minister and cabinet in a parliamentary system. There was a formal government, and most important party leaders served in both. But it was always their party “hat” that prevailed; the parliament, cabinet, and other institutions were little more than a rubber stamp for decisions made in the party, which the government then implemented.

The party also had strong leaders. Ironically, Marx had tried to downplay the role individuals play in shaping history, stressing instead the impact of broad historical and economic forces. Lenin, too, resisted attempts to turn himself into a hero. Yet, shortly after Lenin died, Stalin and his supporters transformed him into a symbol that some observers believe was equivalent to a god. As Orwell pointedly shows in *Animal Farm*, Stalin became the center of an even greater **cult of personality**. After Stalin, Marxist leaders maintained various types of collective leadership in which a number of people shared power. Nonetheless, the prominence of a Fidel Castro, Mao Zedong, or even Mikhail Gorbachev suggests that general secretaries continued to amass substantial power well into the twilight of communism.

The party itself was always organized along the authoritarian lines of democratic centralism. Leaders at one level co-opted those who served under them. Appointments to key positions, included in a list known as the **nomenklatura**, had to be approved by the Central Committee staff. All real debate within the parties was forbidden, and rank-and-file members had no choice but to carry out the decisions made by leaders above them in the hierarchy.

The Communist Party was the only institution that mattered. Anyone desiring a successful career had to be a loyal and active party member. The party itself blanketed society. Almost every child joined the party-dominated Young Pioneers, the equivalent of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in the United States. Young men and women with any ambition at all joined the Communist Youth League, from which adult party members were recruited. The party determined where high school and university graduates were sent to work. Trade unions, women’s groups, and even stamp-collecting societies were under party control. Most important of all, the Communist Party presided over a command economy in which it determined what goods and services would be produced, where they would be sold, and how

much they would cost. It is no wonder that Western observers called these regimes totalitarian!

There was some variation from country to country.

Communist rule was never quite as secure in Eastern Europe as it was in the Soviet Union. Demonstrations against communist rule took place as early as 1953 in East Germany. Major protest movements were put down in Poland and Hungary in 1956, but they reappeared with the reform movement in and subsequent Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. After that, the focus turned to Poland, where a series of protest movements culminated in the rise of the independent trade union **Solidarity** in 1980–81, the first time a communist regime officially acknowledged the existence of an independent political organization. There were also some economic reforms in Eastern Europe—most notably, experiments with market mechanisms in Hungary.

China followed yet another path. Unlike most other parties, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had always been able to maintain considerable autonomy, largely because it spent the 1930s and 1940s fighting a guerrilla war and was frequently beyond Moscow’s reach. After coming to power, the CCP did follow the Soviet line for the most part until 1956. However, because **Mao Zedong** and the other top Chinese leaders objected to de-Stalinization and the other Soviet reforms, they began adopting their own, more revolutionary policies.

The CCP also became divided into factions that opposed each others’ policies. Over the next twenty years, factional disputes dominated Chinese politics. At times, the left, increasingly associated with Mao himself, was dominant and led the country in what it called a revolutionary direction—most notably, in the chaotic and violent **Cultural Revolution**, which lasted from 1965 into the 1970s. When the more orthodox faction was dominant, the leadership adopted more moderate, Soviet-style policies focusing on heavy industrial development.

Within two years of Mao’s death in 1976, the moderates, led by **Deng Xiaoping**, had taken firm control. Deng and his colleagues began a program of dramatic economic reforms that we will explore in more detail in chapter 11. Here it is enough to note that, however much economic reform they have countenanced, Chinese elites have never tolerated any reforms that threatened the party’s stranglehold on power.

### *The Graying of Communism*

It is impossible to overstate how much the Marxist-Leninists had changed in less than half a century. Revolutionary leaders had given way to the likes of Leonid Brezhnev with his love of cowboy movies and German

luxury cars. Purges had been replaced by what the Soviets called “trust in cadres” that all but ensured party officials would retain their jobs as long as they didn’t cause trouble. Leaders who forced their countries to change were replaced by “machine” politicians intent on maintaining their own power and the perks of office. At best, the Communist leaders of the late 1970s were old men like Brezhnev, desperately clinging to power (and life) as the times continued to pass them by. At worst, they were venal and corrupt, like members of the Ceausescu family, who oppressed the impoverished Romanian people to get castles, personal armies, and Swiss bank accounts for themselves—all somehow justified in the name of Marx.

Even if they had wanted to, it is doubtful if these leaders could have used the party state to produce the kind of economic change that should have been on their agendas. Charles Lindblom has likened these centralized authoritarian regimes to our thumbs.<sup>2</sup> If you think about it, you realize that the thumb is best suited for crudely pushing things whereas the other four fingers are better suited for doing more subtle, delicate, and complicated work.

Lindblom suggests that in the earlier stages of industrial development political “thumbs” are good enough. At that point, a country needs more cement, railroad track, electric wire, and other relatively low-tech commodities. These can be manufactured by unskilled workers, including those who are compelled to follow orders. Although most historians now doubt that the collectivization of agricultural and forced industrialization were the best ways to bring the Soviet Union into the twentieth century, there is no denying that such authoritarian mechanisms got the job done, if brutally.

However, a more modern, technologically sophisticated economy requires organizations and skills that are more like political “fingers.” Take, for example, a television. Unlike a tub of cement, a modern television has many complicated parts, from the remote control to the picture tube to the electronic circuitry inside the box. Unlike with cement, workmanship and quality control are extremely important in producing televisions. If the frequency emitted by the remote control or the wiring or the circuitry is just a little bit off, the television won’t work. This is something a “thumb”-based economy is not very good at. In fact, the most common cause of fires in Moscow in the late 1980s was exploding televisions!

Most importantly, moving toward “fingers” would undoubtedly have meant loosening many political as well as economic controls and abandoning the two defining elements of communist societies: the party state and the command economy. In this sense, the party state became an increasingly ineffective way of running a country. To be sure, the party retained its monopoly over who the decisionmakers were and what decisions they reached. And the party kept the secret police and other repressive agencies well staffed and equipped. However, leaders in all these countries found it ever more difficult to control their societies. People were better educated, and in ways we still do not fully understand, this led them to seek more control over the decisions that shaped their lives. Moreover, the influx of Western tourists and mass media made it clear to hundreds of millions of people that the propaganda they heard from their own governments was wrong. People in the West were much better off than they were.

Their societies increasingly paid the cost for their lack of fingers. Their growth rates dropped precipitously. The economic woes were most serious in the sectors in which fingers were most needed, such as light industry, research and development, and consumer goods. The economic downturn was reflected in a poor standard of living that left everyone in the communist world lagging further and further behind people in the West. Most Soviet families, for instance, still lived in tiny, shoddily built apartments, often sharing kitchens and/or bathrooms with other families. People throughout the communist world had money, but there were not enough goods to satisfy the pent-up demand. The waiting list for cars was so long that used cars actually cost more than new ones, simply because they were available.

Even the military, the most efficient sector of the Soviet economy, lagged behind. Soviet submarines were much noisier, and therefore easier to track, than American ones. The United States developed reliable solid fuels for its missiles in the 1960s; it is not clear whether the Soviets ever did. Soviet nuclear warheads were larger than American ones because they had to be; Soviet missiles were a lot less accurate, and so larger bombs were needed to get a “kill” if the missile landed considerably off target.

When Brezhnev died in 1982, communist regimes were facing ever more serious problems that imperiled the very organizing principles on which they were based. The external problems were easiest to see. Rapid technological change, the development of global financial and commercial markets, and more rapid rates of growth not only in the West but in parts of the third world were leaving the communist countries in an ever-deepening economic hole. Meanwhile, a renewed cold

<sup>2</sup>Charles Lindblom, *Politics and Markets* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

war had “forced” the Soviets to spend even more on defense at a time when the economic costs of doing so continued to mount. The domestic challenges were harder to see. Nonetheless, these societies were changing, and many people, especially the young, were chafing under continued repressive rule.

## The Crisis of Communism: Suicide by Public Policy

### *Reform: Too Little, Too Late*

In retrospect, it is easy to see how fragile these regimes had become. At the time, however, most observers assumed that the party state was here to stay. As evidence of this, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, and the Polish government was able to impose martial law and drive Solidarity underground two years later.

Perhaps trying to blind themselves to the inevitable, the party states refused to change. The Soviets continued choosing leaders from the same old generation, picking Yuri Andropov to succeed Brezhnev, and then Konstantin Chernenko when Andropov, in turn, died fifteen months later. With the exception of Poland, the Eastern European countries all had general secretaries who had taken office in the 1960s. Only China was engaging in any kind of reform, but its aging leaders were carefully limiting reform to economics, not politics.

In 1985, however, European communism’s final act began. (See table 9.3.) When Chernenko died, the Soviet Central Committee finally turned to the next generation and appointed Mikhail Gorbachev as general secretary. Gorbachev was by no means responsible for everything that happened in the communist world afterward. Nonetheless, at the very least, he was the catalyst who unleashed the forces that brought about such unprecedented and unexpected change.

When Gorbachev came to power, he was known to be something of a reformer, but no one expected him to

go anywhere near as far as he did. After all, he had risen through the ranks of the Soviet Communist Party and had triumphed because he had gained the support of old-guard politicians.

Quickly, however, Gorbachev began replacing the older generation with younger men and women. Together, they introduced reforms that they hoped would revitalize communism. In the end, the political forces they unleashed killed it instead.

These four types of reforms will be discussed in detail in the next chapter:

- **Glasnost**, or more openness in the political system
- Democratization, beginning with the introduction of elements of competition to the way the Communist Party was run
- **Perestroika**, or economic restructuring, including a degree of private ownership
- New thinking in foreign policy, especially improved relations with the West

It is important to emphasize that when the Soviet leadership initiated these reforms they certainly did not expect them to destroy communism. That they would prove fatal to communism as we knew and feared it only became clear when the spirit of reform reached Eastern Europe and hit a political roadblock.

There, the elderly party leaders resisted implementing glasnost, perestroika, and democratization. East Germany’s Erich Honecker went so far as to forbid the press to carry stories about the changes taking place in the Soviet Union.

But Honecker and his colleagues would not be able to maintain the Brezhnevite status quo for long. There were pressures for change from abroad, most notably and ironically from the Soviet Union itself. Gorbachev and his supporters in the Soviet leadership had decided that they no longer had to keep an iron grip on Eastern Europe. To some degree, this reflected their belief in the values of new thinking. To some degree, too, it reflected the realities of life in the late 1980s. The security value of the “buffer states” had declined in a world in which nuclear missiles could fly over Eastern Europe and strike the Soviet Union in a matter of minutes. In fact, Eastern Europe had become such a financial burden on the Soviet Union that, at the height of the popularity of the Star Wars films, an American political scientist titled an article on Soviet–Eastern European relations “The Empire Strikes Back.”

By 1988 the Soviet Union was eager to see change in Eastern Europe, though certainly not the total collapse of communism. Gorbachev continued to push the re-

**TABLE 9.3** Key Events in the Crisis of Communism

YEAR	EVENT
1956	Hungarian uprising
1968	Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia
1980–81	Emergence of Solidarity in Poland and imposition of martial law
1985	Gorbachev chosen general secretary of CPSU
1988	Opening of iron curtain in Hungary
1989	Collapse of communism in Eastern Europe
	Democracy movement in China
1990	German unification
1991	Disintegration of Soviet Union

gion's recalcitrant leaders to reform. It was even clear that the Soviets were willing to consider modifications in their relationship with Eastern Europe.

Changes within Eastern Europe itself were at least as important. To varying degrees, these countries were suffering from the same economic problems as the Soviet Union. More importantly, the cultural changes discussed earlier had progressed further in the more economically advanced countries of Eastern Europe. Moreover, none of the Eastern European regimes (save, perhaps, Albania) had ever succeeded either in completely suppressing dissent or in achieving even the limited degree of legitimacy found in Brezhnev's Soviet Union.

### *1989: The Year That Changed the World*

The revolution began in Poland. In 1988 Solidarity reappeared, stronger than it had been when General Wojciech Jaruzelski imposed martial law in December 1981. His government was quickly forced into "round table" negotiations with Solidarity and other noncommunist organizations. Out of those discussions came an agreement to hold elections in which some seats would be reserved for the Communist Party and others freely contested. Solidarity won a resounding victory, and in August the Communists agreed to give up power, the first time that had ever happened anywhere. Jaruzelski stayed on temporarily as president, but the Catholic intellectual Tadeusz Mazowiecki held the more powerful position of prime minister in a Solidarity-run government, which dismantled the command economy within months.

The next to fall was Hungary, where liberal economic reforms had been tried at various times since the mid-1960s. By the late 1980s reformists within the Communist Party had grown strong enough to replace Janos Kadar, whom the Soviets had put in power in 1956. The new leaders dismantled part of the iron curtain along the Austrian border. They also roundly criticized the Soviet invasion of 1956 and the Hungarians who had cooperated with the USSR. They even stopped calling themselves communists. Finally, the leadership agreed to free elections in April 1990, in which anticommunists won an overwhelming majority.

Opening the iron curtain in Hungary inadvertently sparked even more sweeping changes. East German tourists vacationing there crossed the open border into Austria. Even though the Warsaw Pact required them to keep the border closed, the Hungarian government did nothing to stop the escapees, claiming that its commitment to human rights was more important than the provisions of an outdated political and military alliance. By



© Reuters/CORBIS

One of many people who took a turn at knocking down the Berlin Wall.

the fall, thousands of people were fleeing to West Germany every day.

Meanwhile, protest movements in East Germany sprang up, and pressures continued to mount until the unthinkable happened. On 9 November 1989, jubilant Germans smashed open the Berlin Wall, people from both sides celebrated together, and the most visible symbol of the cold war disappeared.

The pace of change continued to accelerate. The East German government agreed to free elections for spring 1990, which Christian Democrats with strong ties to their colleagues in West Germany won handily. By that time, German unification as a part of NATO, which had seemed impossible a year before, was inevitable.

The quickest to fall was the Czechoslovakian government headed by Gustav Husak, whom the Soviets had installed after the 1968 invasion. During the fall of 1989, demonstrations started, one of which ended with the death of a university student. The demonstrations spread until hundreds of thousands jammed Wenceslaus Square in Prague on a daily basis. The previously powerless legislature chose Vaclav Havel—who had been in jail less than a year before—to be the new president. Even


**USEFUL WEB SITES**

Marxists.org has the largest archive of primary source documents on Marxism. Another good site for the basics is maintained by the political science department at Australian National University.

[www.marxists.org](http://www.marxists.org)

[www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/](http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/)

About.com's site on twentieth-century history has good links to information on many of the key events in the history of communism.

[history1900s.about.com/cs/communism/](http://history1900s.about.com/cs/communism/)

My colleague Bryan Caplan of George Mason University's Department of Economics runs a highly critical "museum of communism" web site.

[www.gmu.edu/departments/economics/bcaplan/museum/marframe.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/economics/bcaplan/museum/marframe.htm)

The Open Market Research Institute provides a daily feed and archive of news on Russia and eastern Europe.

[www.omri.cz](http://www.omri.cz)

Finally, many Russian and East European Studies programs have good sets of links to on-line material on the transition from communist rule, including the ones at the universities of Michigan, Pittsburgh, and Washington.

[www.umich.edu/~iinte/crees](http://www.umich.edu/~iinte/crees)

[depts.washington.edu/reecas/](http://depts.washington.edu/reecas/)

[www.ucis.pitt.edu/reesweb](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/reesweb)

more remarkably, the legislature elected the liberal communist leader of the 1968 "Prague Spring," Alexander Dubcek, to be its own head. When elections were finally held in June 1990, the reforms were confirmed when the Communists came in a distant third.

Only in Romania did the revolution turn violent. The country had been ruled by Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu as little more than a personal fiefdom since the mid-1960s. Even as the Romanian people were forced to starve so that the country could pay off its international debts, the Ceausescus built monuments to themselves. Elena Ceausescu had herself named head of the Academy of Sciences and awarded herself a doctorate even though she had the equivalent of a fourth-grade education. The Ceausescus also controlled the largest and most ruthless secret police in Eastern Europe, the Securitate.

The first protests took place in the provincial city of Timisoara on 17 December. Securitate forces fired into the crowd, killing hundreds. A civil war broke out between the Securitate and other forces loyal to the Ceausescus on the one hand and much of the army and thousands of armed citizens on the other. Within a week the government had been overthrown. The dictator and his wife fled but soon were captured. On Christmas day they were executed. By the end of the month, Securitate opposition was crushed, and a regime headed by the reform Communist Ion Iliescu was in power.

These successful and largely nonviolent revolutions were not the only earthquakes to hit the communist world in 1989. Economic reforms in China were beginning to show some promising results, especially in the countryside. Political reform, however, was not forthcoming. In early 1989 prodemocracy protests broke out as a group led by students occupied the symbolic heart of Chinese politics—**Tiananmen Square**, in downtown Beijing.

In May Gorbachev became the first Soviet leader since the start of the Sino-Soviet split to visit Beijing. As in Eastern Europe, Gorbachev served as a lightning rod for reformers. Massive, adoring crowds greeted him wherever he went, giving more and more support to the prodemocracy movement. The crowds kept growing, and as they did, hopes for any kind of peaceful end to the protests evaporated. Once that became clear, the government began assembling troops around Beijing. During the night of 3–4 June, they stormed the square, killing as many as a thousand students and others who were still there. After martial law was imposed, China was widely criticized as the most repressive of the communist regimes.

In 1990 the focus of attention shifted back to the Soviet Union, where centrifugal forces were tearing the country apart. The Communist Party had already given up its legal monopoly on power. New organizations were cropping up everywhere, positioning themselves at every imaginable point along the political spectrum. The new Congress of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet were turning into real legislative bodies. Groups demanding sovereignty and, sometimes, total independence emerged in each of the fourteen non-Russian republics. In many of them, ethnic antagonisms escalated into violence that bordered on civil war.

At the party congress in the summer of 1990, **Boris Yeltsin** led many radical reformers out of the Communist Party. Meanwhile, Gorbachev increasingly turned to conservative leaders within the military and security apparatus to keep himself in power, even though advisers



© Reuters/CORBIS

Political activists in China. The prodemocracy movement of 1989 in China coincided with Soviet president Gorbachev's visit to Beijing. Here protesters put up a sign linking their movement with his reform program.

such as former foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze kept warning of a right-wing coup. By April 1991 the Baltic republics (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) were clamoring for independence. The economy was on the brink of collapse.

Finally, the most impossible of impossible events happened. On 19 August military and security service leaders attempted a coup against Gorbachev. For nearly four days, Gorbachev was held hostage, and his wife apparently was psychologically abused by men he had personally put in power. In Moscow, Yeltsin, his most vocal critic, led the opposition in the streets that toppled the plotters. On 22 August Gorbachev returned to Moscow, and to what he thought was power.

The coup proved to be the last straw. The Baltic republics gained their independence, and every remaining Soviet republic declared itself sovereign. Yeltsin emerged as the most powerful politician. Finally, in December, leaders of most of the remaining republics agreed to form the Commonwealth of Independent States. Gorbachev was not even invited to the founding

meeting. On 31 December he resigned the presidency of a country that no longer existed.

### *The Remnants of the Communist World*

In early 2002 there were only five communist countries left—China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Laos, and Cuba. Far less attention has been paid to the reasons communist regimes survived in these countries than to the reasons they collapsed in Eurasia. The limited research on the subject has, however, pointed to three main reasons.

First, each of their parties remains willing to use repression. One of the remarkable aspects of the events in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is that the police and the army (that is, the party) were not willing to fire on their own people. With the exception of Romania, only a handful people died in the revolutions, and those deaths were inadvertent. In these other countries, however, the regimes have been more willing to resort to force.

## Conflict and Democratization in the Communist World

**SOME KEY differences between the industrialized democracies and the current and former communist regimes become evident in considering the role of conflict and democratization in each.**

**In part 2 we saw that democracies have taken firm root—albeit often after centuries of turmoil—and that conflict is viewed as a normal part of political life.**

**In the countries covered in part 3, however, almost all forms of conflict were suppressed throughout the communist period. All had some dissident movements, but rarely did they reach beyond a tiny proportion of the population or threaten the regime. The collapse of communism in Eurasia and the changes in what remains of the communist world have brought much of the conflict that lurked just below the surface into the open. Indeed, as the twenty-first century begins, many of these countries have more conflict than they can effectively handle and still build a democracy or market economy.**

**Thus, if there are parallels to the Western democracies, it is to France or Germany of the early 1900s, when their regimes were anything but stable and legitimate in large part because of protests coming from literally dozens of groups.**

Second, these countries were poorer and less open to outside influences than was the Soviet bloc. In other words, the cultural developments discussed earlier had not progressed anywhere near as far. To be sure, Chinese students and members of the middle class were beginning to demand “discos and democracy,” as journalist Orville Schell put it, but they constituted only a tiny proportion of the total population.

Recent reports hint that some children of members of the Cuban elite have grave reservations about their regime. However, there are only a handful of these people, whereas there were thousands of young “new thinkers” beginning to build careers and exert political influence in the Soviet Union during the 1980s. Similarly, the American press has given such spectacular events as Elian Gonzales’ case and the defection of star baseball players a lot of attention but have probably overstated the degree to which they reflect widespread dissatisfaction with the regime. The key issue for Cuba is what will happen when Castro finally does leave the scene.

Third, these countries had been outside the Soviet Union’s orbit for quite some time before 1989. Cuba and Vietnam were close Soviet allies and, in many ways, were

dependent on the USSR economically and militarily. However, the Soviets exerted relatively little influence on the way the local communists ruled. They also had little desire or ability to force their leaders to adopt perestroika or glasnost. Thus, during his April 1989 visit to Cuba, Gorbachev had no luck in convincing Castro to reform, nor were there any demonstrations in the streets of Havana as there would be throughout the rest of the communist world that spring, summer, and fall.

## Transitions

There was a good bit of optimism in the first heady days after the collapse of communism in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Given the demonstration of “people power” in 1989, many thought it would be relatively easy for those countries to make the transition to a market economy and democratic government. Those hopes gave way to widespread pessimism following a wave of strife and civil war, weak leadership, and further economic deterioration.

Conditions have improved in most of those countries since then. With a few exceptions, their economies have hit rock bottom and begun to recover, though in some cases they have a long way to go. Many have more stable—and in some cases more democratic—governments. Nonetheless, in only a handful of cases can we safely say that major progress has been made toward either democracy or capitalism.

To see how difficult the first stages of the economic side of the transitions were, consider table 9.4, which is based on data gathered and analyzed by the World Bank for the period 1989–95. None of these countries had it easy. Groups 1 and 2 are made up mostly of the former satellite countries and Baltic republics from the Soviet Union. Though they did the best, their economies shrank, and they suffered from an inflation rate that saw prices at least double each year through the mid-1990s.

Groups 3 and 4 consist of the other twelve former Soviet republics, including Russia. Their economies declined by as much as 10 percent per year, which meant that in 1995 some of them produced only half the goods and services they had before the collapse of the USSR. Inflation rates were typically in the 500 percent range, which meant that prices went up fivefold each year. Even more remarkable than the economic statistics are those on life expectancy. In Russia the average man will live about ten years less than he did a decade ago because of the failing social welfare, health care, and economic systems.

**TABLE 9.4** Economic Change in Former Communist Countries, 1989–95

COUNTRY OR TYPE	AVERAGE GDP GROWTH	AVERAGE INFLATION (PERCENTAGE)	LIBERALIZATION INDEX	CHANGE IN LIFE EXPECTANCY (YEARS)
Group 1	-1.6	106.0	6.9	0.7
Group 2	-4.2	149.2	4.7	-0.2
Group 3	-9.6	466.4	3.4	-4.4
Group 4	-6.7	809.6	2.0	-1.6
Countries affected by regional tensions	-11.7	929.7	3.9	0.5
China/Vietnam	9.4	8.4	5.5	2.1

Notes: Chinese data are for the entire reform period (1979–95) and include Vietnam for the liberalization index.

Group 1: Poland, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia,\* Macedonia,\* Czech Republic, Slovakia

Group 2: Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Albania, Romania, Mongolia

Group 3: Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Moldova, Armenia,\* Georgia,\* Kazakhstan

Group 4: Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan,\* Tajikistan,\* Turkmenistan

Countries with an asterisk (\*) are among those severely affected by regional tensions. The table does not have data on Bosnia and Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) because of the continuing war there.

Source: Adapted from World Bank, *From Plan to Market: World Development Report 1996* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1996), 18, 33.

The World Bank also identified a subset of these four groups—countries that were severely affected by ethnic conflict. Before we proceed, note two things about that row of the table. It includes neither Russia, because the fighting in Chechnya had yet to begin, nor Bosnia, because neither the World Bank nor local authorities could gather reliable statistics. The wars in those countries not only disrupted the economies, as shown in this table, but also made effective government—let alone a transition to democracy—impossible.

Finally, contrast these groups of countries to those in the final row—China and Vietnam, the two remaining communist regimes that have reformed their economies the most. Instead of the decline we see for the rest of the countries in the table, the Chinese economy grew by an average of nearly 10 percent a year, which meant that overall output doubled during that same period.

### ***(Relative) Success: Eastern and Central Europe***

One sign of the relative success of the countries in eastern and central Europe is that most of them have been allowed to apply to join the European Union. As we saw in chapter 7, they were allowed to do so only because they have made major strides toward creating a stable democratic government and a market-driven economy.

It is hard to argue that either has definitively taken root. Nonetheless, such countries as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic each have had at least three free elections and seen power shift from one party or coal-

tion to another, which is often taken as a key indicator of a strong democracy. Although still far poorer than the current member states of the EU, these countries have also made significant economic progress and now have, for example, a number of companies that provide goods and services that are competitive in the global market.

### ***Troubled Transitions: The Former Soviet Union***

That is not the case for Russia and most of the other former Soviet Republics. With the exception of the Baltic republics (Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania), these countries have had a much harder time making the political and economic transition. Like Russia, most have had several elections. However, the best we can say about these elections is that several have been relatively free and fair contests. However, none of them has resulted in a genuine shift in power in which a party or coalition once in opposition took office. All, too, suffer from corruption because an elite cadre of former communists has not only entrenched itself in political power but has enriched itself by gaining control of the countries' leading enterprises, whether they remain in public hands or have been privatized.

### ***Ethnic Conflict***

The first President Bush used to enjoy noting that the forty-five years between the end of World War II and the collapse of communism marked the longest period in

## Liberalization in the Current and Former Communist World

**LIBERALIZATION IN** general and privatization in particular have been very popular policies since the collapse of communism in Eurasia. In fact, the process began somewhat earlier in China, Hungary, and Yugoslavia.

These countries also provide us with a classic example of how theoretical predictions and empirical realities do not always jibe. In this case, the now-dominant liberal economic theory tells us that freeing markets, decentralizing control of an economy, and transferring ownership from state to private hands should do tremendous good.

However, the situation “on the ground” has never been quite so rosy. In countries in which shock therapy has been fully implemented, we have seen tremendous growth in the disparities between the winners and losers of economic reform. In most countries, as well, political pressures have forced governments to slow the pace of reform to some degree, and resentment against change has sparked the limited left-wing resurgence noted at the beginning of this chapter.

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recorded history without a war in Europe. Unfortunately, that period lasted only forty-five years.

By the early 1990s sporadic fighting had broken out in a number of the former Soviet republics. It began even before the USSR collapsed with the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the predominantly Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan.

For our purposes, it is most important to note two conflicts that have had a devastating impact on the peoples caught up in the fighting. The former Yugoslavia has experienced five wars since the breakup of the country in 1991. Only the first one, over the independence of Slovenia, resulted in few casualties and caused little damage. By contrast, upwards of 250,000 people were killed and millions more were turned into refugees during the struggle in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which also introduced the notion of ethnic cleansing into the world's political vocabulary.

The two wars between Russia and rebels in Chechnya have been even more devastating. Antagonism toward Russians in that tiny, mostly Muslim region has existed since it was incorporated into Russia in the early nineteenth century. But bloody fighting erupted when Russia put down a first bid for independence in 1994–96. After two years of fighting, tens of thousands were dead,

## Globalization and the Communist World

**PRIOR TO** the 1980s global trends did not affect communist countries as much as those covered in parts 1 and 2. However, globalization did have a bearing on them then—and has an even more powerful impact today—in two broad ways.

First, global forces were at least indirectly responsible for the crisis of communism that is at the heart of this chapter. The communist countries certainly had their internal problems. However, they might well have survived had they not faced increased economic pressures from and a renewed arms race with the West.

Second, international influences have left their current states in a weakened position, economically and otherwise. As we will see with the Russian economy in the next chapter, the triumph of capitalism has given Western bankers, industrialists, and politicians unprecedented influence over the internal affairs of most of these countries. And that impact is not merely economic, as the popularity of Western cultural icons from CNN to Coca Cola to Barbie dolls attests. To cite but one admittedly trivial example, you can buy *matroshka* dolls (dolls within dolls) in Moscow's open-air markets with likenesses of the Clinton family (including Monica Lewinsky), the Simpsons, and the New York Yankees.

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the city of Grozny had been leveled, and no settlement had been reached. The war broke out again shortly after Vladimir Putin became Russia's prime minister in 1999. This time the Russians were able to defeat the rebels more handily, but only after thousands of civilians and rebels had been killed.

### *Reform: What's Left of Marxism?*

North Korea and Cuba have kept their traditional Marxist-Leninist systems, and their people have paid the price. Their countries are among the poorest in the world, and there have been reports of mass starvation in North Korea.

In contrast, the others have embraced economic reform to the point that countries such as China and Vietnam have mixed economies in which the private sector is far more dynamic than the remaining state-owned industries. In fact, the shift toward capitalism and the popularity of the growing consumer culture is so pronounced that there is little of Marxist egalitarianism left.

The one remaining aspect of Marxism-Leninism is the continued political monopoly enjoyed by the Com-

munist parties in these countries. As we will see in chapter 11, the Chinese Communists have cracked down whenever any signs of political dissent appeared, and so far, most Chinese citizens have been willing to accept economic reform without political liberalization. However, many observers are convinced that it is only a matter of time before a significant number of people demand political as well as economic change.

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## Feedback

**W**hen political scientists wrote about the totalitarian nature of communist regimes, they invariably included the media in their list of characteristics. Technologically, the media in the communist bloc were never the equal of those in the West. However, the party controlled them hook, line, and sinker. Every newspaper, magazine, and book printed, as well as all television and radio outlets, were run by the party. What's more, anything printed or broadcast was subject to prior censorship. Meanwhile, the authorities kept Western media out.

That started to change in the 1980s. To begin with, it became more difficult, given advances in communication technology, to keep Western influences out. Then, during the Gorbachev years, there was a noticeable loosening of controls in the Soviet Union and, to a lesser degree, in Eastern Europe. Since then, the press has been just as open as in the West and, given the nature of political and economic life, even more contentious. Even in Russia, where the state still dominates the main national television channels, viewers have little trouble tuning in critics of the status quo. We are beginning to see, however, the same trend we find in the West—in which wealthy conglomerates are gaining control, especially, of television networks.

There are cracks in the party's monopoly in the countries that have kept their communist regimes. The protesters in Tiananmen Square were able to coordinate their activities in part because of faxes they received from the Chinese students abroad, and the CCP is now struggling to limit access to satellite television and the Internet. Similarly, Cuba's isolation is less than complete, something U.S. sports fans discovered when they learned that 1998 World Series star Orlando Hernandez of the New York Yankees (El Duque) had watched his half-brother Livan's exploits for the Florida Marlins on television beamed from the United States before deciding to make his own escape from the island.

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## Conclusion: The End of an Era

**T**hose of us who are old enough to have lived through the height of the cold war “knew” then that the Soviet Union and its allies would be competitors with and often adversaries to the West for the indefinite future. The superpower rivalry seemed to be the most important and most dangerous “given” in international political life.

By contrast, most students reading this book will have been under the age of ten when the Berlin Wall came down. In other words, communism and the cold war will be at best foggy memories. The defining role that they played for the first forty-five years after World War II will seem like a historical relic for most of them.

Nonetheless, it is important for young people today to understand that period for two reasons.

First, as we already saw in chapters 6–8, the cold war rivalry played a major role in determining the way Germany, Japan, and the European Union evolved. We will see this again in part 4 when we consider the third world. There, the spread of the competition between the United States and Soviet Union not only helped determine what kind of regimes emerged but also, tragically, exacerbated existing regional conflicts and escalated them into some of the bloodiest wars in history.

Second, we cannot understand politics in the former communist world today without exploring the communist past itself in depth. This is not true only of a country like Russia, which is struggling to shed itself of communist institutions and values. It also holds for the few remaining communist regimes, like China's, in which the nature of its Marxist past limits its ability to enact and implement reforms within the framework of the party state.



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## Key Terms

Concepts	People	Organizations, Places, and Events
Base	Brezhnev, Leonid	Bolsheviks
Bourgeoisie	Castro, Fidel	Comintern
Command economy	Deng Xiaoping	Cultural Revolution
Communism	Engels, Friedrich	De-Stalinization
Contradictions	Gorbachev, Mikhail	General secretary
Cult of personality	Khrushchev, Nikita	Politburo
Democratic centralism	Lenin, Vladimir	Secretariat
Dialectic	Mao Zedong	Solidarity
Glasnost	Marx, Karl	Third International
Historical materialism	Stalin, Joseph	Tiananmen Square
Marxism-Leninism	Yeltsin, Boris	Warsaw Pact
Means of production		
<i>Nomenklatura</i>		
Party state		
Perestroika		
Proletariat		
Satellite		
Shock therapy		
Socialism		
Superstructure		
Totalitarianism		

## Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Why did Marx think that socialism could emerge only after capitalism? What difference did it make that Marxist regimes first took power in such countries as Russia and China?
2. What is democratic centralism? How did it—and other factors—give rise to what are often called totalitarian regimes?
3. Following the death of Stalin and the ouster of Khrushchev, the Soviet Union and its allies developed regimes that are sometimes referred to as party states. What does that mean?
4. Why did the crisis of communism set in during the 1980s? Why couldn't the party states in Eurasia cope with it?
5. Why are the postcommunist regimes having such a hard time developing either a democratic government or a successful market economy?
6. What is the likely future of the remaining communist regimes? Why do you reach that conclusion?

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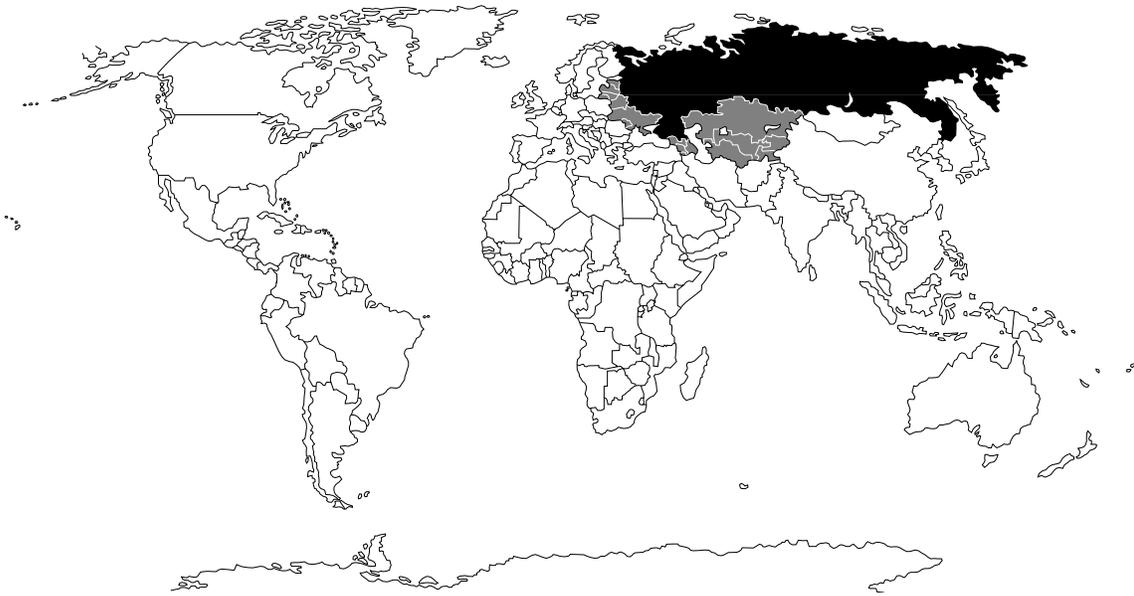
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# RUSSIA

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A Country in Trouble
- Thinking About Russia
- The Evolution of the Russian State
- The Soviet State and Its Collapse: The Gorbachev Years
- Birth Pangs
- Political Culture and Participation
- The Russian State
- Public Policy
- Feedback
- Conclusion: Half Empty or Half Full



*I want to ask your forgiveness, because many of our hopes have not come true, because what we thought would be easy turned out to be painfully difficult.*

BORIS YELTSIN

## A Country in Trouble

On 31 December 1999 **Boris Yeltsin** shocked his fellow Russians and the world by announcing his resignation, six months before his second term as president was due to end. Prime Minister **Vladimir Putin** automatically became interim president until elections could be held the following March. Putin easily won that election, becoming the Russian Federation's second president in his own right.

In other words, Russia ended the 1990s by reinforcing the uncertainty that had dominated political life there throughout the decade. When the 1990s began, Russia was but one of fifteen republics of the old Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR or Soviet Union). In 1985 **Mikhail Gorbachev** had taken control of the country as general secretary of the **Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)** and started instituting reforms that would bring an end both to the cold war and to his country. By the beginning of 1990, the USSR was in serious trouble, though few expected it to collapse as it did at the end of 1991.

The new Russia that emerged from the ashes of the old Soviet Union began life amid tremendous hope—hope personified by Yeltsin himself. Though he was thought to be rather erratic, as well as alcoholic, Yeltsin had pushed for more radical reforms than Gorbachev could accept during the end of the Soviet era. Then, when hard-liners attempted a coup against Gorbachev in August 1991, Yeltsin spearheaded the democratic resistance that toppled the junta within days.

However, the hope soon turned to despair. The bottom fell out of the economy of what was once the world's second-leading superpower. Overall production declined by more than half during the 1990s. Even though conditions have improved somewhat since Yeltsin resigned, Russia will have to grow by an average of 8 percent per year for the next fifteen years to come close to catching up with Portugal, the poorest member of the European Union. Diseases ranging from AIDS to cancer are on the rise, and the average male life expectancy de-

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### RUSSIA: THE BASICS

Official name	Russian Federation
Size	17,075,200 sq. km (roughly 1.75 times the size of the United States)
Climate	Subarctic in much of the country
Population	About 147 million
Currency	30.73 rubles = \$1
Ethnic composition	81.5% Russian, 3.8% Tatar, 3% Ukrainian, 11.7% other
Life expectancy	Men 62, women 72
Capital	Moscow
Head of state	President Vladimir Putin (1999)
Head of government	Prime Minister Mikhail Kusyaynov (2000)

clined by close to a decade during the 1990s. The average Russian woman now has 1.17 children. To keep the population from declining, this number would have to reach 2.14 children per woman. Many demographers interpret the low (and rapidly dropping) birthrate as an indicator of just how little confidence Russian young people have in their economic futures.

The country's political fortunes sagged, too. Yeltsin turned out to be an ineffective leader. In part, his failure may have been a reflection of his deteriorating health—he suffered a number of heart attacks, including one during the middle of the 1996 presidential campaign. But, frankly, it also reflected his personal shortcomings, which included an inability to follow through on economic reform and a willingness to allow a handful of oligarchs (including members of his own family) to both enrich themselves and gain vast political power.

In short, Putin inherited a country in serious trouble. Since then, he has moved to consolidate power in presidential hands. This has made it possible for the government to act more decisively, for instance, in trying to rein in the power of the oligarchs. However, it has also called into question his commitment to either democracy or a market-driven economy.

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### Thinking About Russia

Ideally, we should explore all fifteen former Soviet republics. However, that is not possible in so few pages. Luckily, because most of them face similar social, po-



President Putin answering a question at a press conference.

litical, and economic problems, for the purposes of an introductory course we can get by with just one of them, the Russian Federation.

## The Basics

### Diversity

Physically, the **Russian Federation** is the world's largest country, stretching across eleven time zones. Although Russia only has about half the population of the former Soviet Union, it is still the sixth most populous country in the world, trailing only China, India, the United States, Indonesia, and Brazil.

Russia is also blessed with an abundance of natural resources, including oil, natural gas, and precious minerals, though many of these resources lie under permafrost. That is not surprising given that the Russian Federation is also one of the coldest countries on earth. Almost all its territory lies above the forty-eighth parallel, which also separates the United States from Canada. St. Petersburg has six hours of dim sunlight in January. Kotlas, in the northern region of Arkhangelsk, has a growing season of about forty-five days, which makes raising even radishes difficult. If you spend time in Rus-

**TABLE 10.1** Ethnic Composition of the Former Soviet Republics

COUNTRY	POPULATION (MILLIONS)	TITULAR NATIONALITY (PERCENTAGE)	MAIN MINORITIES (PERCENTAGE)
Russia	147.0	82	Tatars 4
Ukraine	51.5	73	Russians 22
Uzbekistan	19.8	71	Russians 8
Kazakhstan	16.5	40	Russians 38 Ukrainians 5
Belarus	10.2	78	Russians 13
Azerbaijan	7.0	83	Russians 6 Amenians 6
Georgia	5.4	70	Amenians 8 Russians 6 Azeris 6
Tajakistan	5.1	62	Uzbeks 23 Russians 7
Moldova	4.3	65	Ukrainians 14 Russians 13
Kyrgyzstan	4.3	52	Russians 22 Uzbeks 12
Lithuania	3.7	80	Russians 9 Poles 7
Turkmenistan	3.5	72	Russians 9 Uzbeks 9
Armenia	3.3	93	Azeris 2
Latvia	2.7	52	Russians 35
Estonia	1.6	62	Russians 30

Source: Based on 1989 census.

sia in January, the weather forecast will become boringly monotonous—*sneg ne bolshoi*—(snow, but not much).

For our purposes, the most important thing to note about Russia and the other fourteen breakaway states is their diversity. As table 10.1 shows, the new republics are diverse, indeed. Russia's population, for instance, is only 82 percent Russian, and twelve of the others are even more ethnically diverse. All but Armenia have sizable Russian minorities, which has heightened demands from nationalists inside the federation to re-create the Soviet Union in what they call the **near-abroad**.

As the ethnic strife of the past few years suggests, the Soviet Union and Russia were anything but a melting pot. Unlike immigrants who came to the United States voluntarily (other than slaves, of course), most of these groups were forced into the Russian Empire prior to the communist revolution or into the USSR afterward.

Although most non-Russian groups retained their culture and language, the Soviet regime kept a lid on ethnic protest until the late 1980s. But Gorbachev's reforms allowed minority groups to voice their dissatisfactions, and by 1991 each republic had declared some form of sovereignty or independence from central rule. Most experienced substantial violence. In some places, ethnic tensions have gotten worse since the collapse of the

**TABLE 10.2** Economic Decline in Russia, 1990–97  
(All figures in millions of tons unless otherwise noted.)

PRODUCT	1990	1997
Meat	6.6	1.4
Butter	0.8	0.3
Canned goods (billions of cans)	8.2	2.2
Salt	4.2	2.1
Bread	16.2	8.9
Pasta	1.0	0.5
Footwear (millions of pairs)	385.0	32.0
Silk (millions of square yards)	1,051.0	134.0
Coats (millions; later figure is 1992)	17.2	2.3
Cement	83.0	26.6
Beer (millions of gallons)	874.0	655.0
Watches and clocks (millions of units)	60.1	5.0
Refrigerators (millions of units)	3.8	0.1
Vacuum cleaners (millions of units)	4.5	0.6

Source: Adapted from the *Washington Post*, 14 Nov. 1998, A16.

Soviet Union. Fighting over the mostly Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, for example, has continued on and off since 1988. The three Baltic republics passed legislation restricting the ability of ethnic Russians and other “foreigners” who lived in the republics at the time of independence to achieve Lithuanian, Latvian, or Estonian citizenship.

### Poverty

Russia is also desperately poor, as well as the only major country in the world in which life expectancy is declining. A typical urban family lives in a three-room apartment, does not own an automobile, and may not even have a telephone. And living conditions in the countryside are worse. Household tasks take at least twice as long as in the West, because stores are poorly organized and few families have washing machines, microwaves, and other labor-saving devices that are standard in Western homes. Table 10.2 summarizes some recent statistical data on the declining production of basic goods most Russian citizens and corporations rely on in their daily lives.

### The Environment

Russia is also an environmental nightmare. Americans are most familiar with the disaster at Chernobyl (in today’s Ukraine) in 1986. The worst accident ever at a nuclear power plant devastated hundreds of square miles of farmland. Scientists predict that upwards of 30,000 people over the next three generations will die as a result of cancer and other diseases caused by radiation from the plant.

But Chernobyl is only the tip of the iceberg. The Soviet and Russian governments have dumped dozens of spent, leaking, and dangerous nuclear reactors from submarines into the ocean. More than 70 million people live in cities where it is unhealthy to breathe the air. Three-quarters of the surface water is polluted. A water diversion project led to the shrinking of the Aral Sea by dozens of miles, and the salt left behind when the water evaporated has destroyed the soil for hundreds of miles.

Air and water pollution in the city of Kemerovo, where the environment probably is too dirty to be cleaned up, is all too typical. Its residents have three times the average incidence of chronic bronchitis, kidney failure, and diseases of the endocrine system. In one particularly filthy neighborhood, 7 percent of the children born in 1989 were retarded, more than three times the national average. In the small city of Karabash, the foundry emits the equivalent of nine tons annually of sulfur, lead, arsenic, tellurium, and other pollutants for each man, woman, and child. Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly, Jr., included the following conversation with a worker there in their book on the environment and public health:

“Are they sick?” he was asked.

“Of course.”

“Why of course?”

“Because there are no healthy kids here.”

“Then why don’t you quit, get out of here?”

“Where to? It’s the same everywhere. Besides, who’s waiting for me to show up? Where?”<sup>1</sup>

### Key Questions

On one level, the key questions to ask about Russia are the same as those laid out in chapter 1, including how its state evolved, what it is like today, and how it deals with domestic and international pressures. However, given the differences between Russia and the countries covered in part 2, we will also have to spend more time on the historical material and then focus on the uncertainties and difficulties that emerged during Yeltsin’s presidency and that have continued under Putin. Key questions will include these:

- Will Putin and his colleagues be able to continue to strengthen and stabilize the Russian state?
- In so doing, will they also be able to make the regime more democratic and legitimate?

<sup>1</sup>Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly, Jr., *Ecocide in the USSR: Health and Nature Under Siege* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 105.

## THE STAKES OF RUSSIAN POLITICS: A LIGHTER VIEW

As the Soviet Union was falling apart in late 1991, the *Economist* ran a tongue-in-cheek contest, asking its readers to suggest names for the new country that would be replacing it. Here are some of the more revealing—and humorous—answers:

- RELICS—Republics Left in Total Chaos
- PITS—Post-Imperial Total Shambles
- COMA—Confederation of Mutual Antagonism (Its people would be called Commies.)
- UFFR—Union of Fewer and Fewer Republics

- Can they build stronger and more broadly accepted institutions if the economy continues to founder?
- How will Russia adapt to its new international role in which it remains a major power in some military arenas but is increasingly buffeted by global economic forces beyond its control?

### The Evolution of the Russian State

The Russian Federation is a new state, and it is therefore tempting to begin this section by discussing the events that led up to its creation following the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, it would be a mistake to do so. Perhaps even more than was the case for the countries covered in part 2, Russia's past weighs heavily on its politics today. If nothing else, most leading politicians were active members of the Communist Party (CPSU), and all Russian adults lived the bulk of their lives under Soviet rule.

Therefore, this section actually has to be somewhat longer and more detailed than its equivalents in previous chapters. Not only do we have to examine the basic trends in Russian and Soviet history before 1991, we have to dig more deeply into the institutions and power bases of the once-powerful state that collapsed so quickly and so unexpectedly ([www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/history.html](http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/history.html)).

### *The Broad Sweep of Russian History*

Accounts of Russian history normally begin with the ninth-century Kievan Rus, which was centered in today's

Ukraine. The Kievans were but one of many Slavic tribes that occupied a wide arc stretching from the former Yugoslavia (which literally means “land of the southern Slavs”) northward and eastward to the Urals and then Siberia, which the Kievans and their Russian successors gradually took over.

Russia's evolution was not as easy or as peaceful as that last sentence might seem to imply. Time and time again, Russia was invaded and overrun. However, by the early nineteenth century, it had solidified itself as one of Europe's major powers and had occupied most of the lands that would become part of the Soviet Union a century later.

This does not mean that Russia remained one of Europe's great powers for long, because it had missed out on most of the transformations that reshaped Western Europe from the 1500s onward. The tsars remained absolute monarchs. There was no Reformation, leaving Russia dominated by an Orthodox Church with strong ties to the autocracy. Individualism, the scientific revolution, and the other intellectual trends that played such a key role in the West had next to no impact on Russia.

There were periods of reform. Peter the Great (ruled 1682–1725) introduced ideas and technologies from the West, just as Gorbachev did three centuries later. From then on, Russia always had elites, dubbed “Westernizers,” who looked elsewhere for ways to modernize their country. Just as important, though, were the Slavophiles, who were convinced that Russian traditions were superior to anything in the West and who fought to keep foreign influences out.

On balance, Western or modernizing influences were quite weak during most of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and Russia lagged behind the other European powers. As is so often the case, the stark realities of Russia's situation were driven home by a relatively minor event—its defeat by Britain and France in the Crimean War of 1854–55. That defeat set political forces in motion that would culminate in the revolution of 1917. (See table 10.3.)

### *The Wrong Revolution*

As we saw in chapter 9, Marx expected a socialist revolution to occur first in one of the industrialized capitalist countries. There, a tiny bourgeoisie would exploit an increasingly large, educated, and organized proletariat that would eventually rise up and overthrow its oppressors.

Instead, this revolution occurred in a Russia that had little in common with the more advanced societies Marx had in mind. Four overlapping differences between the expectations of Marxist theory and the realities of life in

**TABLE 10.3** Key Events in the Origins of the Soviet State

YEAR	EVENT
1854	Start of the Crimean War
1881	Assassination of Tsar Alexander II
1904–05	Russo-Japanese War
1905	First revolution
1914	Outbreak of World War I
1917	February and October revolutions
1921	End of civil war, formal creation of Soviet Union
1924	Death of Lenin

Russia go a long way toward explaining why the Bolshevik revolution, and then the USSR, turned out as they did.

### Backwardness

The term *backwardness* is value laden and pejorative. However, it does describe Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century.

At that time, Russia had a tenth of the railroad lines of Germany or France. To the degree that Russia was beginning to industrialize, its factories were owned either by the government or by foreigners, so it did not develop the class of independent capitalists Marx had thought was so important. As late as the 1860s, most Russians were serfs who were, for all intents and purposes, slaves of their feudal lords. At the end of the century, over 90 percent of the people still lived in the countryside, and most lived in appalling conditions. Most urban workers were illiterate and had not developed the organization and sophistication Marx expected of a mature proletariat.

### Failed Reform

Russia also adopted few of the democratic reforms we saw in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France and Britain. Indeed, groups that advocated individualism or limits on the autocracy had no choice but to be revolutionaries; there were no “inside the system” ways of effectively pressing for change.

In the aftermath of Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War, the new tsar, Alexander II (ruled 1855–81), realized that Russia was lagging too far behind the West and began a series of belated but limited reforms. Serfs were liberated. Some forms of censorship were relaxed. Universities and the civil service were opened to commoners. And Alexander was on the verge of introducing a constitution that would give about 5 percent of the male population the right to vote when he was assassinated in 1881.

But political reform, such as it was, came to a halt under his son, Alexander III (ruled 1881–94). State-led

industrialization did continue, but this tsar was a reactionary who reinforced the autocratic state at the same time that the power of kings and lords was disappearing in the West.

### A Weak State

Reinforcing autocracy did not mean strengthening the state as a whole. In fact, during the reign of the last tsar, Nicholas II (ruled 1894–1917), the state grew weaker and weaker in every respect other than its ability to infiltrate revolutionary movements.

Russia’s weakness was especially evident in its dealings with the rest of the world. The Russian elite continued to think of their country as a great power. The fact that it was not was driven home as a result of the disastrous Russo-Japanese War and World War I. In 1904 the Russians attacked Japan, in part to quell dissent at home. The Russians assumed they would win easily, but they were routed by the Japanese. Their remaining pretenses to great power status were shattered in World War I, when Russian troops on horseback were mowed down by the dramatically better trained and equipped forces of Germany and its allies.

### Lenin and Revolution

Not surprisingly, a growing number of Russians found the political and economic situation to be intolerable. Because the state maintained its secret police and banned all reformist groups, the ranks of revolutionaries swelled with dissidents of all stripes, many of whom were forced into exile.

By the 1890s these dissidents included small groups of Marxists, most of whom were intellectuals. They were actually among the least revolutionary because, as orthodox Marxists, they assumed that Russia would have to first go through capitalism before a socialist revolution was possible.

Early in the 1900s, however, one of the exiled Marxists, **V. I. Lenin**, (1870–1924), reached a conclusion that was to affect Russian politics until the Soviet Union collapsed. As he saw it, the situation in Russia was so bad that the country could not wait until the conditions for a Marxist revolution were ripe. Instead, Marxists had to adapt their tactics to the current realities of Russia.

In the pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin outlined plans for a new type of revolutionary organization. He argued that only a small, secretive, hierarchical party of professional revolutionaries could hope to succeed. To thwart the secret police, the party would have to be based on what he called **democratic centralism**. Discus-

sion and debate would be allowed before the party decided to do something. However, once a decision was made, everyone would have to obey it without question. Leaders at the top would co-opt officials to run lower-level organizations, which, in turn, would not be allowed to communicate with each other.

At a congress of the Social Democratic Party held in 1903, there was a spirited debate over Lenin's ideas, which led to the famous split between the **Mensheviks** and **Bolsheviks**. The former, advocating a more orthodox Marxist approach, barely lost on the key vote to Lenin's supporters, who came to be called Bolsheviks—a term that simply meant they were the larger faction.

Their disagreements, like the party itself, had little practical impact on Russian politics, because most socialist leaders were in exile and had minimal support among the masses at home. But the Bolsheviks' position improved dramatically over the next fifteen years, not so much because of anything they did but because the tsarist regime continued to weaken. A spontaneous revolution broke out in 1905 in the wake of the Japanese debacle. Although the tsar was able to put it down and solidify his power in the short run, the state turned out to be even more fragile than it had been before the war began.

The autocracy finally collapsed in 1917. World War I had been a disaster for Russia, and as a last, desperate measure, the tsar personally took command of his troops at the front. While there, he was overthrown and was replaced by a **provisional government** that, in turn, found itself unable to withstand a counterrevolution by tsarist forces without the help of the Bolsheviks. Finally, in the fall, Lenin decided that the time had come. On the night of 7 November, Bolshevik troops overthrew the provisional government. For the first time anywhere, Marxists had succeeded in taking over a government.

The revolution was by no means over, however. Although the Bolsheviks quickly took control of most of the cities, they had limited support in the countryside and faced opposition from dozens of other groups. In the Constituent Assembly elected on 25 November, they won only 168 of the 703 seats.

Despite the Bolsheviks' lack of popular support, Lenin was not prepared to yield. He allowed the assembly to meet once in January 1918 and then shut it for good, dashing hopes for a democratic outcome. Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks entered negotiations with the Germans to end the war. They had to accept the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, which cost revolutionary Russia territory and assets totaling 32 percent of its arable land, 26 percent of its railroads, 33 percent of its factories, and 75 percent of its coal mines. As industrial production dropped to a third of the 1913 level, thousands of workers fled

the cities. No one knows how many froze or starved to death.

To make matters even worse, a civil war broke out in 1918. A poorly organized group of forces loyal to the tsar and the provisional government joined with other revolutionary factions in an attempt to topple the new Bolshevik regime.

The Bolsheviks responded by reinforcing democratic centralism, laying the groundwork for the CPSU's domination of all aspects of life later on. They created the **Cheka**, their first secret police, to enforce discipline within the party. At the same time, the Bolsheviks had to bring back members of the old elite to run the factories and the new Red Army. Because the Bolsheviks did not trust them, however, they assigned loyal political commissars to oversee what the officers and bureaucrats did, and the Cheka's responsibilities were expanded to cover the whole society.

By 1921 the Bolsheviks had been able to take advantage of their own organizational strengths, as well as the incompetence and divisiveness among the counterrevolutionaries, and solidify their control of the entire country. Once their rule was secure, they formally created a new state, the USSR.

The Communist Party was given the leading role in policy making and, in fact, supervising everything that happened in the new country. The overlapping party and state hierarchies from the civil war were maintained along with democratic centralism and party domination in general.

In the early 1920s the Soviet Union was not yet the totalitarian dictatorship it would become under Stalin. There were still open debates within the party. There was also a lively cultural and artistic world in which dissenting views were frequently raised openly. Stringent wartime economic measures were relaxed under the New Economic Policy (NEP), which encouraged peasants, merchants, and even some industrialists to pursue private businesses.

### *Stalin, Terror, and the Modernization of the Soviet Union*

Just before he died in 1924, Lenin wrote a political "testament" in which he criticized all the Bolshevik leaders but singled out Leon Trotsky (1879–1940) and **Joseph Stalin** (1879–1953), warning that neither should be allowed to take over the party. Because it was political dynamite, the party did not release the document until the de-Stalinization campaign of the mid-1950s.

To make a long and complicated story short, a most unexpected event occurred. After an intense factional

## V. I. LENIN



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Lenin addressing Communist activists and soldiers in Red Square, 1919.

**L**enin was the chief architect of the Bolshevik revolution and first leader of the Soviet Union.

He was born Vladimir Ulyanov in 1870. His father was a successful bureaucrat, and the young Ulyanov seemed destined for a prominent career himself until his brother was arrested and hanged for his involvement in a plot to assassinate the tsar. Vladimir entered university shortly thereafter but was quickly expelled and sent into exile for his own political beliefs. He spent those years near the Lena River, from which he took his pseudonym. While in his first period of exile, he became a Marxist. He returned to finish his studies and was admitted to the bar in 1891.

fight, Stalin won control of the party—and hence the country. Few people had expected him to replace Lenin. He was not part of the group of exiled intellectuals who dominated the Bolsheviks before the revolution. Instead, he stayed at home to work with the underground party, among other things robbing banks to raise money for it. After the revolution, Stalin was put in charge of the party organization. From that position, he was able to surpass his more visible rivals because, in a party in which all leaders are co-opted, he determined who was appointed to which positions.

Lenin spent the rest of the 1890s organizing dissidents in St. Petersburg and was in and out of jail until he was sent into exile again in 1900. He spent 1901–17 abroad, where he provoked the Bolshevik-Menshevik split and built up his wing of the Social Democratic Party.

Returning to Russia after the tsar was overthrown, Lenin led the Bolsheviks' seizure of power in the October revolution. But he never fully recovered from an assassination attempt, suffered three strokes in 1922 and 1923, and died in 1924.

The quarter-century that Stalin ruled the Soviet Union was one of the most painful periods in all of history. (See table 10.4.) In what is often called the second revolution, as many as 20 million Soviet citizens lost their lives, far too often for little or no reason.

### Industrialization

Stalin is typically—and accurately—portrayed as one of the most vicious men ever to lead a major country. There was, however, a degree of macabre rationality to some of

**TABLE 10.4** Key Events in the Evolution of the Soviet State

YEAR	EVENT
1927	Solidification of power by Stalin; socialism in one-country speech
1929	Beginning of collectivization campaign
1934	First major purges and show trials
1939	Nonaggression pact with Germany
1941	German invasion of Soviet Union
1945	End of World War II, beginning of cold war
1953	Death of Stalin
1956	Twentieth Party Congress and Khrushchev's secret speech
1964	Ouster of Khrushchev
1982	Death of Brezhnev

what he did. The new Soviet Union was in trouble. Hopes of global revolution had given way to a resurgence of right-wing governments in countries surrounding the USSR, something that Stalin was to call “capitalist encirclement.” Whoever was in charge, the world’s first socialist state had to respond decisively. To see that, consider this excerpt from one of his speeches at the time:

**To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to be beaten. No, we refuse be beaten. One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered because of her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol Khans. She was beaten by the Swedish feudal rulers. She was beaten by the Polish and Lithuanian gentry. She was beaten by British and French capitalists. She was beaten by Japanese barons. All beat her because of her backwardness. We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it or we shall go under.**

In response, Stalin forced his beleaguered country to industrialize. In so doing, he perpetrated some of the worst excesses of his rule. But a plausible case can be made that, if Stalin hadn’t pursued something like the policies described here, the new Soviet Union would not have survived.

Before turning to the issue of forced industrialization, we should acknowledge that no country has ever been able to create a modern industrial economy painlessly. This is especially true of states that lag far behind their competitors and want to close that gap quickly. Adopting a *laissez-faire* approach seems to condemn these countries to decades of “catch-up economics.” They therefore often conclude—and perhaps rightfully so—that their only option is to force their society to industrialize as quickly as possible.

In the Soviet case, Stalin adopted a two-pronged strategy. First, because the Soviet Union had only one real resource—human labor, which was concentrated in the countryside—Stalin decided to restructure rural life. The NEP was abandoned, and farmers were herded onto gigantic, supposedly more efficient collective and state farms. The peasants who were no longer needed in the countryside were relocated to the cities to work in the factories that were being built at breakneck speed. The government planned to sell the surplus food the new factory-like farms produced abroad to raise desperately needed hard currency.

Peasants who had been given ownership of their land while Lenin was in power resisted the new attempts to take it away from them. The government responded with violence the likes of which the Soviet Union, and Russia before it, had never seen. In a matter of months, more than 9 million peasants were forced to move to the cities. At least that many more who resisted collectivization were sent to forced labor camps, where most of them perished. An unknown number were killed on the spot.

Second, the agricultural surplus and other resources were used to spark the industrialization and modernization of the Soviet economy. Stalin initiated this through an ambitious **five-year plan**, which called for at least doubling the production of such goods as coal, oil, pig iron, steel, electricity, and cloth between 1928 and 1932. The Central State Planning Commission—**Gosplan**—set goals for the entire economy, which individual ministries then turned into specific instructions for each factory and farm to fulfill. As in the rural areas, people who resisted the state’s plans were treated brutally. Although the plan fell short of its most ambitious goals, the Soviet Union did industrialize as rapidly as any country in history, though at a tremendous human cost.

### Foreign Policy

There was a similar pattern in Soviet foreign policy under Stalin. Lenin had created the **Third International**, or **Comintern**, to spearhead what he expected to be a worldwide revolution, Soviet style. By the time Stalin solidified his power, however, the revolutionary tides had ebbed. Instead, capitalist forces seemed to have strengthened themselves and, in so doing, to threaten the very existence of the world’s first socialist state.

In the late 1920s Stalin reversed the course of Soviet foreign policy. In response to capitalist encirclement and the diminishing prospects for world revolution, Stalin called for “socialism in one country,” something no orthodox Marxist would have dreamed possible.

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 JOSEPH STALIN
 

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Over the next twenty-five years, this policy led the Soviet Union and the global communist movement through what might seem to be a contradictory series of shifts. At first, Stalin prohibited Communist parties elsewhere from participating in antifascist coalitions that might, for instance, have kept the Nazis from gaining power in Germany. But once he realized how serious the fascist threat was, Stalin switched direction in 1934, endorsing popular or united fronts in which communists cooperated with just about anyone who opposed fascism. In 1939 the Soviets reversed course once again, signing the infamous nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany. It was to last less than two years. The Germans invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, at which point Moscow joined the British and later the American-led Allies. Almost as soon as the war ended, however, tensions between the Soviet Union and West escalated into what became the cold war, prompting yet another U-turn in Soviet policy.

Joseph Dzhughashvili was born in the Georgian town of Gori in 1879. Unlike Lenin he was of humble origins. His mother was a maid, and his father an alcoholic and abusive shoemaker. As an adolescent, he entered a seminary, but he abandoned his studies just before graduation in 1899 to become a full-time revolutionary.

Stalin followed Lenin into the Bolshevik wing of the Social Democratic Party, but unlike most of his influential colleagues, he spent the years before 1917 in Russia, organizing the party underground. It was during those years that he took the pseudonym Stalin, for “man of steel.”

During the revolution and civil war period, Stalin was given more and more responsibility for the “nationality question” and the party organization, and was added to the Politburo. Despite alienating Lenin because of his “rude” behavior, Stalin was able to outmaneuver his competitors and seize all but complete control of the country by 1927.

Most historians are convinced that Stalin suffered from a series of psychological problems that contributed to making his regime one of the most brutal in history. He died in 1953.

Joseph Stalin in 1929, shortly after he had consolidated power and begun the brutal collectivization campaign.

What observers often fail to see in these twists and turns is that “socialism in one country” was the primary goal driving Soviet foreign policy and leading Stalin to shift his positions in ways he thought would best ensure its survival with each change in world conditions.

### The Purges

In other words, Stalin’s economic and foreign policies made some sense. Obviously, they had horrible consequences for millions of people, but the Soviet Union did industrialize, and it did survive. In fact, by the time Stalin died, the Soviet Union had become one of the world’s two superpowers.

It is impossible, however, to find any such logic behind the **purges**. In the 1920s the party conducted limited purges to eliminate opportunists and others who joined in the aftermath of the revolution. Later in the decade, Stalin forced Trotsky and most of his other leading rivals

out of the party. But from the early 1930s on, the pace of the purges picked up and had no credible link, however twisted, to the country's economic development.

In 1933 the party held a congress, which Stalin called the "Congress of Victors," to celebrate the completion of the collectivization campaign. At that meeting, Sergei Kirov, the young party leader in Leningrad, actually won more votes than Stalin in the election of the new Central Committee. In December 1934, Kirov was assassinated at his office, apparently on Stalin's orders.

Nonetheless, Stalin ordered the arrest of anyone involved in Kirov's assassination, which set off a wave of arrests, torture, show trials, and executions that touched the lives of millions of innocent Soviet citizens. By the end of the decade, 5 of the 9 Politburo members, 98 of 139 Central Committee members, 1,108 of the 1,966 delegates to the 1933 party congress, and half the army officer corps had been killed. A series of show trials took place at which most of the old Bolshevik leaders confessed to crimes they did not commit and then were summarily executed.

The purges and executions were carried out all the way up and down the party hierarchy. They drained it of many of its enthusiastic members and qualified leaders, including in the secret police, many of whose own leaders found themselves on trial for their lives.

In this nightmarish environment, virtually the only way people could express their feelings was through humor. Consider, here, one "report" of a conversation between two prisoners that sums up just how absurd and horrible the purges were:

**Prisoner One: What's your sentence?**

**Prisoner Two: Twenty-five years.**

**Prisoner One: What for?**

**Prisoner Two: Nothing.**

**Prisoner One: Don't lie. You only get five years for nothing in our country.**

In the larger prisons, the authorities executed an average of seventy people per day. Millions of average citizens were sent to the gulag, or network of concentration camps. People were given five- to eight-year sentences merely for having a "socially dangerous" relative. Very few survived that long.

No wonder political scientists came to call the Soviet Union and systems like it totalitarian.

### *Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and the Politics of Decline*

In March 1953 Stalin suffered a massive, and ultimately fatal, stroke. Like Lenin he died without designating a successor, and a number of men jockeyed for power. This

time the dozen or so top politicians apparently agreed that no one should ever be allowed to amass the kind of power Stalin had and that the Soviet Union should, instead, be governed by some form of collective leadership.

Within two years **Nikita Khrushchev** emerged as the most influential of those leaders. Khrushchev was a typical communist of his generation. Drawn to the party by the revolution, he had risen to the top during Stalin's rule and was involved in some of the regime's most brutal activities.

Under his leadership, the basic institutions of the party state remained intact. However, Khrushchev proved to be a reformer both at home and abroad.

Most importantly, he brought the worst excesses of Stalinism to a halt. The first clear sign that politics were changing came on the night of 24–25 February 1956, when Khrushchev called the delegates to the CPSU's **Twentieth Party Congress** back for a special session. For three hours he held his audience spellbound with his famous **secret speech**, in which he detailed many of Stalin's crimes. After the speech, which did not remain secret for very long, censorship and other political controls were loosened. More open political debate made university campuses exciting places to be and left an indelible mark on that generation of students, which included Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Khrushchev also sought to decentralize economic decision making and to revitalize the flagging agricultural sector. In terms of foreign policy, the Soviet Union retained its cold war hostility toward the West but also sought to relax tensions through a policy Khrushchev labeled "peaceful coexistence."

Always a controversial leader, Khrushchev barely survived an attempt to oust him as early as 1957. Many of his colleagues believed that his reforms went too far in eroding central party control and Soviet prestige. More importantly, few of the reforms worked. As social and economic problems mounted, so did opposition to his rule.

For many the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 proved to be the last straw. That August U.S. reconnaissance planes discovered that the Soviets were preparing to deploy nuclear missiles in Cuba, a country ninety miles south of Florida that had recently passed into the Soviet camp. Two months later President John F. Kennedy imposed a naval blockade to prevent the ships carrying the missiles and other material from reaching Cuba. World War III was a very real possibility. Eventually, however, the ships turned around, and the Soviets dismantled the bases that had already been built.

Khrushchev's critics in Moscow saw Cuba as a humiliating defeat and as yet another example of what they branded his "harebrained schemes." Two years later they succeeded in removing him from office.

Khrushchev was replaced by a group of leaders, many of whom had been his protégés. The most important of them was **Leonid Brezhnev**, who served as general secretary of the Communist Party until his death in 1982. Under Brezhnev the reforms ended, and the leadership took as few risks as possible in both domestic and foreign affairs.

By the time Brezhnev and his colleagues took power in 1964, the Soviet Union already faced serious economic problems. (See the discussion of “thumbs” and “fingers” in chapter 9.) In the years that followed, things only got worse. By the early 1980s overall economic growth slipped to 3 percent per year, or barely 60 percent of the goal laid out in the Tenth Five-Year Plan (1976–80). In some sectors, the figures were even worse—only a fifth of planned increases in coal and chemicals, barely a third in steel and consumer goods, and only half in agriculture.

The Brezhnev leadership did introduce some limited economic reforms. However, little progress was made because anything more than piecemeal change would have threatened the two central elements of the Soviet system that dated back to Lenin’s time: the party’s monopoly on power, and the centrally controlled economy. The Brezhnev generation was not willing to modify either.

Instead, it clung to power. By the beginning of the 1980s, the average age of Politburo members was about seventy. And when Brezhnev finally died in 1982, power was transferred not to new, younger hands, but to two more members of the old guard—first Yuri Andropov and then Konstantin Chernenko—both of whom died within months of taking office.

Economic conditions continued to deteriorate. In the 1980s economic growth averaged less than 1 percent per year. Even though people had more disposable income, there were not enough consumer goods to meet pent-up demand, and those goods that were available were shoddily made. To cite but one example, the few people fortunate enough to own cars took their windshield wipers with them when they parked. Otherwise, they would be stolen.

The *Economist* summed up this period brilliantly in its rather snide obituary on Brezhnev:

**The death of Leonid Brezhnev was the only major innovation he ever introduced into Soviet political history. In life, he stood for the status quo—as firmly as a man can stand when he is in fact walking slowly backward on a conveyor belt that is moving slowly forward beneath his feet. Brezhnev, a solid machine man, was put in to reassure the frightened hierarchs that the experimenting would stop. In this he was remarkably successful. He did not just stop the**

**clocks, but turned some of them back. Defying Marx, he virtually halted the evolution of Soviet society in its tracks. But the country, which was intended to be ruled by the Brezhnev men after Brezhnev’s death, presumably with the aim of immortalizing his immobilism, had been changing under them despite all their efforts; and the world in which it must live has been changing too. His legacy in foreign as in domestic policy is a set of concepts which were old when his reign began eighteen years ago. In Brezhnev’s Russia, only one thing was kept entirely up to date: its military hardware. The most appropriate monument for him would be a multiwarhead nuclear missile linked to a stopped clock.<sup>2</sup>**

When Chernenko died in March 1985, there was no one from the Brezhnev generation left. Someone younger had to take over, and Gorbachev was the obvious choice.

Although there were signs that he was not cut from the same political cloth as members of the Brezhnev-Andropov-Chernenko generation, no one expected change to come as quickly as it did. In 1984 Serge Schmeman of the *New York Times* reported an incident that hinted at just how uncertain things were. That December Gorbachev was sent on a mission to London. He was already in line to replace Chernenko, who clearly was not long for the world. The assumption was that the trip would provide some insight into the next leader of the Soviet Union.

Schmeman began his report with Gorbachev’s departure from Moscow. Gorbachev, dressed in a somber gray suit, shook the hands of his equally somberly dressed colleagues who had come to see him off. His wife, Raisa, went up the back ramp into the plane, out of public view. When they arrived in London, however, they emerged from the airplane together, wearing colorful Western-style clothes, and enthusiastically greeted the crowd.

Which, Schmeman wondered, was the real Gorbachev?

## The Soviet State and Its Collapse: The Gorbachev Years

Schmeman’s uncertainty was quickly resolved. Gorbachev proved to be a dedicated reformer and one of the twentieth century’s most influential leaders. In the end, however, he failed in large part because he was either unwilling or unable to take on the party state.

<sup>2</sup>“Brezhnev’s Legacy,” *Economist*, 13 Nov. 1982, 7–8.

His reforms did go a lot further than those of the Khrushchev years and, as a result, provoked fierce opposition within the party hierarchy. However, they probably could never have sparked the revitalization of the Soviet society and economy he sought because they did not go far enough in challenging the party and its stranglehold on power. The end result was the rapid polarization of Soviet politics. More radical reformers increasingly found fault with Gorbachev for not going far enough, and hard-liners opposed him for trying to go too far and undermining Soviet power and prestige.

### *The Party State*

The Soviet Union Gorbachev ran was dominated by the Communist Party (CPSU) and its massive organization, which enrolled about 10 percent of the adult population as members. It was, for all intents and purposes, the same as the state and was therefore the only political body that counted. Until 1988 all important decisions were made by senior party leaders. Party officials were responsible for overseeing the behavior of every individual and institution. For all but those at the very top, the party was a massive bureaucratic machine whose primary task was to ensure that the policies made by the elite were carried out. Most leading journalists, military officers, factory managers, teachers, and even athletes were required to be party members. Few, however, joined out of a sense of commitment to building a society based on Marxist ideals. Rather, most entered one of the 400,000 or so primary party organizations for a far more pragmatic reason—the CPSU was the only route to success in almost every sector of Soviet society.

Until the late 1980s the party structure remained the same as it had been since the 1920s. (See figure 10.1.) The primary party organizations reported to city or regional committees that, in turn, reported to provincial units. Above them sat the fifteen union republic party organizations.

Atop it all were the national party organs. In principle the most important—but in practice the least influential—was the party congress, normally held every four years. Until the final one in 1990, however, party congresses were little more than rubber stamps that ratified decisions made by the party elite. Much the same could be said of the **Central Committee**, which had about three hundred members, many of whom lived and worked outside of Moscow.

Real power was concentrated in two small groups that the Central Committee officially appointed but that were really self-perpetuating bodies. The **Politburo** (normally 12–15 members, with another 5–6 nonvoting, candidate members) acted much like a cabinet in a parlia-

mentary system. It was the body that actually determined what the Soviet Union's policies would be. The **Secretariat** (usually about 25 members and a staff of about 1,500), oversaw the work of the entire party apparatus. There was considerable overlap in the membership of these two bodies, and the general secretary served as both head of the Secretariat and chair of the Politburo.

The continued reliance on democratic centralism meant that leaders at one level determined who ran things at the level below them in the hierarchy. This allowed the elite to perpetuate itself by choosing people it could count on for all important positions. Its control over the entire organization was facilitated through the use of the *nomenklatura*—lists of important positions and people qualified to fill them, both of which were controlled by the Secretariat. As a result, the arrows in figure 10.1 that suggest “upward” influence are misleading. Because of this continued use of the system Lenin created to wage and win a revolution, the leadership maintained total control over who was appointed to official positions and, therefore, also over the decisions it cared most about.

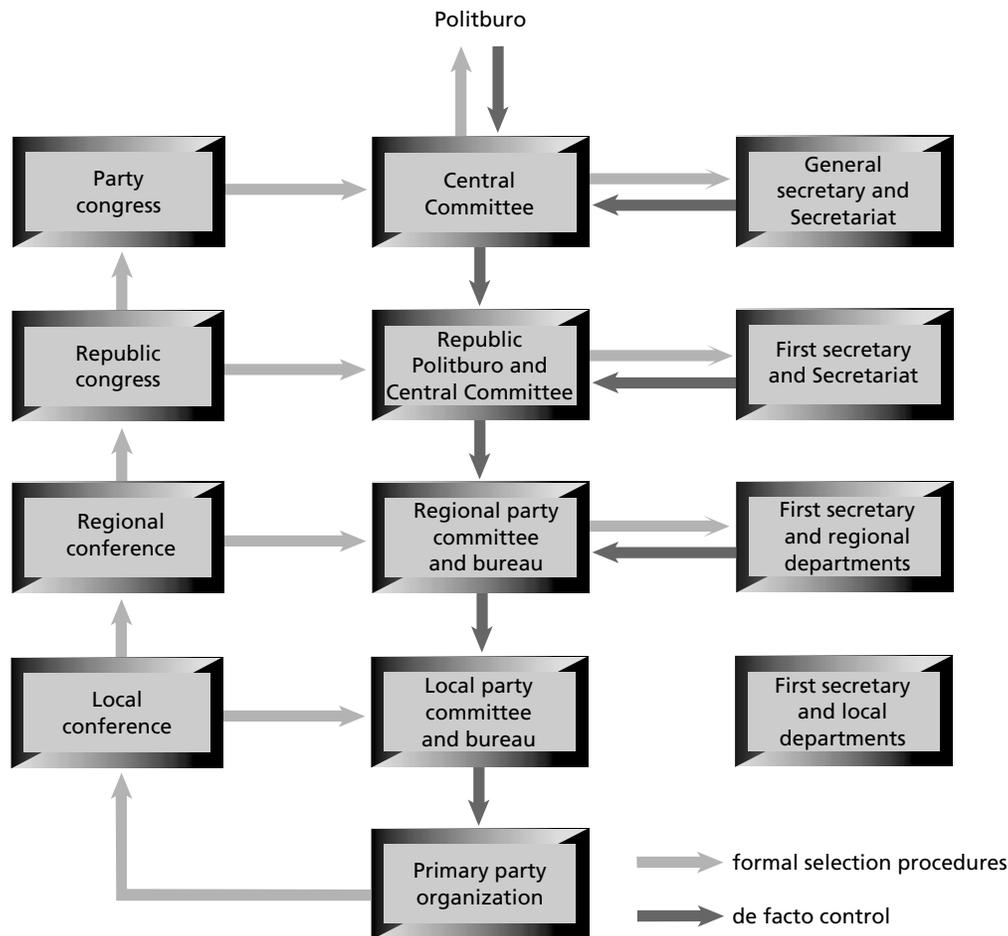
### *Reform*

Gorbachev and his colleagues came to power understanding that the Soviet Union had to change. Economic growth had all but ground to a halt, and the country was falling behind the West in almost every way imaginable.

Therefore, they introduced four sets of reforms designed to reinvigorate Soviet society. What the reforms actually did, however, was polarize both the elite and society as a whole. (See figure 10.2.) Gorbachev inherited a country in which only a tiny proportion of the population—the party elite—was politically relevant, and there were only minor differences of opinion within it. The reforms dramatically expanded both the number of people trying to influence decision making and the range of opinions voiced in those debates. As the 1980s wore on, Gorbachev found himself trying to govern from the ever-shrinking center. That would have been a challenge under the best of circumstances, but Gorbachev also became quite tentative in his own decision making, especially once it became clear that the party itself was the major roadblock. (See table 10.5.)

### *Glasnost*

Gorbachev and his colleagues came to power convinced that they could not breathe new life into Soviet institutions without changing the country's political culture.



**FIGURE 10.1** The Communist Party of the Soviet Union

**TABLE 10.5** Key Events in the Gorbachev Years

YEAR	EVENT
1985	Gorbachev becomes general secretary of CPSU
1986	Chernobyl; first summit with President Reagan
1987	Intermediate nuclear forces agreement; Yeltsin removed from office
1988	Special party conference; Reagan visits Moscow
1989	First somewhat competitive elections; collapse of communism in Eastern Europe
1990	Final CPSU congress; Yeltsin resigns from party
1991	Failed coup attempt; collapse of USSR

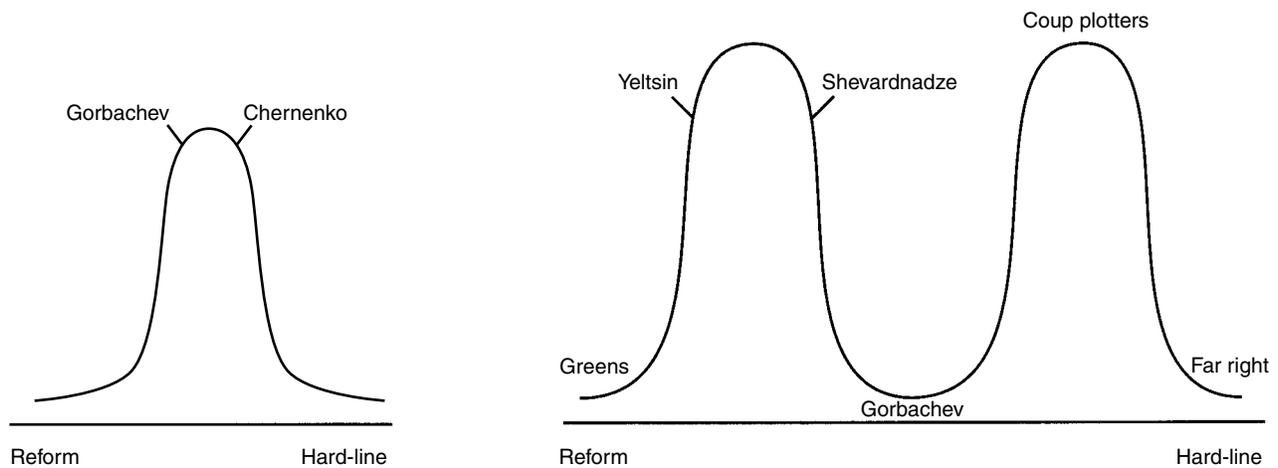
Revitalizing the economy, in particular, would require a public willing to take initiatives and risks, and assume responsibilities.

This was not the kind of culture the Soviet Union had in 1985. At best, most Soviets granted the party state a grudging sense of legitimacy. More likely, they accepted the status quo because there was little or nothing

they could do about it in a society that may no longer have been totalitarian but that still granted precious few opportunities for people to shape their own political, social, and economic destinies.

This is not to say that most Soviet citizens were happy. In retrospect it is easy to see that they must have wanted a greater say in political decision making, more personal freedom, and, most of all, better living conditions. Whatever people thought actually did not matter much until Gorbachev came to power. The party was still strong enough to rule pretty much as it wanted without paying attention to public opinion.

**Glasnost** changed all that, in what turned out to be the most counterproductive of Gorbachev's reforms. The term is derived from the Russian word for voice and is best translated as "openness." It had occasionally been discussed by earlier Soviet leaders but only made it onto political center stage after the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress.



**FIGURE 10.2** The Changing Soviet Political Landscape

The critical turning point—the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster—was not in and of itself political. After a few days of typical Soviet secrecy, the government began making everything about the accident public and even allowed foreign experts in to care for people who had been exposed to radiation.

From then on, the system opened up dramatically. The old Soviet aphorism—“Everything that isn’t explicitly permitted is forbidden”—was turned on its head. Censors stopped reviewing most works before they were published. The heavy-handed control over the mass media was lifted. Some conservative newspapers and magazines remained, but the press and airwaves were filled with material that was critical not only of the Soviet past but also of the current leadership.

Glasnost did not, however, create the kind of tolerant, Western-style political culture Gorbachev had in mind. Instead, it allowed people to vent seventy years’ worth of frustrations. Rather than a more energized and enthusiastic population, the Soviet Union faced ever larger and more radical protests on a number of fronts. Workers struck against low pay and poor working conditions. Women and environmentalists added their voices to the political agenda. An independent peace movement urged the party to move even faster in its rapprochement with the United States and to end its crippling invasion of Afghanistan.

Most important of all, nationalist movements among the country’s dozens of minority groups challenged the legitimacy of the Soviet state itself. In the spring of 1991, the U.S.-based Times-Mirror organization did a huge survey of public opinion throughout Europe, including Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Russians.<sup>3</sup> Half the Russians interviewed were convinced that

things were going to get worse. Some 57 percent felt that the CPSU had a negative influence on the country. Only 10 percent preferred a “socialist country along the lines we had in the past,” and only half identified themselves as Soviets rather than Russians. When asked who was best able to solve the country’s problems, 45 percent cited the Russian authorities, but only 27 percent mentioned the Soviet government. Half thought the pace of economic and democratic reform was proceeding too slowly. Only 22 percent approved of the job Gorbachev was doing as president.

### Democratization

The reformers also realized that they could not introduce glasnost without a degree of democracy as well. In fact, they never planned to turn the Soviet Union into a Western-style liberal democracy. This is hardly surprising, given that even the most radical reformers were products of the system and that most of them—including Gorbachev himself—thought of themselves as committed Marxists. Therefore, movement on democratization came more slowly but included two important steps.

First, the reformers removed Article 6 from the Soviet constitution, which had defined the party as “the leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations and political organizations.” As early as January 1987, Gorbachev hinted that there could be changes in the

<sup>3</sup>Times-Mirror Center for the People and the Press, *The Pulse of Europe: A Survey of Political and Social Values and Attitudes* (Washington, D.C.: Times-Mirror Center for People and the Press, 1991).



## USEFUL WEB SITES

Given the shaky state of the Russian economy, many of the promising Internet portals created there a few years ago have fallen by the wayside. The best English-language entry point for Russian news and political sites is European Internet. Another good source of news is the Open Society Institute.

[www.europeaninternet.com/Russia](http://www.europeaninternet.com/Russia)

[www.omri.cz](http://www.omri.cz)

Because of the difficulties Russians are having maintaining their own sites, especially their English-language mirrors, the best entry points to things Russian are probably those maintained by U.S.-based Russian studies centers, especially those at the universities of Michigan, Pittsburgh, and Washington.

[www.umich.edu/~iinet/crees](http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/crees)

[www.ucis.pitt.edu/reesweb](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/reesweb)

[depts.washington.edu/reecas/](http://depts.washington.edu/reecas/)

There are still a number of organizations doing analytical work and NGOs helping Russian develop. Two of the best are the Jamestown Foundation and the Initiative for Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia, with roots on the right and left wing, respectively.

[www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org)

[www.isar.org](http://www.isar.org)

Finally, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace held a major international conference on “Russia—Ten Years After” in 2001, which is probably the single best source in print or on-line on the transition.

[www.ceip.org/files/programs/Russia/tenyears/default.htm](http://www.ceip.org/files/programs/Russia/tenyears/default.htm)

party’s monopoly on power. Formal proposals were made in June 1988 at a special party conference called to discuss democratization and economic reform. Plans were announced to strengthen the presidency, a position Gorbachev assumed that September.

Second, Gorbachev announced that there would be a new parliament, the Congress of People’s Deputies, which would be chosen through partially free elections. When the elections were held, many of the liberal reformers gained a lot of publicity. However, people concerned that Gorbachev was moving too fast and going too far won more of the seats.

In short, Gorbachev did make the regime somewhat more democratic. He did not, however, mount a frontal assault on the CPSU. If anything, he was hoping to

strengthen it by forcing it to reform and modernize. Nonetheless, the main consequence of his actions was to intensify apprehension and opposition from party members to his right.

## Perestroika

As noted earlier, Gorbachev inherited a rapidly deteriorating economy. Soviet factories were archaic and were rendered even less productive by a workforce that neither worked very hard nor cared about the quality of what it produced. The service industries were in shambles, and people who could afford to do so turned to the black market to get their cars repaired or to obtain decent food. The massive state and collective farms were so poorly run that a third of the harvest spoiled or was lost between harvest and market. Last but not least, the peculiar nature of the Soviet currency and the country’s arcane foreign trade laws kept the USSR from participating in the increasingly important international economy.

Gorbachev understood from the beginning that the Soviet Union was in serious economic trouble. At first, however, there were few signs that he contemplated radical reform. In his first two years in office, he tried to make improvements within the party state system by increasing the discipline of Soviet workers—for instance, clamping down on the sale of alcohol. As the crisis deepened and his incremental reforms failed to bear fruit, Gorbachev and his advisers decided that nothing short of **perestroika**, or a total restructuring of the economy, would restore the Soviet Union to world prominence or improve the living conditions of its citizens. They realized that such a restructuring necessarily involved relinquishing much of the party state’s economic power to the market and promoting private ownership, individual initiative, and decentralized decision making.

Although much of perestroika never made it onto the statute books, by the late 1980s the leadership had taken five broad initiatives:

- Proposing a Law on State Enterprises to introduce market mechanisms into the parts of the economy that would remain under state ownership
- Passing the Law on Cooperatives authorizing the existence of some small, privately owned companies, mostly in the service industries
- Initiating agricultural reforms that would eventually allow farmers to lease, if not own, their land
- Introducing price reforms so that people paid market value for goods and services
- Easing restrictions on joint ventures with foreign firms

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## MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

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Mikhail Gorbachev was born in 1931 near Stavropol in the Crimea. His father was a tractor driver, and Gorbachev himself worked on a collective farm while a teenager. At eighteen he was already a committed and respected member of the Komsomol, or Communist Youth League, when he entered Moscow State University to study law. Like many of his generation, he was deeply affected by de-Stalinization, which, some say, convinced him as early as the 1950s of the need for reform.

At any rate, Gorbachev returned to the Stavropol region, where he quickly moved up the party ranks. He was no radical. But like many of his colleagues in out-of-the-way parts of the country, he did implement some innovative reforms—in his

case in agricultural administration—that earned him national attention and a seat on the Politburo in 1980. In those days he was closely allied with Yuri Andropov, who might have turned out to be a reformer himself, had he lived long enough. Instead, that mantle fell on Gorbachev.

Despite his reputation in the West, Gorbachev was never willing or able to wholly break with the traditional party state, which ultimately led to his and his country's undoing. Since 1991 he has headed the Gorbachev Institute, which works for human rights and world peace along the lines of the “new thinking” he championed while in office. He made an attempt at a political comeback in the 1996 presidential election but won less than 1 percent of the vote.

We will never know if those reforms would have turned the Soviet economy around because they were never fully implemented. Like democratization they faced resistance from much of the party hierarchy, especially the members of the *nomenklatura*, whose power they threatened. Moreover, as critics have pointed out ever since, the ever more indecisive Gorbachev team never even got to the point of proposing a full-fledged package of reforms. By the time they came close to doing so, it may have already been too late to satisfy the demands of an increasingly politicized and impatient population.

### Foreign Policy

Gorbachev will be remembered most positively for his role in ending the cold war. One of his first acts was to declare a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, which was followed by more dramatic initiatives. There was a strong dose of self-interest behind those proposals from a leader who understood that his country was overburdened by defense expenditures that ate up at least a quarter of its GNP.

Gorbachev was also the most visionary international leader of his time. Thus, in his remarkable speech to the United Nations General Assembly in December 1988, he talked hopefully about interdependence and a new world order of countries able to solve their differences peacefully. This is not the place to review those actions in any detail because they fall in the domain of international relations. Here it is enough to note that they provoked considerable opposition at home from people who feared that they would undermine the Soviet Union's position as one of the two most powerful countries

in the world ([www.gei.ch/GreenCrossFamily/gorby/gorby.html](http://www.gei.ch/GreenCrossFamily/gorby/gorby.html)). 

### Crisis and Collapse

In short, by the time communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union had become a political tinderbox. In the two years between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the state grew weaker and its society more polarized. By 1990 rumors of an impending coup were rife. In response Gorbachev increased presidential powers and elevated hard-liners to prominent posts, especially in the military and the security apparatus.

On 12 June 1991 Yeltsin was elected president of the Russian Republic, enabling him to claim that he had a broader mandate and that his rule was more legitimate than Gorbachev's. Five days later, the head of the KGB issued an ominous warning against carrying out liberal reforms “dreamed up across the ocean.” On 24 July Gorbachev reached an agreement with the presidents of ten of the fifteen republics that would have given them considerable autonomy in most areas of domestic policy making. The Union Treaty was to be signed on 20 August after Gorbachev returned from vacation.

At 6:00 A.M. on 19 August, TASS (the Soviet press agency) announced that Gorbachev was ill and had been replaced by Vice President Gennadi Yanayev, who, along with seven other hard-liners, had seized government and party offices in Moscow and other major cities. Gorbachev and his family were taken into custody at their dacha in the Crimea. Troops occupied critical locations in Moscow and other cities.



Boris Yeltsin, standing on an armored personnel carrier and rallying the crowd opposing the coup against Gorbachev in 1991.

© Reuters NewMedia Inc./CORBIS

Most leading politicians were slow to respond to the coup. Yeltsin, however, opposed it from the outset. He immediately went to the White House (seat of the Russian government), which was surrounded by troops. Overnight, he galvanized opposition to the rebellion. Within forty-eight hours it had become clear that the coup was poorly planned by desperate leaders who knew that the signing of the Union Treaty would have meant the end of the Soviet Union as they knew it. The coup collapsed, and Gorbachev returned to Moscow, claiming he would continue to rule as before.

In fact, business as usual could not continue. The Union Treaty was put on hold indefinitely as the Soviet Union continued to disintegrate. By September the Baltic republics had broken away, and in December the leaders of eleven of the remaining twelve republics agreed to form the Commonwealth of Independent States. By the end of the month, Gorbachev had resigned his position as president of a country that no longer existed.

## Birth Pangs

**M**ost of the new republics got off to a shakier start than did the new regimes covered in part 2. To begin with, they did not make as clean a break

from the old order. The new republics began their lives using Soviet-era institutions, and most were led by politicians who had forged their careers within the communist hierarchy. In Russia the reformist-minded Yeltsin team had to govern along with a parliament that had been elected in 1989 and that was still dominated by men and women who had been loyal party activists.

The Russian people had never lived under a democracy. In contrast, although Germany and Japan had hardly been successful in their first attempts at democracy, in those countries there were “untainted” politicians to call on, established organizations that could serve as the starting point for new political parties and interest groups, and millions of individuals who had voted in competitive elections.

This was not the case in Russia, which had not experienced even the most rudimentary attempts at building a democracy in almost three-quarters of a century. Thus, there were no politicians with any experience outside the CPSU to turn to. Perhaps more importantly for the long haul, no one alive had been an adult under any political system other than that of the USSR.

What’s more, economic conditions sank to a level no one could have imagined under the Communists. Ethnic conflict, which had been bad enough before 1991, intensified after the Soviet collapse. Russians also



Former Soviet president Gorbachev speaks on his return to Moscow following the failed coup attempt in 1991.

© Peter Turnley/CORBIS

**TABLE 10.6** Key Events in Russian Politics Since 1991

YEAR	EVENT
1991	Yeltsin elected Russian president Failed coup Collapse of USSR
1992	New state called Russian Federation
1993	Referendum supports most reforms Coup attempt First parliamentary elections New constitution
1994	Drift rightward accelerates Outbreak of war in Chechnya
1995	Yeltsin's second heart attack Second parliamentary election
1996	Presidential election
1997	Expansion of NATO
1998	Economic collapse Two prime ministers sacked
2000	Putin assumes presidency

had to deal with the humiliating reality that they were no longer a superpower and, even worse, had been stripped of territories and peoples—some of which they had controlled for centuries. Even more humiliating and contentious for some was the fact that the Russian government seemed to have to beg for aid from the same Western governments that so recently had feared Soviet military power.

The hard-line holdovers turned into the new regime's conservatives. They obviously did not advocate free-market capitalism along the lines of conservatives in Great Britain or the United States. Rather, they were conservative in the sense that they resisted the reforms proposed by the Yeltsin administration, preferring instead to reestablish the old system and possibly to reintegrate the lost republics back into Russia or to re-create the USSR itself. (See table 10.6.)

Political life polarized throughout 1992 and the first half of 1993. It took months for the elite even to agree on what the new country should be called; they ultimately settled on the compromise Russian Federation, which members of non-Russian minority groups preferred to Russia.

Meanwhile, the old Communist Party reinvented itself as the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), the details of which we will cover later. New political groupings, most notably the Liberal Democrats, led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, sprang up as well, defending various versions of traditional, Soviet-style geopolitical and economic goals. On the other end of the spectrum, radical reformers, most of whom started off in the Yeltsin camp, formed an opposition and clamored for **shock therapy** in the economy. This Western-inspired policy emphasizes the selling off, or **privatization**, of

state-owned industry and macroeconomic policies designed to bring the rampant inflation under control, and dramatic shifts toward a democratic regime.

As 1993 wore on, the tensions continued to mount. By summer Yeltsin's team apparently realized that it had made a mistake in trying to implement meaningful economic and political reforms with a communist-era political system. Therefore, it proposed a new constitution, which met stiff resistance from many parliamentary and regional leaders. On 21 September Yeltsin issued Decree 1400, which dissolved the Congress of People's Deputies and announced new legislative elections for 12 December.

This proved to be the last straw for his opponents, who took the decree as "proof" that the president was trying to create a personal dictatorship. For the next two weeks, hundreds of people, including many parliamentary leaders, occupied the White House. Yeltsin countered by sending troops to surround the building and by cutting off its heat, water, and electricity. The crisis reached a peak on 3 October, when supporters of the occupiers stormed the militia barricades and then attacked the mayor's office and the main television and radio complex.

In sharp contrast to what he had done in 1991, Yeltsin ordered the troops to attack the White House. The occupiers proved no match for the troops and soon surrendered, but not before at least a hundred people were killed and the White House was heavily damaged. The leaders were hustled out of the building and arrested.

At that point, Yeltsin decided to add a new draft constitution to the ballot for the planned elections in December. The constitution was approved, but to his embarrassment, conservative parties won by far the

most seats in the **State Duma**, the lower house of the new parliament.

In other words, despite removing the coup's plotters from active politics and gaining support for the new constitution, Yeltsin faced the same kind of political deadlock as Gorbachev. For the next two and a half years, the president and parliament remained at loggerheads. If anything, the conservatives grew stronger and obliged the president to drop more and more of his reformist goals and advisers. Meanwhile, Yeltsin's declining personal popularity and deteriorating health sapped the executive of its strength. The pace of economic and other reform slowed. Intense fighting broke out between the central government and separatists in the southern republic of Chechnya. More important for the long term were the preparations for the legislative and presidential elections that were to be held in December 1995 and June 1996, respectively.

But those elections did little to sort out the differences between Yeltsin and the Duma, which remained under opposition control. The president had had to bring former general Alexander Lebed and other conservatives into his coalition. In short, the high-stakes political stalemate continued in only slightly modified form.

Conditions only deteriorated for the rest of Yeltsin's abbreviated second term. As we will see in more detail later on, the bottom fell out of the economy in 1998, and there was growing concern with the political and economic clout of the "family"—the people in Yeltsin's inner circle. So, there was something approaching a collective sigh of relief when Yeltsin quit.

Despite all these difficulties, Russia made the transition from the Yeltsin to the Putin presidency with surprising ease, suggesting that the regime might be more secure than many analysts thought. Nonetheless, the political situation remains far more fluid and uncertain than anything we saw in part 2.

## Political Culture and Participation

**T**he evidence regarding Russian political culture and participation is difficult to assess for two reasons. First, open and voluntary political participation is a novel phenomenon, and it is often difficult to determine what peoples' intentions are when they get involved. Second, public opinion polling is also quite new, so we have relatively little reliable data about what the Russian people think and do politically.

Nonetheless, the available evidence points to a pair of paradoxical conclusions. On the one hand, there is reason to believe that most Russians want a democratic regime. On the other, their voting patterns and other po-

litical behavior suggest that they are not happy with the way their regime is currently working.

### *Political Culture*

As is the case with most aspects of Russian politics, its political culture forces us to shift gears, because it has so little in common with those in the liberal democracies. Most people in the industrialized democracies believe that their regimes are legitimate, which contributes to political stability and helps sustain the system during tough times.

This is not the case for Russia. To the degree that we understand it, the Russian political culture is characterized by frustration and hostility. It could hardly be otherwise. Russians have never been governed by a regime that enjoyed widespread legitimacy. When people were finally given the opportunity in the late 1980s to participate somewhat freely and to express their views, it was the anger built up over centuries of imperial rule and seventy years of Soviet rule that burst to the surface.

The shift to a drastically different regime does not mean that the underlying culture has changed. The limited available evidence points to a number of values that have carried over from the Soviet—and in some cases the tsarist—periods. There is, for instance, widespread suspicion of those in positions of authority. Most Russians, especially those who did relatively well under the old system, still seem to want the state to provide critical services, hand down directives, and take the initiative in important social, political, and economic issues.

In some respects, Russians may be more suspicious and hostile than they were prior to 1991 because so many of them are worse off and feel let down by a succession of politicians who promised a better future. Not only has that future not materialized, but at the grassroots level the country seems to be run more or less by the same people as in the old days.

Some signs indicate that most Russians are loath to give their leaders the time needed to rebuild the economy and state. Western electorates these days frequently punish incumbent politicians for short-term declines in their countries' economic or other fortunes. If anything, we should expect the Russians to do the same and then some, especially now that almost all of them know how far behind the West their country actually is.

Surveys conducted by the New Russia Barometre project since 1993 show that most Russians prize the freedoms they have gained since the end of the communist era. Solid majorities support freedom of speech and the right to vote, and see them as among the key accomplishments of the new Russian Federation. Similarly, three-quarters of all Russians typically tell the pollsters

**TABLE 10.7** Levels of Trust in Russian Institutions, 1998 (as percentage)

INSTITUTION	TRUST	DISTRUST
Army	34	44
Church	30	53
Television	23	53
Police	18	60
President of Russia	14	72
Duma	13	70
Private enterprises	11	72
Political parties	7	81
Private investment funds	5	85

Source: Adapted from Thomas Remington, *Politics in Russia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 2002), 133.

that the new regime is better than the old communist one as far as respecting individual rights is concerned. And voter turnout is reasonably high. Only 50.6 percent of eligible voters participated in the 1993 Duma election following the failed coup attempt. But the turnout in national elections since then has not dropped below 60 percent, which is 10 percent higher than the rate of participation in a typical American presidential contest.

Less clear is Russians' support for the broader values that tend to yield social capital and, with it, deep and ongoing support for a democratic regime. Russians have low expectations of the government—expectations most people believe it rarely meets. In addition, one poll found that only 9 percent of one sample thought that “people like me” had more power in the mid-1990s than under Gorbachev; 45 percent claimed that the reverse was true. As table 10.7 suggests, Russians do not hold any of their institutions in high regard. They trust the army and the church the most, but there is more distrust than trust even for these bodies. Levels of distrust of the most important political and economic bodies are as high as any ever reported anywhere in the world.

This sense of alienation is reflected, too, in the low rates of involvement in interest groups. This holds for trade unions, women's groups, and other associations that have links to communist-era bodies, as well as those that were created from scratch after 1991. The one possible exception to this trend toward alienation is the growing number of strikes among miners, teachers, industrial workers, and others who often go months without getting paid. Even here, however, the unions that supposedly represent the interests of those workers are small and have had at best a limited impact on economic policy making.

Finally, important demographic differences indicate that Russian culture may become more democratic over time. In particular, young, urban, and well-educated people support the new regime and liberal

## CONFLICT IN RUSSIA

As in most of the formerly communist countries, there is much conflict in Russia and has been since Gorbachev removed the political lid with glasnost in the late 1980s. Unlike the industrialized democracies, however, much of the protest is aimed not just at individual politicians and their policies but at the regime as well.

There is surprisingly little violence in the conflict, however. To be sure, there have been civil wars in Chechnya, but few of the other protest movements have turned violent. Indeed, despite the crime wave that has struck much of the country, only one politician has been killed. A liberal member of parliament, Galina Staravoitova had been an outspoken critic of the corruption and criminality that are now common in political life. No one knows if her assassination—almost certainly a contract killing—will lead to more such violence in the future.



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The reformist politician Galina Staravoitova who was murdered in a gang-style hit outside her apartment. This is the most prominent example of the widespread political violence in Russia today.

values far more than their older, rural, and poorly educated counterparts.

### *Political Parties and Elections*

There is no better indicator of the uncertainty and fluidity of Russian politics than the status of its political parties and electoral system. In the countries covered in part 2, political parties and democratic institutions evolved together over extended periods. Quite the opposite is the case in Russia, where the two were created in the historical blink of an eye in the early 1990s.

This has led to what the scholars conducting the New Russia Barometre (NRB) call a “floating” party system. In

most stable democracies, voters choose from essentially the same parties from election to election. And, because the individual parties do not change their positions all that much from one ballot to the next, most voters develop loyalties to one or another of them—in what political scientists call “party identification.” One NRB study found that only 22 percent of Russians had any party identification, in contrast to over 80 percent in Britain and the United States. This stability, in turn, allows parties to play a vital role in linking people’s preferences to the parties’ actions as they organize governments and make policy decisions.

There are few signs that this pattern of partisan and electoral behavior is developing in Russia. Instead, as all the tables in this section will show, there is little continuity in either the parties that contest elections or in the voters’ reactions to them. Indeed, the Russian party system is more fluid than any other we will consider in this book. This fluidity, in turn, contributes to the broader uncertainties about Russian politics.

### Elections

Russians’ first opportunity to vote in a reasonably free election came in the referendum of 1993. (See table 10.8.) Early that year, the conflict between the still reformist administration and the increasingly conservative Congress of People’s Deputies came to a head. Boris Yeltsin invoked special powers and called for a referendum in which the people were asked if they supported his rule and economic reforms, and favored early elections for president and the Congress.

Yeltsin got clear but not overwhelming majorities in support of his presidency and economic policies. Voters rejected early presidential elections but supported them for the legislature. However, the turnout was so low that Yeltsin did not get the absolute majority he needed to call for new legislative elections. Moreover, only about a third of the eligible voters actually supported either Yeltsin or his policies. In short, the referendum results did little more than set the stage for the events that culminated in the unsuccessful coup attempt that fall.

Russians’ second opportunity to vote in free elections was a referendum on the new constitution held simultaneously with the State Duma elections in December 1993. As in the spring, barely half the voters turned out, and barely half of those voting supported the government’s initiative.

Since then, Russians have voted in five national elections—three for the Duma (1993, 1995, and 1999) and two for the presidency (1996 and 2000). The Duma elections are run under the same basic system used in

**TABLE 10.8** The Russian Referendum of April 1993

ISSUE	PERCENTAGE YES OF THOSE WHO VOTED	PERCENTAGE YES OF REGISTERED VOTERS
Have confidence in Yeltsin	57.4	39.9
Support Yeltsin’s socioeconomic policies	53.7	34.0
Support early elections for president	49.1	30.9
Support early elections for Congress of People’s Deputies	70.6	44.8

Source: *The Economist*, 1 May 1993, 49.

Germany and Japan. There are 450 seats, half of which are elected by proportional representation and half in single-member districts. Presidential elections follow the French pattern. Any number of candidates can run on a first ballot, and if no one wins a majority in that first round of voting, the top two vote getters compete in a runoff two weeks later.

The dual system for choosing Duma members, in particular, has worked very differently from the similar one in Germany. There, in every election in the past fifty years, the major parties have won just about as many votes in the proportional representation and the single-member district contests.

Indeed, there is nothing stable about Russian parties and elections. (See table 10.9.) Indeed, the most striking thing is that only four parties have run candidates in all the Duma elections—one of which, Women of Russia, did not get enough votes to win a single seat in the proportional side of the 1999 election. Overall, the four parties saw their share of the vote slip from nearly half in 1993 to barely a third in 1999.

The second major difference between the Russian and the German or Japanese systems is that in Russia the parties themselves are very poorly organized. This is most evident in the disparity between the proportional representation and single-member district results. In 1999, for example, the parties that broke the 5 percent barrier nationally won only 108 of the 225 single-member districts. What’s more, only the Communists and the Yabloko fielded candidates in more than half the districts—54 and 51 percent of them, respectively. In other words, a quarter of Duma members elected in 1999 are independents without ties to any of the national parties. Most are local power brokers, and it is hard for voters to determine what their positions on national issues are or how they might behave once the Duma convenes.

The presidential elections do not show much more stability. (See tables 10.10 and 10.11.) To be sure, some of the same candidates have run in both elections, and

**TABLE 10.9** Elections to the Russian Duma, 1993, 1995, and 1999

PARTY	PERCENTAGE OF LIST VOTE			SEATS ON PARTY LIST			SEATS IN SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS		
	1993	1995	1999	1993	1995	1999	1993	1995	1999
Communists	12.35	22.30	24.29	32	99	67	32	58	55
Women of Russia	8.1	—	—	21	—	4	3	—	—
Liberal Democrats	22.79	11.18	5.98	59	50	17	11	1	2
Our Home Is Russia	—	1.13	—	—	45	—	—	10	7
Unity	—	—	22.32	—	—	64	—	—	9
Yabloko	7.82	6.89	5.93	20	31	17	13	14	5
Russia's Democratic Choice	15.38	—	—	40	—	—	56	9	—
Union of Right Forces	—	—	8.52	—	—	24	—	—	5
Fatherland All Russia	—	—	13.33	—	—	36	—	—	32
Party of Russian Unity and Accord	6.76	—	—	18	—	—	9	1	—
Democratic Party of Russia	5.5	—	—	14	—	—	7	—	—
Others and independents	—	—	—	—	—	—	60	103	110
Against all	4.36	3.60	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note: Includes only parties that broke the 5 percent barrier.

some of them are easily identified as members of one of the national political parties. Of concern here is how strongly the major media outlets weighed in on behalf of Yeltsin in 1996 and Putin in 2000, which led many outsider observers to suggest that these were anything but fair and honest campaigns.

Finally, the ambiguity of Putin's Russia can be seen in the 2001 law that all but bans small, regional parties from running candidates in national elections. On the one hand, this law should reduce some of the fragmentation that is a source of much of the stagnation in policy making and remove some of the locally based oligarchs who have little or no concern for the national interest. On the other hand, it is a decidedly nondemocratic act that limits the ability of the Russian people to express their will and hold national politicians accountable.

### The Political Parties Today

It is hard to describe the Russian political parties, let alone predict how they will evolve or even determine which of them will still be on the scene when the next elections are held, presumably in 2003 and 2004. Therefore, we will restrict our attention to the parties that broke the 5 percent barrier in 1995 or 1999 and that are likely to survive the reform law passed in 2001.

The most successful party, so far, has been the **Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)**. It is the only party to have a viable organization throughout the country, which allows it to do such things as conduct door-to-door election campaigns. More importantly, its support steadily increased until it earned nearly a quar-

ter of the vote in the proportional half of the election in 1999. Its leader and presidential candidate, **Gennady Zyuganov**, came in second in both presidential elections.

Despite its share of the vote, the CPRF's influence probably peaked in 1995 when, along with other anti-reform factions, it held enough seats to de facto control the Duma and block many of Yeltsin's legislative measures. The CPRF and those other groups lost support in 1999, and Zyuganov's inability to win more than a third of the vote suggest that the party is unlikely to come to power on its own or as part of any easily foreseeable coalition.

Like the reformed Communist parties in eastern Europe, the CPRF is not a carbon copy of the old Stalinist machine. The new party counts few prominent Communists from the old days among its leaders. Zyuganov comfortably plays his role as leader of the parliamentary opposition and has tried to portray the party more in Social Democratic terms as an organization that wants to protect the social and economic interests of Russia's poor.

Nonetheless, the party is far less reformist than its counterparts in eastern Europe. Zyuganov himself was a staunch opponent of Gorbachev-era reforms and headed a shady "national salvation front" that seemed to want to restore the Soviet Union after it fell apart. He also was quoted as saying that the army should combat "the destructive might of rootless democracy," and he served on the editorial board of a conservative and often anti-Semitic newspaper. Like many former Communists, Zyuganov and his colleagues have adopted nationalistic positions that include sometimes not-so-veiled references to expand the Russian Federation's border into the near-abroad.

**TABLE 10.10** The Russian Presidential Election of 1996

CANDIDATE	PERCENTAGE OF FIRST-BALLOT VOTE	PERCENTAGE OF SECOND-BALLOT VOTE
Boris Yeltsin	35.3	53.8
Gennady Zyuganov	32.0	40.3
Alexander Lebed	14.5	—
Grigori Yavlinsky	7.5	—
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	5.7	—
Others	2.2	—
Against all	1.5	4.8

In the 1996 campaign, Zyuganov and the CPRF took a harder line against economic reform than before, advocating a return to more state ownership and central planning. With their allies in the weakened Agrarian Party, they have also called for the retention of the collectives and state farms created under Stalin. During the 1998 economic crisis, they advocated a slowdown in the pace of economic reform and the breakup of the monopolies and oligopolies created since 1991, which we will discuss shortly. The CPRF continued emphasizing those themes in the 1999 and 2000 elections but got little play on them given the attention paid to Putin and the party he created, Unity.

The Communists undoubtedly are the best organized party in Russia today. This is the case because they can draw on the thousands of middle- and lower-level party officials from the old CPSU. One asset they do not have, however, is the property formerly owned by the CPSU, which was all transferred to the state.

**Unity** is the second largest but the most influential party in Russia today. However, it did not exist when Vladimir Putin was named prime minister in August 1999. Its specific origins are shrouded in secrecy, but all signs indicate that it was put together by oligarch Boris Berezovsky and other members of the Yeltsin “family.” It had minuscule support in the polls until Putin’s popularity began to soar because of his forceful prosecution of the war in Chechnya. Three months after its creation, Unity came within a single percentage point of the Communists even though it won only nine single-member districts—which is hardly surprising for a new organization.

Unity is what observers of Russian politics call a party of power created not so much to defend policy proposals or ideological positions as to promote the interests of the current leadership. Although Putin himself has chosen to keep his distance from what is clearly his party, Unity has yet to define its ideological stance. Instead, with other pro-Putin factions, it has provided Russia with its first disciplined political party supporting a government.

Unity is not the first party of power. In 1995 then prime minister **Viktor Chernomyrdin** created **Our Home**

**TABLE 10.11** The Russian Presidential Election of 2000

CANDIDATE	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE
Vladimir Putin	52.94
Gennady Zyuganov	29.21
Grigori Yavlinski	5.80
Anan Tuleev	2.95
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	2.70
Other candidates	2.58
Against all	1.88

**Is Russia.** It, too, was short on ideological positions and existed largely to support Chernomyrdin and his entourage. When he was forced to resign in 1998, the party’s fortunes plummeted. It won only 1.2 percent of the vote and five single-member districts in 1999. It probably will not survive.

Russia also has three parties that are typically considered reformist because they have been reasonably consistent supporters of efforts to forge a democratic state and a market economy. Together, they account for no more than a quarter of the electorate. Only one of them, Yabloko, has run in all three Duma elections. Another party, Fatherland–All Russia, is not considered a reformist party by all observers. All face uncertain futures.

**Yabloko** is the most consistent and persistent of the reformist parties. Yabloko (Russian for “apple”) is also an acronym for its three founding leaders, only two of whom are still with the party. Of the three reformist parties, it has taken the strongest stand not only in support of democracy but also for the retention of some form of welfare state, which makes it most like the Social Democratic parties considered in part 2. It is also the party that does the best among intellectuals, who were prominent supporters of Gorbachev’s reforms. Yabloko’s vote has dropped by one percentage point in each of the Duma elections. Its leader, Grigori Yavlinsky, announced that if the party did not win at least 6 percent of the vote in 1999 he would not run for president in 2000. It didn’t, but he did anyway—coming in a disappointing third and further harming his own reputation and that of the party.

The **Union of Right Forces** was created by another group of reformers who were more firmly committed to promarket policies than Yabloko. The most prominent of them, **Yegor Gaidar** and Anatoly Chubais, had been key architects of privatization and economic policy in general in the early Yeltsin years. When their previous party, Russia’s Choice, failed to break the 5 percent barrier in 1995, Gaidar realized that he had to build a broader coalition. The new Union of Right Forces hinted that Putin supported its economic plans and was therefore able to score a respectable 8.5 percent of the pro-

portional vote in 1999. The party's use of the word "right" in its name does not mean it is right-wing. Rather, the Russian term it uses, *pravikh*, has the same root as *pravda*, or "truth." Thus, "right" is used by Gaidar and his colleagues to suggest that they have the right or correct answers to Russia's political and economic problems.

**Fatherland–All Russia** is another new coalition party put together for the 1999 election. It may well not deserve to be called reformist, and it certainly is far more moderate than either Yabloko or the Union of Right Forces. It consisted of two groups. The first were supporters of Moscow mayor **Yuri Luzhkov**, who led most of the early polls in the run-up to the 2000 presidential election, and included many regional and republican governors (see the section on the state). But as Putin's popularity soared, Luzhkov felt he had to join forces with former prime minister and former KGB head Yevgeni Primakov. Their merged organization won 13 percent of the proportional vote and, not surprisingly given its regional roots, thirty-two single-member districts in 1999. However, this was far below what Luzhkov had been projected to win, and the disappointing result convinced him not to challenge Putin in 2000.

Finally, Russia has a number of political parties that can only be viewed as antidemocratic—or worse. The most prominent of them has been the **Liberal Democrats**, headed by the enigmatic, and some say dangerous, **Vladimir Zhirinovsky**. Almost everything about

him is murky. Despite his frequently anti-Semitic ravings, he is of Jewish origin. Some think he was also a KGB agent paid to infiltrate Jewish and dissident organizations during the 1970s and 1980s.

There is no debating one thing. He is a loose cannon whose often-frightening rhetoric struck a chord with a significant proportion of Russia's most alienated voters. Since he burst onto the scene in 1993, he has, among other things, done the following:

- Hinted that he would use nuclear weapons on Japan
- Advocated expanding the Russian border all the way to the Indian Ocean
- Invited French racist politician Jean-Marie Le Pen to a ceremony marking his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary
- Blamed Western governments and businessmen (in his case, it is always men) for the collapse of the Soviet Union
- Attacked just about every reformist politician in Russia (for instance, alleging that Yeltsin is in power only because of the CIA)

The Liberal Democrats have no local organization to speak of, which is the main reason the party was able to capture only one single-member constituency in 1995. The party's fortunes have declined since then as Russians have grown tired of Zhirinovsky's positions and



AP/Wide World Photos

An angry woman confronting Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky during a Duma debate on Russia's relationship with NATO in September 1995.

antics. It was technically ruled unconstitutional for the 1999 election and had to reformulate itself as the Zhirinovskiy Bloc. It saw its vote decline to a bare 6 percent in 1999, and then Zhirinovskiy won only 2.7 percent of the vote in 2000. It is too early to write the party off, because it does represent a significant if declining segment of public opinion. Nonetheless, at the very least, it is safe to say that Zhirinovskiy and the Liberal Democrats have passed their peak and, for the moment at least, are not a significant factor in day-to-day politics.

### A Balance Sheet

The Russian party system is likely to remain in flux. Given the impermanence of the parties and the fragmentation of the system, it is hard to imagine how Russia could develop a system anything like those we saw in Britain, France, or Germany in the foreseeable future.

The difficulties go far beyond election returns or party platforms. To illustrate this, consider the following television ads, which ran during the 1995 Duma campaign. Only Our Home Is Russia had anything approaching slick, Western-style commercials with rapidly changing and reassuring images backed by neutral-but-not-bland synthesized music. The other ads ranged from unprofessional to incompetent—to the degree that it was often hard to tell what the ad and the party were for. Some simply showed “talking heads,” and even then they were unable to keep within the time allotted to them. Some of the less-than-serious parties, of course, had less-than-serious ads. An ad for the Beer Lovers’ Party (0.62 percent of the vote) started with two old women looking disapprovingly at a drunken man staggering along a muddy path, a bottle of vodka sticking out of his pocket. One woman then said to the other: “This is not an acceptable way to drink.” Immediately the scene shifted to three men at a picnic on a sunny day, drinking beer. One man said to the others: “This is an acceptable way to drink.”

The Ivan Rybkin Bloc (Rybkin was the outgoing speaker of the Duma, and his party won 1.11 percent of the vote) ran one ad showing a conversation between two cows in which one (Ivan) tried to explain justice to the other by asking if (s)he had ever seen butter made from milk or eaten it. It ended with the first cow eating a slice of bread covered with butter and saying that they would all have butter with their bread if Rybkin was reelected. The Communists ran a simplistic piece in which they showed horror scenes from the Russian past and asked: “Who will stop this?” The answer was obvious. Yabloko had one of Isaac Newton (though the ad said it was Lord Byron) getting hit by an apple falling from a tree.

The most bizarre ads were made by the Liberal Democrats, who ran two remarkable spots. The first showed a

couple watching television in bed. Former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev came on; they said he was boring. Then came Gorbachev, and they said they had seen all that before. Finally it was Zhirinovskiy’s turn, and this time they said that this was more interesting even as their body language made it clear that more television watching was not on their agenda for the rest of the evening. The second took place in an upscale nightclub. After the singer finished her act, she was lured back onstage for an encore that was a much more upbeat song with the refrain, “Without you, this would be boring; Vladimir Wolfovich [as Zhirinovskiy is commonly known], you turn me on.”

That said, the trends are not all depressing.

To begin with, dozens of nongovernmental organizations—including the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and the British Conservative Information Office—have helped the reformist parties strengthen their organizations and improve their campaign techniques. The parties of power have enough money to buy those services from Western consultants.

The Russians have also been able to make some changes on their own. Even though the number of parties remains large and specific organizations come and go from election to election, the voters have actually settled into four or five rather stable families. Thus, the support for parties of power, the Communists, the various reformist groups, and regional power brokers in single-member districts has been about as constant as the vote for the major parties in western Europe. The fifth, and most uncertain, family consists of the antisystem parties, most notably the Liberal Democrats. However, they seem to be losing ground and are likely to continue doing so as economic conditions improve and as their largely older supporters die out.

Finally, the electoral reform passed in 2001 will almost certainly force many of the independents and leaders of small parties to cast their lot with the major national groups and thus add to the consolidation that has already occurred ([www.government.ru/english](http://www.government.ru/english)).



## The Russian State

Each of the countries examined in the rest of this book has one major difference from those discussed in part 2. They all have constitutions specifying how offices are structured, bills are passed, rights are ensured, and the like.

However, those constitutions matter less than they do in any of the industrialized democracies. In the case of Russia, as elsewhere, it is just as important to recog-

nize that certain institutions, some of which are not mentioned in the constitution, probably wield more power than the State Duma, cabinet, or any other legally authorized body. And it is a more fluid kind of power, determined as much by who holds which offices and what resources they have at their disposal as by the rules laid out in the constitution or any other legal document.

In other words, the sections on the state in the rest of the country-based chapters in this book will examine how decisions are made through two lenses. We will explore the institutions as laid out in the constitution. But we will also examine more of what goes on behind the scenes than we did for most of the industrialized democracies.

### *The Presidency*

The Russian Federation continued to use its old, communist-era constitution until 1993. Given Russian traditions and the rocky relations between President Yeltsin and what was then still the Supreme Soviet, it came as no surprise when he then wrote a constitution for a regime based on a strong presidency, much like the one in France. Indeed, there was every reason to believe that, were it to adopt a conventional parliamentary system, Russia would be even more divided and difficult to govern than France's Fourth Republic.

As we have already seen, the president is directly elected for a four-year term in a two-ballot system. Any candidate who gets a million signatures (which could be bought for a dollar apiece in 1996) can run on the first ballot. If a candidate gains a majority at the first ballot, he or she wins outright, as was the case in 2000. If, however, no one wins more than half of the votes cast, the first- and second-place candidates meet in a runoff two weeks later.

The president is all but completely independent of the Duma. There are provisions for impeaching the president, but it is extremely difficult to do so, as Yeltsin's opponents learned shortly after the constitution was adopted. The president appoints the prime minister and the other cabinet members. (See table 10.12.) The Duma can reject the president's choice, but if it does so three times, the president can dissolve the Duma and call for new elections. Thus, in 1998, Yeltsin fired Prime Minister Kiriyenko and tried to bring Viktor Chernomyrdin back in to replace him. The Duma voted the former prime minister down twice. It took the threat of new elections before the deputies and president agreed on a compromise candidate, Yevgeni Primakov.

The president can issue decrees that have the force of law in many policy areas. More importantly, the president runs an administration that is extremely centralized. Since the mid-1990s authority has been concentrated in the **power ministries**—defense, foreign affairs,

**TABLE 10.12** Russian Presidents and Prime Ministers

PRESIDENT	PRIME MINISTER
Boris Yeltsin (1991–1999)	Boris Yeltsin (1991–1992)
	Yegor Gaidar (Acting 1992–1993)
	Viktor Chernomyrdin (1993–1998)
	Sergei Kiriyenko (1998)
	Yevgeni Primakov (1998–1999)
	Sergei Stepashin (1999)
Vladimir Putin (2000–)	Vladimir Putin (1999)
	Mikhail Kasyanov (2000–)

interior (including the police), and the State Security Bureau (FSB)—and an informal body known as the Security Council.

At least since Chernomyrdin was replaced, the prime minister has exercised little independent authority, and the incumbent when these lines were written, Mikhail Kasyanov, is little known outside of the country. Government ministries are free to act more or less on their own as far as implementing policy is concerned. Nonetheless, for reasons that will become clearer when we look behind the scenes, they are not very good at implementing policy.

### *The Oligarchs*

Some people think that the real power in Russia is held by a tiny group of tycoons who have profited immensely from privatization and who have used their wealth to gain political leverage. The power of these **oligarchs** became clear toward the end of Yeltsin's first term in office when analysts began criticizing what they thought was the undue influence of what they came to call the "family"—a small circle of relatives and advisers who controlled access to and had tremendous influence over the president.

The most important member of the family undoubtedly was Tatyana Dyachenko, Yeltsin's daughter. And there is no doubt as well that Yeltsin's family made millions of dollars through shady deals, if not outright corruption, which led Putin to grant them all amnesty from possible prosecution in one of his first steps as acting president.

Although the Yeltsins have left the scene, the oligarchs haven't. No one outside the Kremlin knows exactly how many of them there are, how they made their money, or how much influence they have. Nonetheless, no one thought it was an outrageous overstatement when **Boris Berezovsky** declared in 1997 that he and six other businessmen controlled over half of Russia's GNP. Like Yeltsin's "family," the oligarchs undoubtedly gained much of their wealth through shady deals, if not outright

corruption. They also have sent much of their wealth abroad; in fact, they may have exported more capital from Russia than has been invested there by foreign businesses since 1991. What's more, they all have close, if not well-documented, ties to the Russian mafia.

Berezovsky's case is typical. Born in 1946 to a Jewish family that was part of Moscow's intellectual elite, Berezovsky earned a Ph.D. in mathematics and electronics, and then joined the prestigious Academy of Sciences, where he specialized in developing computerized management systems. He used his contacts to launch his first business during the Gorbachev years, and by the time the USSR collapsed, he was a major trader in automobiles, oil and gas, and the nationalized airline Aeroflot. As we will see in the section on public policy, the Yeltsin government virtually gave away shares in the nationalized industries it inherited. Berezovsky and the other oligarchs capitalized on this odd form of privatization to gain control over thousands of companies. Berezovsky controls companies in dozens of sectors but wields the most influence through his media holdings, including two of the most respected newspapers and the most widely watched television network, ORT.

It is no exaggeration to say that Yeltsin owed his reelection in 1996 to Berezovsky and the other oligarchs. Not only did they contribute vast sums of money, they controlled all the major media outlets, whose campaign coverage was extremely biased. They also are largely responsible for the creation of Unity and for Putin's meteoric rise.

However, Putin has not been as open to the oligarchs, and Berezovsky, in turn, has been critical of the president's reform plan. Another oligarch, Vladimir Gusinsky, has had a particularly hard time. After his television network, NTV, openly condemned Putin's plans, Gusinsky was arrested for corruption, and control of NTV was handed over to the still state-owned natural gas monopoly, Gazprom. After being released on bail, Gusinsky moved abroad. Berezovsky, too, ran afoul of Putin and joined Gusinsky in exile in late 2001. The fact that these two oligarchs now live abroad should not lead to the conclusion that they and their colleagues are without influence. Given their wealth and political connections, they remain important powers behind the scenes.

In short, the oligarchs remain a powerful force. There is no better indicator of this than Putin's stated commitment not to reconsider any of the privatization deals through which the oligarchs gained their millions.

### *The Parliament*

Until 1999 the parliament was the main counterweight to the presidency and, as such, frequently was a lightning rod in the intensely conflicted Yeltsin years. That



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Russian business tycoon and behind-the-scenes political power broker Boris Berezovsky at work.

does not mean, however, that the parliament has ever been all that powerful. In fact, the 1993 constitution was written in a way to minimize its likely impact.

As is the case in most of the democratic world, the parliament consists of two houses. The upper house, the **Federation Council**, has two members from each republic and region. But, like most upper houses, it can do little more than delay the passage of legislation.

The lower house, the State Duma, is elected much like the German Bundestag. As noted earlier, it has 450 members, half of whom are elected in 225 single-member districts. The others are chosen by proportional representation, though as in Germany, a party must win 5 percent of the vote from the proportional half of the ballot to gain any seats.

The Duma itself is a fairly wild place by Western standards. Deputies scream at each other, and walkouts are common, as are fistfights. By 1995 eighty-seven candidates either had been convicted of felonies or were under indictment.

More important for our purposes is the fact that the Duma does not have much real power. It cannot, for example, force the executive to enforce laws it passes, and it has only limited influence over the budget. In theory, the Duma has to approve presidential appointments, but Yeltsin was known to keep nominees in "acting" positions for upwards of a year. Most importantly, the Duma has no effective ability to cast a vote of no confidence and force a prime minister and cabinet out of office. It also can do little to remove a president.

As table 10.9 showed, the Communists and other opponents of reform controlled the Duma following the first two elections. They used that base to block many policy proposals requiring legislative approval and to

## Democratization in Russia

**ALTHOUGH INSTITUTIONS matter, focusing on them can obscure the most important point about Russia's fledgling democracy. Constitutional provisions and the rule of law pale in comparison with what political scientists call the "personalization of leadership" around Yeltsin, Putin, and the other top leaders.**

**Perhaps it should not come as a surprise that a man who spent the first thirty-five years of his professional life clawing his way up the Communist Party hierarchy would find it natural to create a "top-down" style of leadership when the going got rough. Nonetheless, by the time of the 1996 election, it was clear that neither Yeltsin nor any of his leading rivals could be said to be committed democrats. Indeed, all the major candidates favored maintaining the personalization of power around a strong presidency in ways that are not likely to strengthen democratic institutions or the rule of law.**

**There is little evidence that things on this extremely important but hard-to-measure front have changed appreciably during Putin's first few years in office.**

keep reformist nominees from taking or holding onto office. With the emergence of Unity in 1999, however, the role of the Duma has changed. Putin and his cabinet by no means have the kind of disciplined parliamentary majority we find in Britain's House of Commons. Nonetheless, the Duma has eagerly passed all of Putin's major legislative initiatives, including laws that reduced the power of the republics and regions, restructured the party system, and reduced taxes.

### *The Bureaucracy*

The Yeltsin team would have preferred purging the bureaucracy of the officials who had been the glue to the old communist system, especially those in policy-making and security positions. In practice, however, this would have been all but impossible because the country lacked trained personnel to take their place. Consider education, for example. The old regime had relied heavily on the schools in its attempts to shape public opinion and create a docile population. Teachers were expected to support the party line. The curriculum and textbooks presented official party positions not only in the mandatory courses in Marxism-Leninism but also in the examples used by textbook writers to teach first-graders reading or arithmetic. As much as they might have liked to, government officials lacked the resources to replace all those teachers and books.

In areas such as the Foreign Ministry and the various agencies that replaced the KGB, many top officials did lose their jobs. However, even in those organizations, there are many people left from the old days whose loyalties are by no means certain (and who can therefore be used to staff the plots of post-cold war spy novels).

There is some concern today about the impact of the security services, most notably the Federal Security Bureau (FSB), which is the main body that replaced the Soviet-era KGB. This is the case because of Putin's background. He spent his entire career in the KGB during the Soviet era, was brought to Moscow (at Berezovsky's urging) to run the FSB, and has appointed a number of security officials to top posts in his government. The security services also may be influential because it has *kompromat*, or compromising material on all leading officials, including Putin.

### *The Judiciary*

Prior to 1991 the Soviet judiciary was little more than a cog in the party machine. The situation was not as bleak as it had been under Stalin. Nonetheless, the legal system lacked the provisions that sustain an independent and impartial judicial system and the rule of law.

The new Russian republic has tried to rebuild a judicial system that invariably found defendants guilty and historically relied on "show" trials in high-profile cases. Most notably, it established a Constitutional Court to deal with cases involving legal principle. Similarly, there is now a Supreme Court that serves as a final court of appeal in criminal, civil, and administrative cases. Both have been reasonably active. The Constitutional Court, for example, played a major role in determining how the 1993 referendum on the key institutions and policies was conducted. More importantly, both courts have been highly politicized, because their judges are named by the president and by the heads of the two houses of parliament, respectively, each of whom is reluctant to appoint anyone he cannot count on.

In the long run, what happens in everyday judicial life—given the many abuses that occurred during the Soviet years—may prove to be more important. And despite the difficulty in retraining the entire legal profession and/or recruiting a new generation of attorneys, considerable progress has been made. Although 65,000 people claimed they were illegally detained in 1994, fully a third of them were released from jail on the basis of a court order. A few defendants who were falsely accused have won cash settlements from the state prosecutor's office. There have even been a few hundred jury trials—the first since 1918. Still, the Russian government faces an uphill struggle on this and many other

## BORIS YELTSIN



© Laski Diffusion/Getty Images

Boris Yeltsin's first public appearance after suffering his second heart attack in less than a year.

**B**oris Yeltsin was born in Siberia in 1931. Like most Soviet leaders of his generation, he was well educated, beginning his career as a civil engineer. He soon turned to full-time party work and rose through the ranks in the city of Sverdlovsk, which has since returned to its precommunist-era name of Ekaterinaberg.

Yeltsin was brought to Moscow in 1985 and put in charge of the Moscow party organization (a prize position) and made a member of the Politburo. He soon became one of the country's most outspoken and radical reformers. For instance, he openly criticized party leaders for their privileged and lavish lifestyles. By 1988 he had gone too far for Gorbachev and was stripped of all his major party and state posts. In 1990 he quit the Communist Party at what turned out to be its final congress. The next year, he was elected president of the Russian Republic, which had previously not been a particularly important post. But with his personal popularity and the position he took in opposition to the August 1991 coup, Yeltsin soon became by far the most powerful politician in the USSR as it collapsed and then in the new Russian Federation.

He was less successful as president. His years in office were marred by economic difficulties, ethnic unrest, corruption, and, of course, questions about his own health and sobriety.

fronts. To cite but one example, in 1995 there were only 28,000 prosecutors and 20,000 independent attorneys, most of whom were trained under the very different Soviet legal system.

### *The Federation*

On paper the Soviet Union was a federal system formed by union republics that had joined it voluntarily. The constitutions adopted over the years—again on paper—guaranteed certain political and cultural rights to the republics. There were even provisions outlining procedures for seceding from the USSR.

But these provisions existed only on paper. Until the Gorbachev years, party leaders in Moscow determined policy for the subnational units, just as they did everything else. This changed, however, in the late 1980s. Pent-up hostilities in the non-Russian republics, and then in Russia itself, erupted and proved to be one of the most important reasons the USSR disintegrated.

Some observers thought that the creation of fifteen new countries would ease the ethnic tensions. However, because none of the new republics is anywhere near homogeneous, most have faced serious internal difficulties.

The Russian Federation is no exception. In some instances, most notably Chechnya, the Russian government has been no more successful than its Soviet predecessor in quelling ethnic unrest. However, on balance, it has been able to defuse much of the pressure from the regions.

The minority population consists of hundreds of ethnic groups, the largest of which, the Tatars, makes up only 4 percent of the total. Russia has basically kept the complex maze of regions delineated along ethnic lines that it inherited from the Soviet Union. There are twenty-one autonomous republics and sixty-eight other bodies with various titles that are defined as “subjects of the federation.”

Relations between Moscow and many of the republics and regions were quite tense in 1992. Tatarstan declared itself a sovereign state. Leaders in what was then Checheno-Ingushetia refused to carry out Russian laws. Fighting in Georgia spilled over into the Russian republics in the north Caucasus. The situation was by far the worst in Chechnya, where civil wars raged from 1994 to 1997 and 1999 to 2000, cost well over 100,000 lives, and took a terrible toll on the government's legitimacy at home and abroad.

Chechnya may prove to be the exception rather than the rule. In the aftermath of the 1993 coup attempt in Moscow, the overall situation began to improve. There was a growing awareness in most of the autonomous republics that full independence was not a viable option. Only Tatarstan and the impoverished Bashkyria had more than 3 million people; eleven had fewer than 1 million.

As a result, the government has negotiated a nationwide Federation Treaty and a series of bilateral agreements with eight of the republics. Komi, for example, was granted special powers to deal with its environment, which had been heavily contaminated by wastes from the petrochemical industry. Yakutia won concessions allowing it to keep profits from the sale of its diamonds and other minerals. The tiny but once independent Tyva gained the right to secede. Other such agreements have been worked out to give more autonomy to the forty-nine provinces not defined in ethnic terms, most of which are in the more highly populated western third of the country.

But there may be trouble ahead for these subjects of the federation. Putin has also pushed through reforms designed to weaken the power of the republics' and regions' governors. Many of them had turned their jurisdictions into personal fiefdoms, all but ignoring Moscow's policies and regulations. So, in May 2000, Putin established seven new "federal districts" between the national government and republics and regions, each of which is headed by a presidential representative. The Federation Council also has been weakened. Finally, a new law gives the president the power to remove a governor if he or she refuses to harmonize local law with national policy or the constitution.

### *The Military*

In studying Russia, we also have to consider an institution that was ignored in part 2 but that will feature prominently in the rest of this book—the military. Under the Soviets, the military was not actively involved in politics, other than in trying to increase its piece of the budgetary pie.

So far, this has largely been true in postcommunist Russia as well. Yeltsin survived the 1993 coup attempt because the troops he called on were loyal to the regime. They attacked the White House even though one of the leading conspirators, Vice President Alexander Rutskoi, was a former air force general and one of the few heroes of the Afghanistan war.

However, many commentators are worried that the military might not stay out of politics. Yeltsin needed support from another prominent former general, Alexander Lebed, to win in 1996. More importantly,

there have been rumors of frustration within the military. This is hardly surprising in a country whose past influence was largely a function of its military might, which has disappeared virtually over night. Officers are worried, too, because so many of their comrades are suffering economically. Thousands of serving officers are not being paid and have been forced to moonlight in other jobs to make ends meet. Moreover, many in the military are not happy about the instability of recent years, and there have even been occasional rumors about a military coup. So far, however, the military, *per se*, has largely stayed on the sidelines, and its biggest impact has been as a source of possible future leaders who might not necessarily be committed to democracy.

### *The Bottom Line*

Power is far more dispersed now than it ever was during the Soviet era. (See figure 10.3.) Putin has tried to centralize authority in his own hands. However, it is hard to imagine the Kremlin regaining the virtually total control it had before Gorbachev came to power. Indeed, the very plural bases of power in Russia today suggest a country that is in more danger of stagnation than of dictatorship. As Arkady Dvorkovich, a young deputy minister and committed reformer, put it, "The key people are not adequate; it is not organized. We pass the plan and then nothing happens."<sup>4</sup>

### **Public Policy**

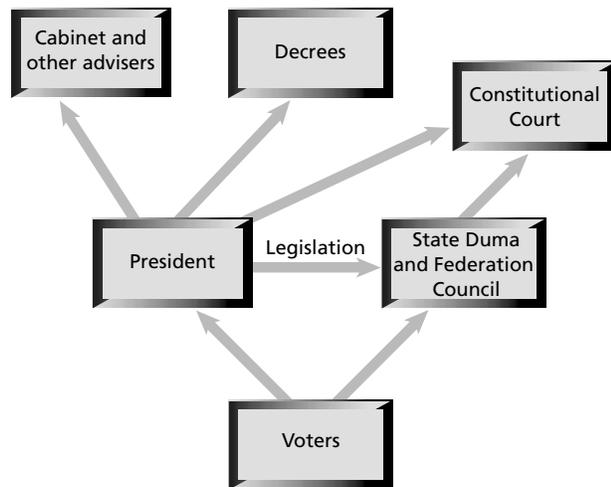
**N**ot surprisingly, the Yeltsin and Putin governments have struggled to define and implement public policy. Although this has been the case in all the former communist countries, Russia has had a particularly hard time, as we saw, for instance, in table 9.4.

### *The Economy*

By far the most important, and the most problematic, policy area is the economy. To see why, simply recall how much the economic deterioration contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The new Russian leaders faced a dual challenge. First, how would they shift from a centrally planned economy in which the state owned virtually everything to one based on private ownership and a market

<sup>4</sup>Edward Lucas, "Putin's Choice: Survey, Russia," *Economist*, 19 July 2001, [http://www.economist.com/surveys/displayStory.cfm?Story\\_id=622829](http://www.economist.com/surveys/displayStory.cfm?Story_id=622829), accessed 5 August 2001.



**FIGURE 10.3** Decision Making in Russia

orientation? Second, how could they ensure that the fruits of these changes—when and if they came—would be shared by all Russians?

Yeltsin and his team were initially committed to sweeping economic reform as the only viable response to the appalling conditions they inherited. However, like everything else in the former Soviet Union, actually carrying out reform was easier said than done. To begin with, there were no historical examples of transitions from centrally planned to market economies for them to draw on. Add to that Yeltsin's own personal lack of decisiveness, perhaps magnified by his many illnesses, and the result was a government that was usually unwilling and unable to follow any consistent economic policy.

Politically speaking, Russian economic policy has revolved around the struggle between two groups. The reformers, including most professional economists and the Western experts who have been brought in as consultants stress the importance of a rapid and complete shift to a market economy. Their preferred policy was shock therapy, but even its strongest advocates acknowledged that it would have tremendous costs for many Russians in the short term.

The conservatives, in contrast, want to proceed much more slowly. They stress the fact that the *laissez-faire* approach has not been all that successful in the West, where all countries have had to turn to a welfare state to help cushion the impact of capitalism's uneven development on the less fortunate.

Proponents of the two approaches are not distributed randomly in Russian society. On the one hand, almost all reformers were in the Yeltsin camp and have never gained much support either in the parliament or

the country as a whole. The Duma, on the other hand, has been dominated by the rejuvenated Communist Party and others who preferred a "go-slow" approach, at least until Putin's victories in 1999 and 2000.

Conservatives were not the only obstacle facing the reformers. Given the domination of the Communist Party over education prior to 1991, most reformist economists, like former acting prime minister Yegor Gaidar, were self-trained and inexperienced. Therefore, in a move that has drawn criticism at home and in the West, the reformers drew on a relatively unrepresentative group of Western neoclassical economists who urged them to move rapidly to a free-market economy, whatever the costs to people and enterprises in the transition.

In 1991 and 1992, deteriorating economic conditions, the popularity of Yeltsin and his administration, and the as yet untested but theoretically elegant predictions of the professional economists tilted the balance toward shock therapy. This led the first Yeltsin governments to emphasize privatization, which has taken two forms.

The first occurred spontaneously, mostly among small firms in the service sector. About 95 percent of the restaurants, shoe repair stores, gas stations, barber shops, and other such businesses that existed before 1991 now have private owners, usually the men and women who managed them under the Communists. Other people have formed upwards of 20,000 small firms, also mostly in the service sector.

Such "bottom up" privatization would not have worked for the gigantic industrial enterprises that dominated the Soviet economy. Potential individual investors could not come up with anywhere near the capital to buy these firms. And most were of dubious value because they would have had to be gutted and completely restructured before they could turn a profit. As a result, the government adopted a different approach to privatizing these large enterprises, using a system of vouchers made available to the public. In 1992 all citizens got a voucher worth 10,000 rubles (then about \$25), which they could sell, use to buy stock in privatized companies, or invest in larger funds that bought and managed shares in those companies. Most chose the third option, which means that these new bodies, which are roughly equivalent to American mutual funds, have become the owners of most of the stock that was offered for sale on the open market.

Shares were also made available to the firms' managers—in other words, to men and women who had been part of the old communist elite. The new owners/managers have thus enriched themselves and, in the process, have strengthened their links to the new state, which is not exactly what the orthodox economists had in mind when they urged the government to privatize.

Finally, shares in most enterprises being privatized were offered to foreign investors. At first, there was relatively little interest because the companies were inefficient (at best) and because Russian law limited how much of a stake foreigners could have in companies. After 1993, however, the investment and legal climates both improved, and foreigners pumped an average of \$100 billion per year into Russia over the next five years. Outside investors, for instance, own about 90 percent of the shares of AO Volga, which produces a third of Russia's newsprint. The privatized firm is managed by Germans, who are changing its operations so that it can export more of its product to markets where it might earn more profits.

Do not equate privatization with success for radical economic reform. Simply taking enterprises out of public ownership does not necessarily mean creating a competitive market economy. In part because managers were able to gain control over so many companies and because investment funds bought up most of the vouchers, there is a tremendous concentration of wealth in the Russian economy, which led to the creation of the powerful oligarchs and their conglomerates.

Even shock therapy's strongest supporters acknowledge that in the short term it causes many people to lose their jobs or see their incomes shrink. However, few expected Russia to suffer as much as it has. The Russian economy deteriorated tremendously, with overall production declining by an average of more than 6 percent per year during the 1990s. The decline was particularly pronounced in heavy industry, which had been the mainstay of the old Soviet economy.

A few million people have done quite well in post-Soviet Russia, but most have not. To cite but one example, the giant Uralmash heavy machinery factory has lost more than 20,000 jobs and will almost certainly shut down altogether because there no longer is any real market for its products. The official unemployment rate in the late 1990s was 12 percent, but the real figure was much higher once people who had left the workforce or could only find part-time jobs were taken into account.

The changes can be seen most graphically in the amazing decline in the value of the ruble. Under the Soviets, the ruble was not a convertible currency, because the government artificially fixed the value of a ruble at \$1.60. When I was there in 1986, people could buy and sell rubles on the black market at about 20 rubles for a dollar. In mid-1997 it took 5,500 rubles to get a dollar, and when these lines were written in early 2002, it took over 30,000. (In practice, it was 30 to a dollar, because the Russians had introduced a new ruble that was worth 1,000 of the old rubles on which these values were calculated.)

Polls show that a majority of Russians prefer economic stability over reform. At least until 1999, their frustration fed the vote of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and other parties that had qualms about Yeltsin's economic policy.

There were signs that the economy had reached rock bottom in 1997, but the country was shaken the next year by its worst financial crisis yet. The government had borrowed billions of dollars after 1991. For a variety of complicated economic reasons, Russia could not pay its debt and for all intents and purposes defaulted on the loans. The stock market lost half and the ruble two-thirds of its value. Two prime ministers were fired because they could not end the crisis. Finally, new loans and a new stabilization package imposed by Western governments and the International Monetary Fund slowed the decline.

Since then, there have been tentative signs that shock therapy Russian-style may finally be working. The economy actually posted modest gains from 1999 through 2001. The benefits have been particularly pronounced for those in the modernized portions of the privatized industries. Nonetheless, it will be years before Russia reaches the levels of wealth and production of the late Soviet period, and there seems to be little the government can do to speed that growth process up.

### *Foreign Policy*

One might have expected Russia to have similar difficulties with its foreign policy. After all, at the beginning of 1991, it was one of the world's two superpowers. A year later, it was no more than a relatively minor player in international affairs and a supplicant for economic aid. To make matters even worse, it had to develop relations with fourteen states that had been part of the Soviet Union and that many Russians still felt were rightfully part of their country.

The Russians have occasionally given observers in the West reason for concern about their foreign policy. The ravings of politicians like Vladimir Zhironovsky have received a lot of attention in the press and among right-wing politicians on both sides of the Atlantic. Yeltsin's occasional anti-American statements and more frequent diplomatic gaffes worried people who saw him as the West's biggest hope for stability. And Russia unquestionably has been less than vigilant about the movement of nuclear technology across its borders and the disposal of nuclear waste.

Still, on balance, Russian foreign policy has been largely pragmatic. Rhetoric aside, Yeltsin and his team adapted to their position as a middle-level power,

developed reasonable relations with their neighbors, and began putting as much emphasis on economic as on geopolitical issues in their foreign policy. We can see this if we focus on relations with the United States.

It was hard for both Russian and American foreign policymakers to adapt to the new postcommunist world. American leaders in both the first Bush and the Clinton administrations, however, took for granted that the United States needed to maintain a positive working relationship with the new Russian state. At first, they felt that way because there was genuine enthusiasm about Yeltsin and his role in the collapse of communism. However, as Yeltsin's flaws became ever more obvious, American and European leaders sought to distance themselves from him even as they realized that the alternatives were worse.

They were not worried that Russia would pose the same kind of threat to the United States and its allies that the Soviet Union had. Indeed, the United States and Russia reached a series of agreements to dismantle more than a third of their nuclear arsenals and stop targeting each other. Moreover, the Russian government was so poor, and morale in the army was so low, that it could no longer be thought of as having a fighting force that could have an impact far beyond its borders.

Rather, the United States and its allies worried that instability in the region and aggression from Russia could exacerbate already difficult situations in such places as Chechnya, Yugoslavia, and Moldova, and even as far away as the Indian subcontinent. Furthermore, they had to pay some attention to the fears of postcommunist leaders in eastern Europe, who were not convinced that Russia had given up all its designs over them.

As a result, the United States and Russia have had a sometimes tense and sometimes cordial relationship in which the Americans have normally cast their lot with Moscow despite some very important sources of friction. U.S. support for Russia has included the following:

- Aid in dismantling Russian nuclear equipment
- Incorporation of Russia as a permanent member of the annual G-7 (now, of course, G-8) annual summit
- Provision of substantial economic aid and investment from the public as well as the private sector
- Training and other assistance in developing democratic institutions

Russian-American relations took an unexpected turn for the better after the events of September 11. Presidents Putin and Bush discovered new common ground on terrorism-related issues. The Russians realized that they shared concerns about terrorism with the Americans when it emerged that al-Qaeda personnel had fought in

Chechnya and that Chechens had participated alongside the Taliban during the fighting in Afghanistan. Washington, in turn, realized that it needed to use bases in several of the former Soviet republics, most notable Uzbekistan, all of which were heavily dependent on Moscow for their defense. Not only did the United States and Russia cooperate in the initial stages of the war on terrorism, but their overall relations improved. In particular, the two countries moved closer to an agreement on changes to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty that would allow the United States to move forward with its plans for a missile defense system.

In early 2002, however, the relationship began to sour again. Among other things, the Russian government did not share the American perception that Iran and Iraq should be considered potential targets in the next stages of the war on terrorism. This disagreement burst into the open when President Bush called those two countries and North Korea the "axis of evil" in his state of the union address.

## Feedback

**B**efore Gorbachev came to power, the Communists controlled everything that was legally printed, published, or broadcast. There was a tiny underground, or *samizdat*, press, but its circulation numbered in the tens of thousands, at best.

Almost overnight, there was a revolution in the media that Soviet citizens had access to. The world's most closely state-controlled media became its most contentious. By 1988 almost anything that could be said was being said on the airwaves. New newspapers, magazines, and journals were published, many of which were critical of everything and everyone.

This has continued since 1991, with but one important exception. Most of the media are now in private hands, although the two main television networks are still government-owned and a third is controlled by the city of Moscow. Otherwise, the media are coming to resemble their profit-seeking equivalents in the West.

This hardly means that they are apolitical. There were serious accusations that the state television was openly biased toward Yeltsin in the 1996 election. Moreover, most of the eight major industrial groups have controlling interests in one or more of the media outlets. In short, the press may be legally free, but it is no more open to dissent from below than its American equivalent, most of which is also owned by giant conglomerates.

There is also growing evidence that most Russians are turned off by the nastiness of political coverage in the media.

## Conclusion: Half Empty or Half Full

Of all the countries covered in this book, Russia comes closest to reflecting the cliché about whether the glass is half empty or half full. This is the case because, even after a decade of transition, it is impossible to predict whether Russia will develop a stable democracy and a prosperous market economy.

On the “half empty” side are all the problems laid out in this chapter. Indeed, after analyzing the industrialized democracies in part 2, it is hard not to be pessimistic given Russia’s social, economic, and political difficulties, many of which have worsened since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

But we should not ignore the “half full” aspects of Russian life. It has had five reasonably fair and competitive elections. There was a successful transition of power from Yeltsin to Putin. The oligarchs are at least slightly less powerful, and their two most notorious members have been forced into exile. There are signs that the economy has started to recover.

Nonetheless, there really is only one conclusion we can reach about Russia, one that will apply to many of the other countries we consider in the rest of this book. The transitions to democracy and market capitalism are rarely easy.



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## Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Democratic centralism	Berezovsky, Boris	CPSU	Bolsheviks
Glasnost	Brezhnev, Leonid	KGB	Central Committee
Near-abroad	Chernomyrdin, Viktor	CPRF	Cheka
Nomenklatura	Gaidar, Yegor		Comintern
Oligarch	Gorbachev, Mikhail		Communist Party of the Russian Federation
Perestroika	Khrushchev, Nikita		Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Power ministries	Lenin, V. I.		Fatherland–All Russia
Privatization	Luzhkov, Yuri		Federation Council
Purges	Putin, Vladimir		Five-year plan
Shock therapy	Stalin, Joseph		Gosplan
	Yeltsin, Boris		Liberal Democrats
	Zhirinovskiy, Vladimir		Mensheviks
	Zyuganov, Gennady		Our Home Is Russia
			Politburo
			Provisional government
			Russian Federation
			Secret speech
			Secretariat
			State Duma
			Third International
			Twentieth Party Congress
			Union of Right Forces
			Unity
			Yabloko

### ***Critical Thinking Exercises***

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of Russian politics presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the “right direction” or is on the “wrong track.” If you were asked such a question about Russia, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?
3. The Soviet Union was often referred to as a “party state” ruled under “democratic centralism.” What do those two terms mean? How did they shape the USSR? How did they contribute to its collapse?
4. How did the history of tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union contribute to the difficult beginnings of the new Russian Republic?
5. In this book, you have encountered a number of influential individuals. How would you compare Boris Yeltsin's impact with any one or two of those other leaders?
6. Russia is having a hard time establishing effective institutions, democratic or otherwise. Why do you think this is the case?
7. Russia faces a serious problem of “gridlock” between a conservative and communist-dominated State Duma and a more reformist executive. How has that affected its ability to enact economic and other reforms?
8. If you were hired as a consultant to an American (or other Western) firm thinking of investing in Russia, what would your advice be?

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# CHINA

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- What Kind of Communist Party?
- Thinking About China
- The Evolution of the Chinese State
- Political Culture and Participation
- The Party State
- Public Policy: Perestroika Without Glasnost
- Feedback
- Conclusion: Kadan or Communism?



## *Black cat, white cat, what does it matter as long as the cat catches mice?*

DENG XIAOPING

### What Kind of Communist Party?

On 1 July 2001 one of the more intriguing events in the generation-long history of reform in China occurred. President and **Chinese Communist Party (CCP)** leader **Jiang Zemin** made a surprising announcement during a two-hour speech at a ceremony in Beijing's Great Hall of the People. Capitalists would now be allowed to join the CCP.

In fact, party officials estimated that already 113,000 of the 64.5 million members owned businesses. But they had all formed their firms after they had joined the party.

The ban on business members dated from Communist Party Order Number 9, issued in the weeks after the 1989 crackdown on prodemocracy demonstrators at **Tiananmen Square**. At the time, Jiang echoed the sentiment of most party officials: "If we let people who aren't willing to give up exploitation and who depend on exploitation for their livelihood to join the party, what kind of a party would we be building?"<sup>1</sup>

Twelve years later, Jiang struck a very different tone by declaring, in the elliptical language typical of Chinese political life, "We cannot simplistically use whether people have property and how much property they have as a criterion to determine whether they are politically advanced or backward."

Jiang and his colleagues were responding to the changing reality of political, economic, and social life in China. In 2000 about 20 percent of China's GNP was produced by wholly privately owned firms, which had created over 4.5 million jobs. Joint public-private ventures accounted for another 30 percent of GNP. A growing number of state-owned companies are shutting down because they cannot compete either with privately owned Chinese companies or with foreign firms. The shift toward the private sector will only accelerate now that China has joined the World Trade Organization.

Pressure for change had been building in the party for at least a year. Advocates of opening it up argued that

<sup>1</sup>All quotes in this section from John Pomfret, "China Allows Its Capitalists to Join Party," *Washington Post*, 2 July 2001, A1, A14, and Craig S. Smith, "China's Leader Urges Acceptance of Capitalists in Communist Party," *New York Times*, 2 July 2001, A1, A9.

### CHINA: THE BASICS

Size	9,595,960 sq. km (a bit smaller than the United States)
Arable land	10 percent, down one-fifth since 1949
Population	1.25 billion
Population growth rate	1.1%
GNP per capita	\$780
Currency	8.28 yuan = \$1
Life expectancy	72
Ethnic composition	92% Han Chinese
Capital	Beijing
Head of state	President Jiang Zemin (1993)
Head of government	Prime Minister Zhu Rongji (1997)

the capitalists were the most dynamic members of Chinese society and that the CCP needed them. Allowing businessmen and -women in is yet another sign that the party understands that the best it can hope to do is to create a country whose dominant ideology—and political party—embodies a mixture of capitalism and Marxism.

Some hard-liners objected. A regional party official said that "if these people really join the party they will use their strength to first seize power within the party and to change the party's nature." Another put it far more bluntly: "Capitalists in the Communist Party? You've got to be kidding."

After a generation of economic reforms, the party's hold on people's lives had also declined, as was evident in everything from growing access to noncommunist media to the corruption of many high-ranking party officials and their relatives. Relations between the CCP and at least parts of the population were frayed, most notably in the efforts to repress the Falun Gong spiritual movement.

Still, China's political situation is almost exactly the opposite of what we saw in the former Soviet Union and Russia. In China the Communists remain in charge politically, largely because they have succeeded—so far, at least—in creating a more market-driven economy while blocking anything like glasnost or democratization. Yet, we have to ask if there is anything Marxist left in a Chinese communism that admits capitalists so that the country can be as wealthy and powerful as the countries covered in part 2.

There is plenty of debate over how much continuity and how much change there is in contemporary China.



President Jiang Zemin.

The one thing we can say with certainty is that for the past quarter-century the Chinese leadership has pursued the pragmatic line hinted at in the quote by **Deng Xiaoping** that begins this chapter. Deng was the behind-the-scenes leader who dominated the party from the late 1970s until his death in 1997. Like most Chinese politicians, he rarely directly said what he meant. In this case he was not really talking about cats, but about his support for any economic system that would catch mice—or, in other words, make China richer.

## Thinking About China

### *The Basics*

#### The World's Largest Country

China's most important characteristic is its size. The **People's Republic of China (PRC)** is by far the world's most populous country, with upwards of 1.2 billion people, or more than one-fifth of the world's population. The government has engaged in largely successful attempts to limit population growth. Some 74 percent of women of childbearing age use contraceptives, compared with only 5 percent in Myanmar (formerly Burma) and 35 percent in India. Nonetheless, a baby is born somewhere in China every two seconds, and estimates

## CHINESE NAMES AND TERMS

As with Japan, issues involving the Chinese language can easily confuse readers and thus should be clarified at the outset.

Chinese names, unlike those in Japan, are always rendered with the family name first. In other words, George Walker Bush would be written or spoken Bush George Walker.

Failure to remember this can be embarrassing. For example, the first time President Harry Truman met Chiang Kai-shek, he reportedly greeted him, "Glad to meet you Mr. Shek."

There are also two primary ways of transliterating Chinese terms. Almost everyone writing about China uses the pinyin system its leaders prefer. People in Taiwan and Hong Kong still use the Wade-Giles version. I have used pinyin for all names and terms other than those associated with Taiwan and the Nationalists.

now suggest that the Chinese population will reach 1.5 billion in the next half-century.

China's huge population is stretching the country's limited natural resources. In all there are only about two acres of land—or an eighth of the Asian average—per person, and only a fourth of that is arable. There also is a severe water shortage for both human consumption and irrigation. And the limited land and water are being gobbled up by new housing and industrial development at an alarming rate.

Unlike the former Soviet Union, China has a relatively homogeneous population. A total of 92 percent of the people are Han, or ethnically Chinese. The rest of the population consists of far smaller groups, but with the exception of the Tibetans and the Uygers, minority nationalities have not been politically important. Although there is a single written Chinese language, there are tremendous differences in the way it is spoken. Someone who speaks only Mandarin, for instance, cannot understand Cantonese and other southern dialects. Gradually, however, Mandarin is becoming the lingua franca and is now spoken by almost all educated people.

#### The Middle Kingdom

The two characters the Chinese use to denote their country (middle kingdom), as well as one of the ones they use for foreigners (barbarians), tell us much about their country. Some sense of national superiority is a part of every culture, but in the case of China, it has played an especially important role. Though less so than

in Tokugawa Japan, Chinese leaders closed themselves off from outside influences for most of the last millennium. Until early in the twentieth century, for instance, examinations that tested a student's ability to memorize Confucian texts were used to determine entry into the all-important civil service. More recently, the leadership's concerns about Western cultural influences were reflected in the 1983 "antispiritual pollution campaign" that attacked people who used makeup or listened to rock and roll. As the consumerism of modern capitalism sweeps so much of the country, the leadership worries that the traditional—and implicitly superior—Chinese values will be lost and the country harmed as a result.

### Poverty and Prosperity

China remains a very poor country despite all the progress that has been made since 1949. Per capita income is about \$780 a year, a figure substantially below that of Mexico. However, it is more than four times higher when measured in terms of purchasing power parity, which some think is a better indicator of actual living conditions. That said, the Taiwanese standard of living is substantially higher than the PRCs, which is probably more important than any statistic to many Chinese citizens.

Despite the continued overall poverty, the Chinese have made remarkable strides in overcoming the country's social and economic ills. Life expectancy has leaped to 70, far above the Asian average. Three-quarters of the population is literate, compared with the Asian average of 40 percent. Only 6 percent of Chinese babies—but 30 percent of India's—are born dangerously undersized. For the past decade or so, China also has enjoyed a remarkable economic boom. In the mid-1990s, before the Asian economic crisis hit, the Chinese economy grew by an average of about 8 percent per year, and industrial production increased by close to twice that rate. A dozen or so years ago, Andrew Walder described how dramatically life in China has changed (and the numbers for the early 2000s would be five to ten times those of 1987):

**In the late 1970s, the Chinese urban consumer aspired to own a wristwatch, a foot-powered sewing machine, a name-brand bicycle, and a transistor radio. By the mid-1980s, such items were commonplace, and the consumer could realistically aspire to own a color television, a washing machine, refrigerator, or a tape recorder–stereo. From 1978 to 1987, ownership of television sets increased 38-fold; of refrigerators, 131-fold; and the number of washing machines grew from around 1,000 to 5.7 million.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup>Andrew Walder, "The Political Sociology of the Beijing Upheaval of 1989," *Problems of Communism*, Sept.-Oct. 1989, 34.

The recent growth has thus produced millions of newly rich Chinese men and women, though they make up only a tiny proportion of the total population. In the countryside prosperous peasants really should not be called "peasants" anymore because they may employ dozens of workers, earn hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and drive luxury cars. The newfound wealth is even more evident in the cities. The middle class can shop at Benetton or eat in the world's largest McDonald's. And cellular phones and beepers have become status symbols.

### Key Questions

Jiang Zemin and his colleagues govern a China that is in almost the exact opposite situation as the one Gorbachev faced in the late 1980s. The reformists in the former Soviet Union went a long way toward opening up their political system but foundered in their attempts to implement perestroika. The growing economic frustrations and the greater opportunities for people to participate politically combined with ethnic and other tensions put so much pressure on the regime that it collapsed.

The CCP's leaders, in contrast, have limited their reforms to the economy and have maintained their tight grip on political life. On those rare occasions when they have allowed a modicum of free expression, they have clamped down as soon as the protests began to threaten the party's authority—as in Tiananmen Square in 1989 or with the public demonstrations of the Falun Gong since the late 1990s.

In the medium to long term, the question is whether the party can keep doing this. There are already signs that it is having trouble recruiting talented young members and that its organization is atrophying in many places. More importantly, the economic reforms are transforming the lives of millions of people, who are growing used to making their own choices in the marketplace. So far, most Chinese have been willing to accept policies that limit that freedom to economic matters, but there is reason to believe that they will eventually demand political power as well. It is by no means clear that the party will be able to hold off such demands save, perhaps, by giving the **People's Liberation Army (PLA)** a substantial role in maintaining order.

Because only a handful of communist countries are left, what happens in China will go a long way toward determining the future of Marxism in general. It is very much an open question whether any Marxist-Leninist regimes will survive. Moreover, as the Chinese experience of the 1980s and 1990s suggests, we will have to ask whether societies that maintain Leninist states but allow their economies to become ever more capitalistic will

bear any real resemblance to the type of egalitarian and classless society Marx envisioned.

From these broad concerns flow four more specific questions we will concentrate on here:

- Can the Chinese leadership realistically hope to limit the impact of the outside world to economic issues? As the Chinese people learn more about other cultures and have more money to spend, won't they begin to demand political freedoms as well?
- Will the state continue to be able to put down protests like the one in Tiananmen Square in 1989, especially if they become larger or more violent?
- What will happen if the CCP continues to have trouble recruiting talented and dedicated members who could become its future leaders?
- Jiang Zemin and his colleagues are popularly referred to as the "third generation" of CCP leaders. But they are in their late sixties or their seventies, and most are scheduled to retire from at least their official positions in the next several years. What will the next, fourth generation be like?

## The Evolution of the Chinese State

As was the case with Russia, we cannot understand the reformist policies in China today or, for that matter, the half-century of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule without considering the impact of the country's past. We will see that its distinctive version of a Marxist-Leninist state is in part an outgrowth of historical trends that made China less-than-fertile ground for anything approaching orthodox Marxism. As in the Soviet Union, the CCP's commitment to Marxism was not one of the most important reasons it came to power. Indeed, as was also the case in the USSR, those other reasons go a long way toward explaining why China evolved as it did after the revolution.

### *The Broad Sweep of Chinese History*

The historical roots of contemporary Chinese politics go back nearly 3,000 years to the teachings of Confucius and other ancient scholars whose ideas have had a remarkable influence on culture and hence politics in this day. (See table 11.1.) Commonly thought of as a religion in the West, **Confucianism** is actually as much a code of social conduct that revolves around a few key principles. People should accept their place in the social hierarchy,

**TABLE 11.1** Key Events in the Origins of the People's Republic of China

YEAR	EVENT
551 B.C.	Birth of Confucius
221 B.C.	Start of Qin dynasty
1644	Start of Qing dynasty
1839–42	Opium War
1894–95	Sino-Japanese War
1898	Imperial reforms begin
1911	Overthrow of the Qing dynasty
1919	May Fourth Movement
1921	Formation of the CCP
1925	Death of Sun Yat-sen
1927	KMT attack on CCP
1931	Japanese invasion of Manchuria
1934–35	Long March
1949	CCP victory; KMT flees to Taiwan

and the living should respect their ancestors, women their husbands, children their fathers, and everyone their social and political superiors.

The Chinese also developed the world's first large and centralized state in the third century before the birth of Christ. The militaristic Qin (from whom the English word *China* is derived) defeated most of the other regional kingdoms and established a single unified empire covering most of modern China. The Qin emperors were able to mobilize thousands of people to build canals, roads, and the first parts of the Great Wall.

The Qin and subsequent dynasties succeeded in large part because of the remarkable bureaucratic system. Two thousand years before Europeans even considered a civil service based on merit, the Chinese had a well-established system of examinations through which a bureaucracy that served the emperor was recruited. By the fourteenth century, at least 40,000 bureaucrats were responsible for collecting taxes and administering imperial law throughout the country. The civil servants often competed with local landlords who had their own armies. Nonetheless, the imperial bureaucracy was an indispensable part of a country that had to support more than forty cities of over 100,000 people, including several of more than a million as early as the seventeenth century.

When China had effective emperors in place, things went well. However, this was not always the case. China went through cycles in which a dynasty declined, rebellions broke out, and, eventually, a new group solidified its hold on the national government, creating a new dynasty. In all, there were twenty-five of these dynastic changes in the 2,000 years leading up to the collapse of the last dynasty, the Qing, in 1911.

The Qing was, in fact, a Manchurian dynasty that took over in 1644. Quickly, however, the Qing adopted

the Chinese language and customs, and ruled through the traditional imperial system.

By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the Qing had entered a period of decline. The population was growing faster than agricultural production, leaving an overstretched peasantry and an often hungry urban population. Peasant rebellions broke out over much of the country. More important were the cultural blinders that led the Manchus to look upon Chinese traditions as superior and to ignore the industrial revolution and the other trends that were transforming the West.

Early in the nineteenth century, Europe came crashing in anyway. Though China never became a colony, European and American missionaries, traders, and soldiers gained considerable control over its affairs. The British, who had been smuggling opium into the country, defeated China in the first Opium War (1839–42). The country was then opened up to missionaries and merchants. During the 1850s the loosely coordinated Taiping rebellion (led by a man who claimed to be Jesus' younger brother) broke out.

During the rest of the century, all the major European powers moved in. A few areas, like Hong Kong, passed directly into European hands. More often, the Europeans took effective control of much of coastal China and imposed the principle of **extraterritoriality**, which meant that their law, not China's, applied to the activities of the Europeans.

The Chinese were humiliated. The government lost any semblance of authority, and the once proud and powerful civilization saw itself under the sway of Christians and capitalists. Parks in Shanghai, for instance, often carried the sign "No dogs or Chinese allowed."

Things came to a head after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. As we saw in chapter 8, Japan had been even more isolated from events in the West, but once Admiral Perry arrived in 1854, the Japanese embarked on a rapid and successful program of modernization. Even though the Chinese continued to look upon their neighbor to the east as a second-rate power, Japan was rapidly becoming one of the world's mightiest nations. After winning the war and seizing control of Taiwan and Korea, Japan gained concessions within China itself, thereby joining the Western powers in their de facto imperial control of much of the country.

By the end of the century, Chinese leaders belatedly realized that they had to change. The educational system, for instance, was still based on the traditional Confucian curriculum, which left China without the industrially and scientifically trained elite it would need to meet the challenge from the West.

The traditional examinations were discarded. Young people were sent abroad to learn about what **Chen**

**Duxiu**, later one of the founders of the CCP, called "Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy." Dissatisfaction with the imperial system grew. Young people adopted Western dress and Western values. Movements calling themselves democratic began to organize.

During the Hundred Days' Reform of 1898, the emperor issued decrees designed to modernize the education system, the economy, the military, and the bureaucracy. Instead, the reforms provoked resentment from the elite and were halted almost immediately following a coup that sent the emperor to prison and doomed any hopes of a Chinese equivalent of the Meiji Restoration.

Some reform efforts did continue. But as in tsarist Russia, they came far too late. In fact, all the reform proposals did was further reveal China's weaknesses and heighten opposition to the imperial system. Universities that had so recently educated loyal Confucian scholars were now turning out revolutionaries.

### *A Failed Revolution*

As was the case in Russia at the same time, China had more than its share of revolutionaries. Between May 1907 and April 1911, there were eleven failed military coup attempts launched by the followers of **Sun Yat-sen** alone.

Sun (1866–1925) was one of the first Westernized intellectuals and one of the first Chinese people to be photographed wearing Western clothes. While still in his twenties, he decided that the situation in China was so grim that he became a full-time revolutionary. In 1895 he was exiled for his role in an abortive plot and spent most of the next sixteen years abroad, raising support for the series of failed coup attempts. In 1905 a group of radical students in Tokyo elected him head of the Revolutionary Alliance, which soon became the **Kuomintang (KMT)**, or **Nationalist Party**.

On "double ten" day (10 October 1911), yet another rebellion broke out, this time in the city of Wuhan. Much to their surprise, the conspirators drove the governor-general from the city and took it over. In Denver at the time, Sun decided to stay in the United States and finish his fund-raising tour rather than return to China for what he assumed would be another failure. This time, however, the rebellion spread throughout the country without a single shot being fired. When Sun finally returned in December, it was to take over as president of the new Republic of China.

As in Russia, toppling the old regime was one thing, and building a new one to take its place quite another. The regime had fallen not because the revolutionaries were so strong, but because it was so weak.

The revolutionaries had only their nationalism and their opposition to the imperial system in common.

Within months their differences came to the fore, and central authority began to crumble once again. Unlike in Russia, however, it would be another forty years before a new regime was firmly in place.

In an attempt to save the revolution, Sun gave way to a **warlord**, General Yuan Shikai. Yuan was briefly able to bring the country together under what amounted to a personal dictatorship, but his own imperial pretensions simply spawned more rebellions. All hopes to unite China around a strong, authoritarian leader collapsed when Yuan died suddenly in 1916.

From then on, there was a central government nominally under KMT control. In reality, it never had control over much of the country. Instead, power devolved to dozens of warlords, who ran the regions they controlled with only the slightest concern for doing what the KMT wanted or for modernizing the country. In short, the political situation remained as volatile as it had been a generation earlier.

The next real break came in 1919 after the publication of the Treaty of Versailles. Like Japan, China had entered World War I on the Allied side on the assumption that Wilsonian principles of democracy and national self-determination would lead to the end of imperialism. But nothing of the sort happened. The German concessions were simply transferred to other Allied powers.

This proved to be the last straw for alienated, well-educated young people. The day the treaty's provisions were announced, thousands of students took to the streets. Their **May Fourth Movement** quickly sounded broader themes—against Confucianism, the education system, and the family. Magazines like Chen Duxiu's *New Youth* gained a wide following among this generation, which was even more frustrated by China's failure to modernize. After May Fourth, the students and their supporters grew more political, but this particular movement, like so many before it, was poorly organized and gradually lost momentum.

## *China Stands Up*

It was not terribly surprising that many young people would turn to Marxism. Even though Marx argued that socialism could only develop out of capitalism, his ideas seemed to speak to the oppressed everywhere. What's more, Lenin had incorporated imperialism into Marxist analysis, and the radicalized Chinese students could easily relate to the Soviets' struggle against the Western European powers.

In 1921 twelve delegates, representing fifty-seven members, met to form the CCP, first headed by Chen Duxiu. The party was composed almost exclusively of young intellectuals, and, like the rest of the international

communist movement, it quickly fell under Moscow's direct control.

The KMT, too, drew inspiration from the Bolsheviks, who, in turn, were convinced that the Nationalists were the faction Moscow should cast its lot with in China. KMT officers were trained by the Soviets, including **Chiang Kai-shek**, who would take over the party after Sun's death in 1925. Mikhail Borodin, the Comintern's agent in China, ordered the CCP to merge with the KMT to unify the country.

Meanwhile, the Communists' influence expanded among industrial workers in the big cities in the south and became a major force within the KMT. Tensions between the CCP and the Nationalists mounted as the Communists grew in strength and numbers, but overall the center of gravity in the KMT shifted rightward. Chen and some of the other leaders urged an end to the united front, but Moscow prevailed.

Along with its communist supporters, the KMT launched the Northern Expedition in 1926 in another attempt to unite the country under a single national government. Support for the CCP continued to mushroom. Workers threw open the gates of a number of cities as communist forces approached. Chen advocated arming workers and peasants under CCP leadership, but Borodin demurred again.

The conflict between the CCP and KMT finally came to a head in April 1927, when Kuomintang forces attacked their supposed CCP allies in Shanghai. Nationalist troops slaughtered thousands of CCP members, including most of the leadership. Of the 50,000 CCP members in early 1927, only 5,000, including Chen Duxiu, survived.

Just before the attack, one of the few party members from a peasant background, the little-known **Mao Zedong** (1893–1976), had published a short pamphlet reporting on what he had found in his native Hunan province. Mao argued that, given the opposition of China's overwhelmingly rural population and the KMT's control over most cities, the revolution had to be based on massive mobilization in the countryside and conducted as a guerrilla war.

Because of his peasant background and the time he had spent in the countryside during the 1920s, Mao was better able than the other surviving CCP leaders to draw two key lessons from the Shanghai massacre. First, revolution in China was not going to come through spontaneous uprisings in the cities. Second, it would take years to organize the only kind of revolution that could work: one based on the peasantry.

Ignoring Borodin's orders, Mao launched his first attacks on the city of Changsha that fall. This Autumn Harvest Uprising was quickly put down, and the CCP



Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai during the Long March.

leadership as a whole was slow to come around to Mao's views. Mao persisted anyway, establishing the first "base camp" along the Hunan-Jiangxi border.

The KMT responded by launching a series of campaigns to "exterminate the communist bandits." CCP forces survived the first four campaigns, but during the fifth, they were surrounded by a massive force of KMT troops. Mao realized that conventional warfare was bound to fail, so in October 1934 a small group of communist soldiers launched a diversionary counterattack while the bulk of their forces, numbering about 100,000, broke through the KMT cordon to the west.

Mao's bedraggled troops then embarked on what became the **Long March**, which lasted almost a year. The CCP forces fought skirmishes every day and full-scale battles every few weeks against either the pursuing KMT or local warlords. The fighting and the difficulties of the march itself took a horrible toll. Only 10 percent of the troops who started out were still alive when the army arrived in Yanan in October 1935. Among the dead was one of Mao's sons.

Ironically, the Long March proved to be a stunning success for the CCP. All along the way, the party organized. Members talked about a China based on justice

and equality. More importantly, unlike the bands of marauding soldiers who had come and gone over the centuries, they treated the peasants well. No men were conscripted, and no women were abused. The CCP paid for the food and supplies it took. Where the CCP gained control, large estates were broken up and the land given to the peasants. Taxes were reduced, and the arbitrary power of the landlords was eliminated.

In January 1936 the Politburo elected Mao chairman of the CCP, a post he would hold until his death in 1976. With this move, all notions that a Marxist revolution could be based on a large, urban proletariat disappeared. Although Mao always paid homage to Lenin, gone, too, was the Leninist notion that a revolution could be carried out by a small vanguard party. In its place was the more populist **mass line**, which Mao described at length in 1943:

**In all practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses, to the masses." This means take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are preserved and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas become more correct, more vital and richer each time.<sup>3</sup>**

Note that the Chinese revolution bore even less resemblance to Marx's expectations than the Russian one did. Certainly, the CCP leadership was inspired by Marx's analyses, and Mao's writings were always couched in Marxist terms. Nonetheless, the CCP took even greater liberties with Marxism than the Bolsheviks did.

The Chinese Communists did make a remarkable contribution, turning Marxism into a philosophy that appealed to millions of peasants in Asia, Africa, and Latin America after 1949. Still, the fact that China was even more backward than the Russia of 1917 meant that the kind of transition to socialism based on the redistribution of the resources of an affluent society that Marx had in mind was impossible.

There was yet another reason the CCP ultimately won: its resistance against Japanese aggression. Around

<sup>3</sup>Mao Zedong, "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership," *Selected Works*, Vol. 3 (Beijing: Foreign Language Press), 119.

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## THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHINESE STATE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Unlike in the former Soviet Union and most of eastern Europe, communists came to power in China as a result of a massive popular revolution. However, this does not mean they did so in a way Marx anticipated.

Rather, the revolution succeeded because the CCP could appeal both to the oppressed peasants and to people from other walks of life who wanted to resist the Japanese occupation. As a result, the CCP took China even further from orthodox Marxist expectations than the Soviets did. Over the years,

1895 Japan joined the countries with imperial designs on China, which generated considerable resentment in particular among the Chinese intellectual community. Japanese troops invaded Manchuria in 1931, and by 1935 they had taken control of much of northern China, including well over half the country's industrial base.

Chiang Kai-shek knew that the Chinese army was not capable of beating the Japanese, and so he retreated to the south while trying to build a modern, more competitive army. During the Long March, however, the CCP decided that it would fight, something it set out to do as soon as the Yanan camp was established.

In late 1936 a group of disgruntled generals took Chiang Kai-shek prisoner. Communist leader **Zhou Enlai** (1899–1976) was consulted and called for Chiang's release in order to form a new united front to fight the Japanese. From 1937 to 1945, the KMT and CCP were ostensibly allies once again. In practice, however, the KMT was always ambivalent about both forming a united front and fighting the Japanese. As a result, the CCP got most of the credit for spearheading the resistance, in the process expanding its base of support. Adding themes of nationalism and anti-imperialism to its message of social justice, the CCP became quite appealing in almost every social milieu.

The Communist army grew from 80,000 in 1939 to about 900,000 regular troops and 2 million reserves by 1945. The CCP also gained considerable administrative experience in the fifth of the country it controlled.

Still, when World War II ended, the KMT seemed way ahead. Its army was much larger, and it received millions of dollars of aid from the United States, whereas Stalin did next to nothing to help the CCP. But in early 1946 the disciplined Communist army, headed by **Lin Biao**, gained control of Manchuria and started moving south. By the end of 1947, guerrilla war had given way to

the country was characterized by reliance on the mass line (discussed shortly), emphasis on rural development, the central role attached to culture and ideology, and factionalism within the CCP itself.

It was thirty years before the party's leaders decided that those approaches could not pull the country out of deeply rooted poverty and weakness. Thus, it was only after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 that the first tentative steps toward economic, but not political, reform were taken.

full-scale conventional combat, and the tide was turning in favor of the CCP.

By the summer of 1949, KMT forces had been routed. Only a few scattered troops were still fighting when Chiang and the Nationalist leadership fled to Taiwan. In October 1949 the Communists proclaimed the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The victory marked the end of one of the darkest periods in Chinese history, something Mao eloquently noted in a speech a week before the PRC was born:

**The Chinese have always been a great, courageous, and industrious nation; it is only in modern times that they have fallen behind. And that was due entirely to oppression and exploitation by foreign imperialism and domestic reactionary government. Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up.**<sup>4</sup>

### *Factionalism*

As we saw in the chapters on France, Germany, Japan, and Russia, the creation of the current regime does not mark the point at which we should stop examining it. Rather, it makes sense to continue our discussion up to the point at which a degree of stability and continuity in political decision making and policy implementation was achieved.

In China it took thirty years. During that time leadership shifted back and forth between more moderate, orthodox leaders and radicals who wanted to take the country toward socialism as quickly as possible. Twice, during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural

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<sup>4</sup>Cited in Witold Rodzinski, *The People's Republic of China: A Concise History* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 13.

## MAO ZEDONG



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Mao was different from the sophisticated intellectuals who led the CCP in its early years. His father was a fairly successful peasant who ran his family with an iron fist. Mao began working in his father's fields at the age of six, but because his father wanted to make certain that at least one of his children could read and write enough to keep the family books, he sent his son to school. The young Mao was an excellent student and graduated from teacher's training college in 1918. He then moved to Beijing, where he took a job at the university library under Li Dazhao, who, along with Chen Duxiu, was to found the CCP. Mao experienced May Fourth in Beijing and soon returned to his home region and began organizing.

Mao might never have become a major CCP leader were it not for the tragedies that hit the party in the 1920s and 1930s. The 1927 attack by the KMT forced the CCP to consider a peasant-based strategy—an approach that was confirmed by the Long March. Mao's leadership of the party was only once seriously questioned in the forty years between the end of the Long March and his death.

As more information has been gathered about Mao's personal life and the disruption of the Cultural Revolution, assessments of his historical role have become far more critical. Nonetheless, he certainly will always be thought of as one of the most influential Marxist analysts and political leaders of the twentieth century.

Mao Zedong and his fourth wife, Jiang Qing, in 1945.

Revolution, the radicals under the leadership of Chairman Mao took the country to the brink of disaster. It was only with the death of Mao that the moderates gained control of the party and state and set the country on the path of economic reform, which it has followed to this day. (See table 11.2.)

Then and now, the Chinese system closely resembled the Soviet one Gorbachev inherited, at least on paper. The CCP has a legal monopoly on political power and dominates all areas of policy making and implementation. It is also based on **democratic centralism**, which theoretically means that internal disagreements are kept to a minimum if they are allowed to exist at all.

The CCP, however, has never been able to escape those internal disagreements and, at times, has actually had loosely organized **factions** supporting different ideological viewpoints and leaders. When the political pendulum has swung most widely between them, the struggle has led to attacks on key party and state institutions.

It also has propelled groups such as regional leaders and the military onto political center stage. Most importantly, the struggle often led to the personalization of power around the "supreme leader"—even more than in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death.

The CCP did not start out divided. From 1949 until the late 1950s, what differences there were among leaders had virtually no impact on party life or the country as a whole. Mao Zedong commanded the support of the entire party. Moreover, no one in the CCP questioned the assumption that they would establish a Soviet-style Marxist-Leninist regime, just as in every other communist country in the world.

So, the CCP announced a First Five-Year Plan in 1953 that channeled more than half the available investment funds into heavy industry. As in the Soviet Union, the heaviest burdens fell on the peasants, who were driven into ever larger units and forced to sell their grain to the state at predetermined prices. Meanwhile, a con-

**TABLE 11.2** Key Events in Chinese History Since the Revolution

YEAR	EVENT
1949	CCP takes power
1956	De-Stalinization in Soviet Union begins
1956	Hundred Flowers Campaign
1957	Great Leap Forward
1960	Demotion of Mao Zedong
1965	Beginning of Cultural Revolution
1972	Opening to United States
1976	Deaths of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong; formal end of Cultural Revolution
1978	Democracy Wall
1983	Anti-spiritual pollution campaign
1989	Democracy Movement and Tiananmen Square
1997	Reversion of Hong Kong to PRC
1997	Death of Deng Xiaoping

stitution was promulgated in 1954 that centralized power even further and led to a rapid expansion of both state and party bureaucracies.

The PRC also quickly established an international role squarely within the Soviet-dominated world communist movement. It seems to have had no choice. In 1950, without any apparent input from the Chinese, North Korean troops invaded the southern half of the Korean peninsula and occupied Seoul. The United States was able to convince the United Nations (the Soviets boycotted the Security Council on the day of the crucial vote, and Taiwan still held the Chinese seat) to send UN troops dominated by the United States into Korea. The Chinese had little option but to support their fellow communists in the north. As the UN troops approached the Yalu River, separating China and North Korea, the PRC decided it had to intervene, and its troops—with substantial Soviet military aid—fought until the end of the war three years later.

This “Soviet” phase of the PRC’s history was not to last long, however. Serious qualms about the Soviet Union and the relevance of the Soviet model lurked just below the surface.

Nikita Khrushchev’s “secret speech” in 1956 brought these concerns into the open. In it, he admitted that there could be multiple “roads to socialism,” thereby opening the door for the CCP to pursue its own strategy. However, the Chinese leadership found the rest of the speech highly disconcerting. Its attack on Stalin’s **cult of personality** did not sit well with a leadership that stressed Mao Zedong’s thoughts and actions. More importantly at the time, the new openness of the world communist movement gave the CCP leadership an opportunity to vent its resentment toward the Soviets, which had been building since the days of Borodin.

Within months the Chinese and Soviets were taking verbal potshots at each other. Mao referred to Khrushchev’s reforms as “goulash communism” that was taking Soviet-bloc countries further and further from Marxist goals. Most of the time, however, the early Sino-Soviet debate was couched in elliptical terms—with the Chinese attacking the Yugoslavs when they really meant the Soviets, and the Soviets doing the same thing with the Albanians, the only European Communist Party to ally with the PRC.

By the end of the decade, the Soviet Union had withdrawn all its advisers and cut off its economic and military aid to the PRC. During the late 1960s and the 1970s, there were even skirmishes along the long border separating China and Siberia. It was only in the late 1980s, with the rise of reformist leaders in both countries, that any substantial steps were taken toward healing this **Sino-Soviet split**.

For our purposes, the split was important because it allowed the CCP to develop its own policies and address its own problems. The most important of these problems was the factionalism that developed around both ideology and, eventually, the role of Chairman Mao. From 1956 until the 1980s, Chinese politics was little more than a battle between two factions: the Maoists and the more moderate or orthodox Marxists.

The first open signs of the rift came with the **Hundred Flowers Campaign** in 1956. Intellectuals were given considerable freedom to express themselves, much as in the “thaw” in the Soviet Union. Far more than the Soviets, the CCP traditionally relied on **campaigns** in which the party sought to mobilize the masses to meet its goals, which have ranged from eliminating flies and other pests to reshaping Chinese culture. In this campaign Mao used a traditional phrase—“Let a hundred flowers bloom and a thousand points of view contend”—in urging the people to speak their minds. They did just that in ways that soon worried Mao and the wing of the leadership that crystallized around him.

The Hundred Flowers Campaign was quickly brought to an end. The following year, Mao and his supporters moved in the opposite direction and called for a **Great Leap Forward**, through which the Chinese were to make rapid progress in the transition to socialism and communism. The campaign was based on the assumption that they could do so if and only if the Chinese people threw all their energies into the effort. Therefore, the move toward collective agriculture was accelerated. An attempt was made to incorporate everyone in the process of industrialization—for instance, by building small backyard furnaces on the collective farms. Intellectuals, who in Mao’s eyes had become suspect during

the Hundred Flowers Campaign, were expected to engage in manual labor that would bring them closer to the people. More generally, Maoists took the “red” side in the **red-versus-expert** debate in which the factions disagreed about the relative importance of ideological and technological factors in China’s development.

The Great Leap Forward turned out to be a disaster. Industrial production declined precipitously. Experimental programs, like the one that called on farmers to build their own smelters, were abject failures. The situation in the countryside was particularly chaotic, and in the hard winter of 1958–59, as many as a million people starved to death.

As the evidence about the failure of the Great Leap Forward began to pour in, the debates within the party heated up. Leading the charge was Peng Dehuai, head of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and a Politburo member, who wrote a letter to Mao in July 1959 attacking the campaign. An enlarged Politburo met later that month to consider Peng’s criticism. Mao threatened to go to the countryside and start another revolution if Peng’s views prevailed, and he was able to summon up enough support to have Lin Biao take Peng’s place as head of the PLA.

Mao’s victory was short-lived. Within a year he had been forced to give up his position as chairman of the PRC and lost much of his influence in both the party and state bureaucracies. The more moderate wing of the leadership, led primarily by **Liu Shaoqi**, who was named Mao’s successor-designate, and Deng Xiaoping, reemerged on a more gradual and orthodox policy of industrial development during the first half of the 1960s.

For our purposes, understanding the issues in the debate are less important than the fact that it was occurring at all. It marked the first time that Mao’s leadership had been questioned, paving the way for the **Cultural Revolution** that was to do so much damage to the CCP and to China as a whole.

Scholars are still debating what drove Mao to embark on the Cultural Revolution. For someone who had been the architect of a popular revolution, there was good cause for concern in the early 1960s. The CCP was becoming increasingly bureaucratic and showed signs of developing the kind of conservative elitism that we saw in the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev era. Furthermore, there was a whole new generation of young people who had not experienced the trauma or the exhilaration of the revolutionary struggle. In short, Mao feared that China was becoming too self-satisfied and flabby.

The psychiatrist and historian Robert Lifton was the first of many observers to add Mao’s aging and its effects on his personality to the factors leading to the Cultural Revolution. To such analysts, Mao mixed to-



Chinese accused of being “capitalist roaders” being paraded through Beijing in 1967 during the Cultural Revolution.

AP/Wide World

gether concerns about his own mortality with those about the revolution that had been his life for almost a half-century. Another historian put it more bluntly and pejoratively: “Not only did his arrogance increase, his vanity did as well.”<sup>5</sup>

In the end, we will never know how much of Mao’s decision was a rational political response to the situation after the Great Leap Forward and how much of it was a quirk of an increasingly quirky personality. Nonetheless, almost immediately after his demotion, he turned to the only source of power he had left—the PLA. With its support, Mao launched the Socialist Education Movement in 1963, which again put ideology and mobilization on center stage.

Meanwhile, Lin Biao used his position as head of the PLA to create a cult of personality around Mao that dwarfed anything orchestrated by Stalin and his henchmen. Every imaginable accomplishment was attributed to Mao. His position in Marxist philosophy was equated with that of Marx and Lenin, and enshrined as what came to be called Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong thought. The ridiculous turned to the absurd when news stories about the seventy-year-old Mao swimming six

<sup>5</sup>Cited in, *A Concise History*, 97.

miles in an hour appeared on the front page of the PLA's daily newspaper!

In March 1966 Mao stepped up the pressure by attacking the Beijing party apparatus. Peng Zhen, then head of the Beijing party, was dismissed. In May 1966 Professor Nie Yuanzi put up the first *dazhibao*, (big-character poster) at Beijing University, urging revolutionary intellectuals to “go into battle” against the party bureaucracy. University officials quickly tore it down, but a few days later, Mao publicly endorsed it.

Professor Nie's poster brought the conflict within the party into the open. Liu and Deng realized that their positions were in jeopardy and counterattacked. They organized work teams to go to the universities to criticize Nie and Mao and to enforce discipline.

Their efforts failed. University and middle-school students formed groups of **Red Guards** to carry on the work of the Cultural Revolution. Within weeks they had paralyzed the nation's educational system. With Mao urging them to attack party members who also were **capitalist roaders** (those accused of opposing Mao), many of the Red Guards turned into vigilantes and vandals. Meanwhile, Mao attacked the CCP as “capitalist bureaucrats.” In August 1966 Liu was officially labeled “the leading person in authority taking the capitalist road” and Deng “the number two person in authority taking the capitalist road.” Liu, Deng, and thousands of others were arrested and sent either to prison or to the countryside. Liu would be the most famous of the countless thousands of Chinese citizens who died in this campaign. Deng (who was already in his mid-sixties) was forced to work as a machinist on a collective farm; one of his sons was either pushed or fell from a seventh-story window and has been confined to a wheelchair ever since.

New radical groups emerged around the country. Most famous was the Shanghai commune, organized by three relatively unknown men—Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Hongwen, and Yao Wenyuan—who were quickly promoted to positions of national prominence and who joined Mao's wife, **Jiang Qing**, in eliminating anything Western and nonideological from the theaters and airwaves.

Revolutionary “seizures of power” took place all over the country. Jiang urged her Red Guard faction to use weapons to defend themselves if need be. They did just that. Sometimes the violence was aimed at clearly political targets, but on all-too-many occasions, the young people were simply settling old scores or lashing out randomly at anyone who struck them as a symbol of the “bad” China.

Although it is hard to fathom just how disruptive the Cultural Revolution was, Harvard's Ross Terrill provides one insightful anecdote. It turns out that even trained

## Conflict in China

**CHINA HAS experienced more open conflict than any other communist country with the possible exception of Poland. And Chinese conflict has been dramatically different from that in Poland in two important ways. First, it has on occasion turned violent. Second, some of it has been orchestrated from above as part of the factional dispute within the CCP itself.**

**There has been less overt conflict in China since the Tiananmen Square demonstrations of 1989. Dissidents are occasionally arrested, but some of their colleagues are also occasionally released from prison. There have been press reports of strikes in many major cities, and there have also been violent outbursts in minority regions.**

**Undoubtedly, considerable resentment toward the CCP and its rule lurks just below the surface. Unlike Poland again, however, China has not seen the development of an independent opposition movement with strong grassroots support.**

circus horses were stripped of their lives of luxury and sent to work in the countryside. One group of horses was sent to a commune near a military base, where they worked dutifully until the bugles began to play, when they returned to the equine version of the capitalist road and performed a few of their old dance steps.<sup>6</sup>

By late 1967 it was clear even to Mao that things had gone too far, and he called in the PLA to restore order. Red Guards were to merge into “three-in-one” committees with the PLA and politically acceptable CCP members. But in a country that large, in which conditions were so chaotic, the disruption continued.

Moreover, the party continued to tilt dramatically to the left. Of the more moderate leaders, only Zhou Enlai remained. To make matters even more complicated, Lin Biao, who had been designated Mao's successor after Liu's fall, attempted a coup in 1971. Although details have never been made public, apparently Lin had either come to oppose the Cultural Revolution or had grown tired of waiting his turn to replace Mao. Along with his wife, son, and other supporters primarily from the PLA, Lin hatched a plot to kill Mao. The plot failed, and Lin perished in a plane crash while trying to escape to the Soviet Union.

By then, order had been restored, and the chaos of the Cultural Revolution was largely over. The **Gang of**

<sup>6</sup>Ross Terrill, *China in Our Times* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 65.

## ZHOU ENLAI



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Premier Zhou Enlai meeting and dining with President Richard Nixon's envoy, Henry Kissinger.

**Four**—as Jiang, Zhang, Yao, and Wang came to be known—still controlled cultural and educational affairs. The economy and administration, however, began to take center stage, and all but the most dedicated Maoists realized that China could not afford the disruption it had experienced in the late 1960s. This meant that the country's leading administrator and survivor, Zhou Enlai, became more influential.

In 1973 Zhou announced that China would concentrate on the **four modernizations**—agriculture, industry, science, and the military—that have been the focus of the country's official policy goals ever since. Although already terminally ill, Zhou was still politically strong enough to bring Deng Xiaoping back from exile to become deputy prime minister later that year.

In January 1976 Zhou died. On 25 March a Shanghai newspaper accused him of having been a capitalist roader—an accusation that evoked a tremendous response. Memorial wreaths began to appear in Tiananmen Square. And massive demonstrations were held in his honor, which were finally broken up by the authorities on 4 April.

When Mao died the following September, the mourning paled in comparison. His positions in the party and government were taken over by Hua Guofeng, a political unknown who proved unable to end the struggle between Deng and the Gang of Four. In the short run, it seemed the Maoists would be the winners. Deng was demoted again, and Hua tried to drape himself in Mao's

Zhou was born in 1899. Unlike Mao's family, Zhou's was part of the gentry, and his father had passed the traditional Confucian exams that determined entry into the bureaucracy. Like many privileged young people of his generation, Zhou went to Japan to study and returned to participate in the May Fourth Movement. He later continued his studies in France, where he became a Marxist.

Zhou's charm and sophistication enhanced the CCP's reputation with foreigners and Chinese intellectuals alike. Once the PRC was established, Zhou became prime minister, a post he held until his death. He was a conciliator, the one leading politician who held the respect of both factions and could, at times, build bridges between them.

Unfortunately, Zhou contracted cancer in the early 1970s and knew he would not live much longer. Still, he was able to gain enough support to launch the four modernizations and bring Deng Xiaoping back into the leadership.

political mantle, even combing his hair the way the chairman had in order to emphasize the physical resemblance between the two men.

Hua, however, was no friend of the Gang of Four. As a regional party official responsible for security in the late 1960s, he had seen the impact of their policies firsthand. Moreover, he realized that Jiang coveted his position. Therefore, he brought Deng back from political obscurity yet again and arrested the Gang of Four.

The Cultural Revolution was finally over, but its legacy remained. For a decade scientific and industrial development had been put on hold. In addition, a generation of students had been unable to go to school, so the country lost their potential contributions to social, economic, and cultural development over the course of their lifetime. Perhaps most importantly of all for the long term, the Cultural Revolution heightened the already substantial cynicism among large segments of the Chinese population.

### *Events Since Mao's Death*

Factionalism did not disappear with Mao's death. However, the conflict since then has not been as intense or disruptive.

By 1978 Maoism had been effectively destroyed with the arrest of the Gang of Four and the removal of Hua Guofeng from all positions of power. Ever since, power has been in the hands of party officials who had been moderates before the Cultural Revolution; many had

also been among its victims. Not surprisingly, they have downplayed ideological goals and embarked instead on what has now been more than two decades of reform featuring the introduction of private ownership and freer markets in much of the Chinese economy. They have done little, however, to open up the political system. In fact, they have quickly and harshly brought the few even vaguely liberalizing political reforms to a halt as soon as any signs that they might challenge the party's hegemony have appeared.

The post-Cultural Revolution leadership has been more unified than at any time since the mid-1950s. Still, there has been considerable division within it over the nature and pace of reform.

One group has favored moving toward a market economy as quickly and as fully as possible. It was also reasonably open to political as well as economic reform. Because its most visible leaders during the 1980s—Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang—were believed to be Deng's protégés, outside observers often saw him as part of this faction. The other group centered on Chen Yun, known as a strong advocate of central economic planning, and former prime minister Li Peng. The Chen-Li faction had more qualms about the disruptions reform can cause and so has backed less sweeping change and been more willing to clamp down on everything from protest movements to corruption.

Deng's role in this was always obscure, given that he championed both economic reform and continued party control. His critics called him part of a "wind faction" that changed its direction with each shift in the political breeze. It is more likely that Deng and his closest advisers shared some of the concerns of both groups and therefore tried to strike a balance in ways that changed along with the circumstances of the moment. As we will see in more detail in the rest of this chapter, the same has been true of Jiang Zemin and the others who have governed China since Deng ceased playing an active role in daily political life.

## Political Culture and Participation

In previous chapters, political culture and participation were treated separately following the logic discussed in chapter 1. Cultures generally reflect generations of political and other developments in the values of people living today. These values, in turn, help determine what those people do (and don't do) politically.

In China the link between the two is far more complicated, and the two feed off each other in ways we in the West are not accustomed to. Chinese political culture does reflect the same long-term impact of history

## USEFUL WEB SITES

The Internet in China is itself controversial. The government has so far succeeded in blocking access to sites that could provide citizens with information that could conceivably spur dissent. What's more, there are very few useful sites maintained in China itself. Last but by no means least, many of the best sites on Chinese politics have disappeared in recent years.

However, there are two good general portals to news and other information. One is China Today; the other is Inside China, which has been taken over by European Internet.

[www.chinatoday.com](http://www.chinatoday.com)

[www.europeaninternet.com/china/](http://www.europeaninternet.com/china/)

The Asian-America Society, the German-based Kontor project, and the Virtual Library all provide good sets of links to Internet-based material on China.

[www.asiasociety.org/](http://www.asiasociety.org/)

[www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/igcs/](http://www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/igcs/)

[www.chinakontor.de/I-chinese-politics.htm](http://www.chinakontor.de/I-chinese-politics.htm)

The Hoover Institution's Lyman Miller recently launched a project to track the Chinese leadership. The Rand Organization's James Mulvenon has done the same for security issues.

[www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/default.htm](http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/default.htm)

[members.aol.com/mehampton/chinasec.html](http://members.aol.com/mehampton/chinasec.html)

on people's values and assumptions about politics. However, as the discussion of the Cultural Revolution suggests, the culture itself has been politicized, especially when the Maoists were in power and actively tried to reshape it. Moreover, as in the Soviet Union before Gorbachev's time, the party has actively tried to manipulate political participation.

As with most of Chinese politics, much has changed since the death of Mao. Cultural campaigns are largely a thing of the past, and there are even competitive political campaigns in local elections in rural counties. However, it still makes sense to think of political culture and participation as more of a seamless web than we did for any of the liberal democracies covered in part 2.

## *A Blank Slate? A Cultural Revolution?*

Mao's greatest failures had their roots in his misunderstanding of his own people. He correctly realized that Chinese values would have to change if he and his

colleagues were to succeed in implementing Marxist ideals. However, he incorrectly assumed that it would be relatively easy to do so. Shortly after coming to power, Mao wrote:

**The two outstanding things about China's 600 million people are that they are "poor and blank." On a blank sheet of paper free from any blotches, the freshest and most beautiful characters can be written, the freshest and most beautiful pictures can be painted.<sup>7</sup>**

For those in the Maoist faction, cultural change was the top priority because they believed that socialist institutions could only be built by a people committed to socialist values. Most orthodox and moderate party leaders differed only in degree, arguing that cultural change was but one of a series of priorities and ranked below economic growth in importance.

Unfortunately, it is very hard to determine how much Chinese political culture changed—if at all. Cultures are always difficult to chart, because they include values and assumptions that people rarely think about and that represent what amounts to their political "second nature." Political culture has always been documented using public opinion polls and more in-depth observations of what people think and do by journalists and anthropologists. In China public opinion polling is in its infancy, and very few of the published results touch on issues of culture and change. We do have access to some first-rate anthropological studies and journalistic accounts, but even these barely scratch the surface of a complex question about a complex society. Therefore, everything that follows in this section should be read with even more skepticism than usual!

In one sense, Mao was right about the Chinese people being a blank slate. Prior to 1949 Chinese peasants, who made up the overwhelming majority of the population, were not politically involved other than paying taxes and getting caught up in the occasional war. Politics was something that concerned the landlords and magistrates, a view reinforced by Confucian values stressing group loyalty, conflict avoidance, and acceptance of one's place in the social hierarchy.

But this does not mean that they had no political values. We also know from the history of dynastic change and peasant rebellions that this neo-Confucian culture did not always "work." Violent uprisings occurred for much the same reasons they did in other countries with a tradition of peasant unrest. Generally, people tolerated the system. However, if a large number of peasants in a

given area came to the conclusion that the local scholarly elite was not performing adequately, respect for authority disappeared, and pent-up anger erupted into violence.

There is considerable evidence that much of this cultural tradition has persisted into the communist period. Studies carried out in some isolated rural areas suggest that peasants still generally defer to the authority of local leaders and that loyalty was rather easily transferred from the pre-1949 elites to CCP officials. Thus, many students and intellectuals who were "sent down" to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution expressed surprise at the willingness of the peasantry to accept them, even though they did not contribute much labor and stretched scarce local resources.

Reports persist, too, of the sense of resignation and the sullen anger that seem always to have been a part of peasant, and now working-class, attitudes in China. During the immediate postrevolutionary, Great Leap Forward, and Cultural Revolution periods, there were numerous accounts of peasants using the official ideology of the campaign as a cover to settle old scores with other peasants or former landlords. Some research on the Cultural Revolution and the Democracy Movement of 1989 also reports on what can only be called urban thugs, who used demonstrations as a pretext for vandalism and intimidation.

The early CCP tried to replace this inherited culture with a value system based on four main elements:

- **Collectivism.** This may well have been the easiest of the four to achieve, because Chinese culture has traditionally revolved around group loyalties to one's family or village. The CCP wanted to see that loyalty transferred to a broader and more inclusive institution—the party and state. From at least the time of the Hundred Flowers Campaign on, however, this transition clearly has been an especially hard one for intellectuals and others who are increasingly tempted by individualism as the society and economy modernize.
- **Struggle and activism.** Traditional values revolved around harmony and acceptance of the status quo. As part of Mao's notion of the mass line, the CCP wanted the Chinese people to participate in what the leadership clearly understood would be a bumpy transition to socialism. However, the party also saw participation not as something people did for themselves but as part of the collectivist goal of serving the people and fighting selfish tendencies.
- **Egalitarianism and populism.** Hierarchy was one of the key organizing principles in Chinese society

<sup>7</sup>Cited in Terrill, *China in Our Times*, 1.

prior to 1949. The CCP tried to end what it saw as the irrational subordination not only of the working class and peasantry but of women and younger people as well. Even recent policies that have created an extremely wealthy minority of the population are justified as leading to a more egalitarian future. Abolishing hierarchy does not, however, lead to a more individualistic society, but rather, again, to one in which people voluntarily serve the country as a whole. It should be pointed out that the CCP also reinforced hierarchical traditions with its imposition of a Leninist-Stalinist-style party state, which certainly minimized the degree to which egalitarian or populist goals could be reached or even pursued.

- **Self-reliance.** Finally, the Chinese tried to break with the traditional values that left most people dependent on the elite, waiting for instructions and leadership from above. Instead, the CCP tried to convince people that together they could control their own destinies. Over the years, self-reliance has taken on many forms, from the extreme, failed campaign for self-sufficiency during the Great Leap Forward to the ongoing efforts to modernize China with as little interference from abroad as possible.

Especially in the early years, the party relied on two main techniques for speeding up cultural change. The first was the state domination of all key agents of political socialization except for the family. As in the former Soviet Union, the CCP has total control over the education system and the mass media. Even today, the party uses the schools and media for overt political education. It even tried to undermine the power of the family by shifting many child-rearing activities to the *danwei*, or **unit**—the basic body assuring work, housing, and welfare to which most urban Chinese were assigned before economic reforms took hold.

The CCP also relied on mass campaigns more than the Communist parties did in what used to be the Soviet bloc. From the 1950s through the 1970s, the CCP initiated countless campaigns to rid the country of physical and social “evils,” from flies to homosexuality. The great movements, from the Hundred Flowers Campaign to the Cultural Revolution itself, were such efforts in which party leaders argued that success hinged on maximum participation for two reasons. First, in the absence of a large, trained, and reliable bureaucracy, the people were normally needed to implement any kind of sweeping new reform. Second, and more important for our purposes, the campaigns were invariably accompanied by political study sessions in which people were brought to-

gether to discuss the problem at hand and some relevant texts by Mao, and thereby deepen their understanding of and commitment to Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong thought.

Typical of the Maoist-era campaigns was the Socialist Education Movement, launched in 1963. After the failure of the Great Leap Forward, Mao was deeply concerned about what he believed to be the corruption and demoralization of rural party cadres. Mao and his followers prepared a statement about rural conditions that required **cadres**, or full-time party members, to participate in productive labor. As in most campaigns, this document was discussed in study groups around the country, and Maoist sympathizers used it to foster popular criticism of the cadres and to put pressure on them to adopt a more Maoist point of view.

Neither the campaigns nor the broader efforts to create a “new socialist man” were all that successful. There was a lot of cynical and self-interested participation in them. Many of the 17 million young people sent down during the Cultural Revolution came to resent their exile and the system that sent them there.

These efforts, however, do seem to have been far more successful than their equivalents in the former Soviet Union. There, for example, university students were required to take courses in Marxism-Leninism, but these were treated as unfortunate requirements by both the faculty who taught them and the students I saw who slept or knitted through the classes. In China a far larger (though, alas, unknown) proportion of the party members who conducted the “education” and the average citizens who “learned” from them appeared to have taken those exercises seriously. As a result, the CCP probably did succeed in forging a regime that was seen as legitimate by most elements in Chinese society, at least until the Cultural Revolution. Although the regime may not have come close to creating a society committed to Marxist and Maoist values, improved living conditions seem to have led most people to be satisfied, if not with the current leadership, then at least with the way things have evolved since 1978.

Even the Democracy Movement of 1989 worked on the assumption that democratic institutions could *and should* be built within the existing socialist order. Unlike many of their counterparts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the students who first occupied Tiananmen Square and engaged in the hunger strike cast their demands explicitly in patriotic terms, arguing that socialist democracy required the elite to be open to criticism from the people.

We should not make too much of either the CCP’s commitment to cultural change or the degree of legitimacy it ever enjoyed. The limits to the progress it has

made can easily be seen in its failed attempts to “reinvent” one of the most important lingering aspects of traditional thought and action: the role of women. Of all the countries covered in this book, the PRC made the most concerted efforts to improve the status of women. Women played a vital role in the revolution, prompting Mao to stress how they “held up half the sky.” The 1950 Law on Marriage and other early decrees gave women legal equality and outlawed a series of traditional practices, including foot binding.

The CCP has not engaged in this kind of consciousness raising and gender reform since Mao’s death, except for its largely successful campaign to keep families from having more than one child. As in the former Soviet Union, women in China continue to occupy secondary positions in everything from the politics of the household to the politics of the Politburo. In fact, only a few women have played a significant role in the CCP elite, most of whom were the wives of even more prominent men, including Mao and Zhou.

And now there are signs that the condition of women may actually be worsening. Women are being discriminated against more in hiring, housing, and the distribution of land. At a recent job fair to recruit government officials, fully 80 percent of the positions were open only to men. Women who are hired are routinely required to promise that they will not marry for at least three years. Women are again being bought and sold as wives, a practice that supposedly had been eliminated in the 1950s.

The party has also drastically scaled back its efforts to reshape public opinion and the political culture since the death of Mao Zedong. Deng Xiaoping’s sense of pragmatism, according to which the people were exhorted to “seek truth from facts,” left little room for the kind of ideological education Mao favored. The party has loosened its controls somewhat, allowing a somewhat wider range of views to be expressed in the media and schools and, more importantly, allowing foreign music, films, and news into China on a scale that would have been unimaginable a generation ago.

Some party leaders are deeply concerned that the spread of Western pop culture and personal computers is creating a population more concerned with self-interest than collectivism. The very modernization of the country opens the door to a greater diversity of interests, and some of the new groups, such as the urban entrepreneurs and international traders, are beginning to band together, if for no other reason than to express their professional interests. As the number of people who work outside the centrally planned economy continues to grow, the unit is becoming less and less of a factor in their lives.

In some respects, then, the cultural unity that may have existed before the Cultural Revolution has largely disappeared. We have no way of knowing how much deep dissatisfaction there is with either today’s party elite or the regime as a whole. What is clear is that there are pockets of discontent scattered throughout the country—among young intellectuals and business executives who have been “winners” during the reform years, and among manual workers, poor peasants, and ethnic minorities whose conditions have at best barely improved.

Do not, however, equate this growing discontent with a commensurate increase in dissent. Although there is more open protest than there was a generation ago, it undoubtedly lags behind public opinion. More importantly, most recent protests occurred among poorly organized groups that have not been able to come together to pose any sort of serious challenge to the authorities.

To see why this is the case, we have to take a step back from the current situation and consider how communist regimes in China and elsewhere traditionally orchestrated participation “from above.”

### *Participation from the Top Down*

People studying comparative politics in the West often mistakenly conclude that political participation is largely from the bottom up. In the industrialized democracies, most of the participation we focus on does take place because individual citizens choose to get involved, typically to express their point of view on who should govern or what policies they should adopt.

This was not the case in the former communist regimes of the Soviet bloc, nor is it the case in China today. The Chinese authorities include democracy and the mass line in their rhetoric. And average citizens actually participate in political life more than their counterparts in the West. However, little of that involvement has an effect in shaping public policy. Rather, some political scientists call it “mobilized” participation because the CCP determines what people should do and then turns them out to meet the regime’s goals.

Although they are sometimes consulted before decisions are made, their typical activity involves carrying out policies that have already been approved farther up the political hierarchy.

This was especially true during the Maoist years, during which the campaigns mentioned earlier were a routine fact of life. Politics affected virtually all aspects of people’s lives. Almost everyone in urban areas was assigned to units, which were dominated by local party representatives. Much the same was true of the people’s communes in rural areas, which were much like state and collective farms in the Soviet Union.

Between 6 and 10 percent of the adult population belongs to the CCP, which is actually a rather high proportion of the population to be so active politically by Western standards. Again, we should not read too much into this, because most party members do political work that is determined by the cadres, who outrank them. Most of their work, too, involves the routine implementation of policy decisions made by their superiors. And, as in the former Soviet bloc, many people join the party because it is the one and only way to get ahead in all areas of Chinese society.

There is less top-down activity now than there was during the Maoist years. As noted earlier, major campaigns are a thing of the past. The party has had trouble recruiting reliable and competent members now that private enterprise holds out opportunities to gain wealth and influence. Finally, the units are far less influential; in fact, many urban residents are no longer part of a unit at all, but instead find work, housing, and other services in the open market. In rural areas the communes have been abolished and replaced with what amounts to private farms and looser forms of social control, both of which will be described later.

### *Change in the Countryside*

There is also some fragmentary evidence that China is experiencing more of the kinds of political participation we focus on in the West. Survey research is in its infancy in China, but recent polls conducted in Beijing and in four rural counties have shown that substantial numbers of people engage in voluntary political activity, some of which puts demands on policymakers.

In the rural poll, respondents were asked if they had done any of the following:

- Attended local party meetings
- Attended official village meetings
- Worked with others to help solve a local problem
- Expressed their opinion to a party cadre
- Tried to contact and influence a local government official

The results, summarized in table 11.3, surprised the American scholars who helped direct the research. In fact, the numbers compare quite favorably with those in Western democracies, though we should take Chinese polling results with a hefty grain of salt. If they are accurate, however, over half the rural population engages in some sort of voluntary political activity and over a third engage in something that places demands on the authorities.

Moreover, with but one exception, the same factors contribute to participation in China as in the West. For

**TABLE 11.3** Political Participation in Rural China

NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES	ALL FORMS (PERCENTAGE)	DEMANDING FORMS ONLY (PERCENTAGE)
0	41	66
1	31	22
2 or more	28	12

Source: Adapted from M. Kent Jennings, "Political Participation in the Chinese Countryside," *American Political Science Review*, 91 (June 1997), tables 2 and 3.

example, men participate more than women; young people are less active than their elders; and, as in most countries, the more educated people are, the more likely they are to be involved in political life. The one somewhat worrying difference is that CCP members are much more likely to get involved than the rest of society, which may limit the importance of this small rural groundswell of political participation for the future.

These changes have occurred in the countryside because local elections have been competitive since 1987. The CCP is still the only organization that can present candidates; nonetheless, voters often now have choices for members of the governing bodies that replaced the People's Communes. Economic liberalization has also given people more of an ability to make the decisions that shape their economic lives, which, if Western theorists are correct, is being translated into demands for more influence over their political lives as well.

### *Dissent*

During the last few years there have been reports of strikes by factory workers and peasants, as well as demonstrations by Tibetans, Uygers, and other ethnic minorities. Few of these events were anything but short-term, local movements. In fact, the skimpy evidence available to us suggests that the party rarely hesitated to put them down—with force if need be. That said, there have been three coordinated movements since the late 1970s. Although the regime ultimately repressed them as well, aspects of each indicate that the regime may not be as powerful as some of its critics believe.

### **The Democracy Wall**

First was the **Democracy Wall** effort of 1978. Initially, Deng and his colleagues allowed a degree of political freedom after they replaced Hua Guofeng and the remaining holdover leaders from the Cultural Revolution. With government approval, people put up big-character posters, first on the so-called Democracy Wall in downtown Beijing, and then elsewhere in the country. Many were simply critical of how socialism was being

implemented. Others went further and advocated a wider variety of reforms, ranging from freedom of speech to a multiparty system.

The man who became the most prominent of the dissidents, **Wei Jingsheng**, then a twenty-five-year-old electrician, wrote about democracy as the fifth modernization to accompany Deng's four—industry, the military, agriculture, and science and technology. Wei went further than anyone else had in openly criticizing the party and its leadership. For instance, he wrote:

**We hold that people should not give any political leader unconditional trust. Does Deng Xiaoping want democracy? No, he does not. We cannot help asking: What do you think democracy means? If the people do not have a right to express their views freely, how can one speak of democracy? If refusing to allow other people to criticize those in power is your idea of democracy, then what is the difference between this and what Mao euphemistically called the "dictatorship of the proletariat"?**<sup>8</sup>

Soon, Deng's patience ran out, and the government prohibited all posters and publications that criticized socialism. The leaders were arrested, including Wei, who was sentenced to fifteen years in prison.

### The Democracy Movement

For the next decade, visible dissent came only from isolated individuals, most notably the world-renowned astrophysicist **Fang Lizhi**, who is now living and teaching in exile in the United States. Fang was a brilliant physics student who graduated from Beijing University at the age of twenty and who was immediately assigned to work for the prestigious Academy of Science's Institute of Modern Physics. He later taught at the University of Science and Technology. Though he thought of himself as a loyal party member, he got into political trouble during the time of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Fang was able to keep his job, but he could only publish his scholarly works under a pseudonym and was never allowed to occupy the administrative posts his colleagues elected him to.

Beginning in 1978 Fang took advantage of his professional reputation and the relaxed political controls to begin speaking out on broader political issues. For example, he included the following remarks in a 1985 speech:

**There is a social malaise in our country today, and the primary reason for it is the poor example set by Party members. Unethical behavior by Party leaders**

**is especially to blame. This is a situation that clearly calls for action on the part of intellectuals. We Communist Party members should be open to different ways of thinking. We should be open to different cultures and willing to adopt the elements of those cultures that are clearly superior. We must not be afraid to speak openly about these things. In fact, it is our duty.**<sup>9</sup>

Like many other intellectuals at the time, Fang soon ran afoul of the authorities and was silenced for most of the 1980s. In 1989 the situation changed dramatically with the emergence of the **Democracy Movement**, the first large, reasonably well organized protest movement against the CCP and its policies.

As with the demonstrations in 1976, the Democracy Movement began with spontaneous protests following the death of a respected reformist leader—Hu Yaobang. Within four hours of his death, big-character posters appeared on the walls of Beijing University. That evening, the highly connected graduate students in its Department of Communist Party History bicycled into Tiananmen Square to place a wreath in his memory. Two days later, five hundred students marched to Tiananmen Square to lay yet more wreaths. Each new day brought larger and more militant demonstrations. The police did not intervene.

Within a week, younger students had come to dominate the movement. Unlike the graduate students, they had few memories of the Cultural Revolution, took the new openness for granted, and assumed that they could take the protest to a new level. On the night of 21–22 April, 10,000 of them marched into the square—and stayed. A day later, their ranks swelled to 100,000.

On 27 April the students planned another massive march. This time the government tried to block them. The students marched anyway, and their courage inspired an estimated 200,000 Beijing residents to join them.

At that point, both the government and the students were still looking for a mutually acceptable solution, but the two sides ended up talking past each other. In early May the movement spread beyond Beijing to other major cities. Journalists defied party discipline and began reporting what they saw. The students who remained in the square proved to be a double embarrassment during Gorbachev's visit to Beijing by disrupting planned events and by making it clear that they were inspired in large measure by the political reforms undertaken under his leadership in Moscow. The demonstrations continued after he left. A small group of students began a hunger strike. On 17 May perhaps as many as 2 million people

<sup>8</sup>Cited in Orville Schell, *Mandate of Heaven* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 29.

<sup>9</sup>Cited in Orville Schell, *Discos and Democracy: China in the Throes of Reform* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 131–33.



AP/Wide World Photos

Students at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts putting the finishing touches on the "Goddess of Democracy," modeled after the Statue of Liberty.

filled Tiananmen Square in the largest demonstration since the Cultural Revolution.

None of the concessions or conciliatory gestures the leadership tried slowed the movement. Meeting after meeting between officials and students turned into a fiasco. There were even rumors that part of the army had gone to Zhao Ziyang—the leader with the most influence among the students—and offered to help him remove Deng and the old guard from power.

On 20 May, however, the students' leaders realized that they could not apply further pressure on the government without dropping their commitment to nonviolence. Meanwhile, the hard-liners began a counterattack, seizing control of the party leadership. By the end of the month, they had replaced Zhao with Jiang Zemin, the mayor of Shanghai, who had a reputation as a hard-liner.

The standoff continued for two more weeks. Finally, on the night of 3–4 June, troops loyal to Yang Shangkun, president of the PRC and head of the family that dominated the PLA, stormed the square. No one knows how many people were killed, but estimates run as high as four thousand. Many student leaders fled the country.

Even though they took no part in the movement, Fang Lizhi and his wife had to take refuge in the American Embassy, where they remained for almost a year before being allowed to emigrate. In the days and months after the crackdown, hard-liners in the party solidified their hold on power and made the open expression of dissent impossible. Most movement leaders were either arrested or escaped into exile.

### Falun Gong

For the next decade, the authorities played a kind of political cat-and-mouse game with dissidents. When economic times were good, they allowed a bit more open discussion of ideas and released some political prisoners. Once conditions began to deteriorate or the dissidents became too critical of the authorities, they cracked down, often re-arresting the same individuals they had recently freed, including Wei Jingsheng, who has spent the better part of two decades in prison. To cite but one example, in 1998 a small group tried to register their Democratic Party as a legal, independent body. Their request was refused, and most of the leaders of the fledgling group were arrested.

The most serious challenge in recent years, and the most revealing response by the authorities, has come from a most unusual source—**Falun Gong**. Falun Gong is one of those organizations that spring up in much of East Asia that are hard to fit into Western conceptual schemes.

On one level, it is merely a version of *qigong*, which is a set of physical exercises that practitioners believe lead to spiritual and physical well-being. On another level, it is inspired by Buddhism and thus has many aspects of a religion. On yet another level, the very fact that it exists as an autonomous organization with as many as 50 million practitioners means that the party leaders view it with caution—at best.

Falun Gong was founded in 1992 by a minor railway official, Li Hongzhi, who had no particular expertise in either spirituality or religion. Nonetheless, the movement and its program of exercise and meditation quickly took hold—especially among middle-aged, middle-class Chinese, many of whom had been victims of the Cultural Revolution and many of whom were not thriving as a result of the most recent economic reforms. The movement also spread through its effective use of the Internet. Although its sites are no longer accessible in China itself, Falun Gong adherents abroad now email material from the sites, which on-line Chinese can routinely receive ([www.falundafa.org](http://www.falundafa.org) or [www.faluninfo.net](http://www.faluninfo.net)).

As long as Falun Gong adherents simply went to parks to perform their exercises, the regime tolerated



them. However, on 25 April 1999, 10,000 of them held a peaceful demonstration in Tiananmen Square. By mid-2000 Falun Gong had held more and larger illegal rallies. Falun Gong members claimed that their meetings were not political at all. The authorities viewed things otherwise, just as they have any attempt to create an independent body that lies outside their monopoly of sources of political power. That July they outlawed Falun Gong, claiming it was an “evil cult.”

Falun Gong does have some cultlike tendencies, and its belief that ritualistic exercise and meditation can cure disease is certainly unusual by Western standards. Nonetheless, it is part of a venerable Chinese spiritual tradition whose beliefs are no more dangerous or cultish than those of, for instance, Christian Science.

Nonetheless, the authorities cracked down. Li Hongzhi went into exile and now runs the movement from New York. The party responded by sending at least five thousand members to labor camps for “reeducation” and arrested several hundred more. A few dozen members committed suicide while in prison.

For our purposes, the key to Falun Gong is not what it does or does not believe in. Rather it lies in the way the authorities respond to it. As the religious sociologist Richard Madsen puts it, “Any organization like Falun Gong, no matter what the content of its ideology, would be a threat to the communist regime.”<sup>10</sup> The fact is, a well-organized group beyond the control of the party is an obvious source of concern for the party elite, who know that the CCP itself is nowhere near as powerful or popular as it once was, as we are about to see.

In other words, Falun Gong, in and of itself, might prove to be nothing more than a passing fad. However, the party elite seems to believe it sets a dangerous precedent. If they to allow it to continue to grow and take positions different from their own, however bland and benign those positions might be, other more political and more challenging organizations might look at Falun Gong’s relative freedom and demand the same for themselves. So, all the signs suggest that the party leaders believe they have no choice but to crack down.

## The Party State

There has been one common denominator in Chinese politics since 1949—domination by the CCP. Despite all the forces that are changing the face of China, the party remains quite close to the Leninist

<sup>10</sup>Richard Madsen, “Understanding Falun Gong,” *Current History*, 99 (Sept. 2000).

## Democratization in China

**CHINA IS one of two countries covered in this book (Iraq being the other) in which we cannot realistically talk about democratization. Western journalists and human rights advocates seize on whatever evidence they can find of hostility to the CCP, such as the 1998 attempt by dissidents to register their own opposition party, as signs of prodemocratic sentiment. In fact, there is little or no evidence to suggest that any significant democratization is occurring “below the surface.”**

**What is less clear is what will happen in the long term. Political scientists are not naïve enough to assume that the emergence of capitalistic forces in the economy will necessarily lead to democratic political movements as well. What’s more, the regime still seems to be able to quash embryonic movements that do spring up, such as the attempt to register the independent Democratic Party in 1998. Still, it’s by no means certain that the regime will be able to stave off such efforts in the future or that it won’t try to preempt them with gradual, pragmatic reforms of its own.**

model laid out in chapter 9 and has been able to resist pressure for political reform. There are, however, some ways in which today’s CCP is different from that model, as well as reasons to believe that the party is weakening ([www.chinatoday.com/org/cpc](http://www.chinatoday.com/org/cpc)).



## The Basics

Like all other Communist parties that joined the Comintern in the 1920s, the CCP adopted democratic centralism and the rest of the Bolshevik organization. This means that, although the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has a government and a constitution, the most recent version having been adopted in 1982, the state is not really where power lies. Despite some minor exceptions, which we will encounter later in this section, the party still calls all the political (if not the economic) shots.

The PRC officially is governed by a massive National People’s Congress of well over two thousand members. But like the Supreme Soviet prior to Gorbachev, the congress meets infrequently and serves primarily as a rubber stamp for decisions made elsewhere. Similarly, the president (in January 2002, Jiang Zemin) and prime minister (**Zhu Rongji**) are powerful primarily because they hold positions atop the CCP, not because of their formal government offices.

The only significant structural difference between the PRC and other communist governments is the somewhat larger role given to provincial and local authorities

in China. Even that should hardly be surprising given China's size and its relatively poorly developed communications system.

In any case, as in the former Soviet Union, real power lies in the party. The 1982 constitution did drop Article 2, the PRC's equivalent of the Soviet Article 6, which gave the party a monopoly on power. This made little difference in practice, given Deng's continued endorsement of party control.

The CCP enrolls a slightly smaller proportion of the total population than did the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). However, it is still a huge organization. Its more than 50 million members means that the CCP is bigger than all but twenty-two countries! The dominance of the party unit in determining where people lived and worked into the 1980s gave it at least as much control as the CPSU had before the reforms of the Gorbachev era.

The new generation of pragmatic party leaders has tried to change the party's composition. Increasingly, they are trying to recruit university graduates and trained technicians, whose expertise, and not their class background or ideological commitment, is seen as necessary if the party is to lead the way toward further modernization. This explains the importance of opening the economy to the private sector discussed at the beginning of the chapter.

Twenty years ago, the party would have had little difficulty finding these types of dedicated members and future leaders because party membership was the one and only way to reach the top of Chinese society. Now, this has begun to change. With private businesses employing more and more well-educated young people, the CCP is no longer the only "game in town," and the party is finding it harder and harder to recruit the kinds of cadres it wants.

Party membership is still a requirement for a political career. However, for many apolitical young people who are more concerned with making money, there is no need to belong to the CCP. For them the often petty administrative work new party members are assigned can be an unnecessary burden.

The leadership also continues to control all major appointments in the government and in the party itself. Like the CPSU, the CCP has a *nomenklatura*. The Chinese were among the first communist governments to separate party and state leadership below the national level. In practice, however, this has yet to make much difference, because the party elite still controls appointments to both.

Power is officially lodged in the party congress, normally held every five years, and in the **Central Committee** it elects to run the party in between sessions. As in the old Soviet Union, neither body has had much influ-

ence. Democratic centralism still operates. Congress delegates traditionally have been co-opted from above, and the meetings themselves have done little more than ratify decisions already made by the elite.

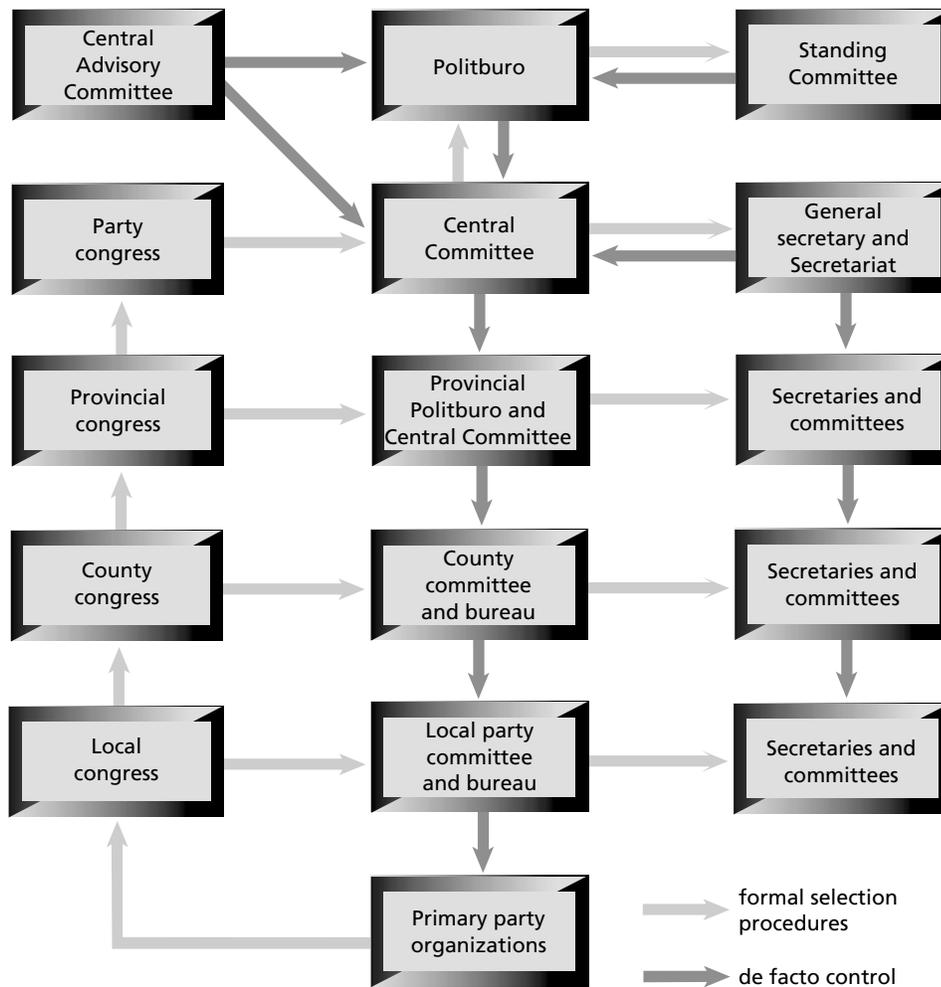
The Central Committee, too, exercises little day-to-day power. Unlike the former CPSU, there is not much continuity in its membership, with a turnover rate of about 50 percent at each of the most recent congresses. The Central Committee is a massive body that meets only a few times a year because well over half its members live outside of Beijing. Although these plenums have often been the site of acrimonious debate over most of the major policy initiatives taken since 1978, the final decisions are invariably made higher up.

As was the case in the CPSU, power is concentrated in a very small political elite. The most important part of that elite is the **Politburo**, usually composed of about twenty members, all of whom are senior party leaders. The Politburo includes top state officials as well, such as the premier or the chair of the State Planning Commission. Unlike the CPSU, the Politburo's day-to-day work is the responsibility of its smaller **Standing Committee**. (See figure 11.1.)

We (perhaps) gained a unique glimpse into the inner workings with the publication of the *Tiananmen Square Papers* in early 2001.<sup>11</sup> Three prominent American sinologists were given copies of what they were told were transcripts of secret meetings of the party's leadership during the Tiananmen crisis. Initially, the three doubted that the documents were authentic. However, after months of study and queries of colleagues around the world, they decided that they could well be real and decided to go ahead with plans to publish them. The papers reveal a leadership that was deeply divided between reformers and hard-liners, though it is safe to say that similar transcripts from meetings during the first days of the Cultural Revolution would show far more acrimony. In the end, Deng Xiaoping had the last word and cast his lot with the hard-liners and their desire to force the students and their supporters out of Tiananmen Square.

Not only do we not know if these documents are real, we also do not know how typical they are—if, of course, they are legitimate. The participants in those meetings knew the stakes were high and understood that the costs of making a mistake could be catastrophic in the medium to long term. No one knows how much debate there is on more normal political issues. The one thing we can say with a reasonable degree of certainty is

<sup>11</sup>Liang Zheng, Andrew Nathan, Perry Link, and Orville Schell, eds., *The Tiananmen Square Papers: The Chinese Leadership's Decision to Use Force Against Their Own People—In Their Own Words* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).



**FIGURE 11.1** Decision Making in China

that the dominant leader—Deng Xiaoping at the time of Tiananmen Square and Jiang Zemin as these lines were written—does seem able to have his will prevail if he voices his viewpoint strongly enough.

### *Variations on a Theme*

In some other respects, the CCP is quite different from the old CPSU. Those differences help us understand why the CCP went in such a novel direction following the beginning of factionalism.

During Deng's years in power, the most important of these differences was the behind-the-scenes leadership exercised by the party's elderly elite. Although Deng was able to urge his colleagues into formal retirement with him in the 1980s, they continued to run the country through the **Central Advisory Committee (CAC)**, which was set up in 1982. In theory, the CAC ostensibly existed only to advise the Politburo and the rest of the

official leadership. In fact, its members remained the most powerful people in the country and made all the most important decisions.

With most of its members either deceased or too ill to work even on a part-time basis, the CAC was abolished at the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1992. Although the CAC, therefore, existed for only a decade, it had the impact of delaying the real assertion of power by Jiang and other so-called first-line leaders who were then widely—and accurately—seen as little more than puppets for their elders.

There is no doubt that Jiang, Zhu, and their colleagues emerged from the shadows and exerted power in their own right after Deng's death—if not before. Nonetheless, we are probably entering another period in which true leadership will be exercised by senior politicians who work largely outside of the public eye.

The constitution prohibits presidents from serving more than two terms, and Jiang's second was due to ex-

pire in mid-2002. As these lines were written earlier that year, all signs indicated that Jiang, who would soon turn 75, would not seek a third term as president and would also resign as secretary general of the CCP. It was widely rumored as well that he was urging other senior leaders, including Zhu and party stalwart Li Peng, to do the same. Apparently, Jiang hoped to promote some of his protégés into the frontline leadership positions but continue to pull the important political strings from his position as head of the Central Military Commission. In early 2002, however, he was getting some resistance from his more conservative contemporaries, who fear that, were Jiang to succeed, the “fourth-generation” leaders would be far too open to radical political as well as economic reform.

There are also growing signs that the party’s organization is neither as rigid nor as powerful as the Leninist model or figure 11.1 might suggest. Among the most important evidence of this is the erosion of the party organization itself. China has a long history of highly centralized bureaucratic rule, which meant that the Leninist party was by no means wholly out of line with tradition. If anything, such practices have been reinforced under the CCP, with its emphasis on the top twenty-five to thirty-five officials and the “core leader” at any one time. As in the old Soviet bloc, these officials have been able to concentrate power through their personal networks and the *nomenklatura* system. These general tendencies are probably even more pronounced in China with its system of *kou*, or policy gateways, which coordinates decision making in four key sectors—party organization, government administration, state security, and foreign affairs.

Conversely, there are powerful pressures toward decentralization and the weakening of the party’s power in general that Kenneth Lieberthal has labeled “fragmented authoritarianism.” Until recently, both Chinese tradition and democratic centralism led people to pass unsolved problems upward in the party hierarchy. As we saw with the distinction between political “thumbs” and “fingers” in chapters 9 and 10, highly centralized decision making does not work all that well in a complex society in which people at the “bottom” have to take initiative or act quickly. It should also be remembered that some of China’s provinces have more people than do most European countries. What’s more, many politicians, including Deng and Jiang, established their credentials by working successfully at the provincial level.

There also are growing signs of nepotism and corruption within the CCP that top any of the revelations about the CPSU during the Brezhnev years. Of special concern is the fact that so many children of high-level party cadres have positioned themselves near the top of the political and economic hierarchies. Take, for in-

stance, Deng Xiaoping’s five children. Deng Pufang, crippled during the Cultural Revolution, heads the Chinese Federation for the Disabled. Deng Nan holds a critical position on the State Science and Technology Commission. Deng Lin is an accomplished artist, though many believe that the \$20,000 she commands per painting reflects her family name as much as her talent. Deng Rong was her father’s secretary and interpreter, whom many believe had the most influence over the aging leader. Finally, Deng Zhifang holds an American Ph.D. and is one of China’s top young entrepreneurs.

And it’s not just Deng’s family. In the mid-1990s, for instance, at least three Politburo members were the children of elites of an earlier generation, and the PLA has long been dominated by a single family. Most current party officials have successfully helped their own children find powerful and/or lucrative positions in either the state or the private sector.

The strength of these families opens the door to a far broader, but harder to document, concern—corruption. The press is filled with reports of new millionaires living luxuriously at least partially as the result of illegal activities. Bribes are an accepted part of doing business in the new China. Corruption within the police force is known as the “three chaoses”—for the acceptance of bribes, the unauthorized imposition of fines, and the illegal sharing of license and other fees by the men and women who collect them.

Finally, there is the PLA. As we saw in chapter 10, the Soviet army stayed away from political controversies until the coup, at which time it proved incapable of intervening politically in any kind of unified manner. The PLA, in contrast, has been an important political actor since the Long March. At that point, the party and the army were one and the same. Many party leaders, including Deng Xiaoping, started their careers in the PLA, and army leaders have always held prominent positions in the CCP leadership. Membership on the party’s **Military Affairs Committee (MAC)** has similarly been a sign of political power within the CCP as well as the PLA.

The PLA became part of the factional struggles in the 1960s, beginning with the purge of its leader, Peng Dehuai, who had openly criticized Mao’s policies during the Great Leap Forward. Under Lin Biao, the PLA played a vital role in planning the Cultural Revolution and then restoring order once the movement got out of hand.

The PLA was far less political in the years between Lin Biao’s death and the Democracy Movement of 1989. During the 1980s the army was as divided as the party as a whole. Some leaders sided with the reformers. Press reports during the spring of 1989 suggested that the PLA was so deeply split that units controlled by the rival factions came close to fighting each other. In the end, most

## DENG XIAOPING



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Deng Xiaoping in 1985—as usual, smoking a cigarette.

of the leading PLA officers came down on the side of the hard-liners.

The PLA is important because it has an independent power base of its own. It is far less subject to control through the normal mechanisms of party oversight than was the case for the old Soviet army. And it has had a tremendous vested interest in the future of economic reform, because it runs dozens of enterprises, some of which have been converted from military to consumer-oriented production.

### Public Policy: Perestroika Without Glasnost

Since the late 1970s the CCP has followed a political and economic strategy that is almost exactly the opposite of the one we saw in Gorbachev's Soviet Union. There the CPSU loosened political controls but dithered when it came to economic reforms. The combination of political liberalization and frustration with the

Like Zhou Enlai, Deng was born into an elite family and spent his youth studying the Confucian classics. In 1920, at the age of sixteen, he went on a work-study program to Paris, where, among other things, he joined the European branch of the CCP that Zhou had formed, worked in a factory, and developed a life-long love of croissants. Later in the 1920s, he again studied in Paris.

On his return to China, he joined Mao in his effort to organize in the countryside and took part in the Long March. He became a leading military figure within the CCP and by the 1940s was political commissar of the PLA.

After the CCP came to power, he held a number of positions in the party hierarchy and gradually cast his lot with Liu Shaoqi and others seeking a more pragmatic approach to economic policy. For this he was purged during the Cultural Revolution and, again, following Mao's death.

He returned to office for a third time in 1978 and guided Chinese political life until his death. He actually never officially held a high position (he was never more than vice premier of China and vice president of the Chinese Bridge Club), but like many of his generation, he exercised power from behind the scenes. He resigned from his last government position in 1989, made his last tour of the country in 1992, and died from Parkinson's disease in 1997.

accelerating economic decline opened the political floodgates that destroyed the USSR.

Under Deng and, now, Jiang, the CCP did the opposite. As we have just seen, there have been no significant openings of the political system. However, economic policy has changed so much that it is difficult to speak of China as a socialist state.

### Economic Reform

The economy is the centerpiece of any socialist country's public policy. Concern about inequality sparked support for socialism in the first place, and socialist policymakers of all stripes have accorded the state a more central role in economic management than we find in the capitalist societies with the strongest *dirigiste* (managed economy) traditions.

In China today, we also have to focus on the economy, because Deng and his colleagues led the country away from socialist principles (albeit always rationalizing their actions in the name of socialism). In so doing, they presided over one of the most dramatic periods of

growth in world history, which some analysts believe will make China one of the world's leading economic powers in the near future.

When Mao died, China's economy was not in good shape, though it was doing better than might have been expected given the political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. Industrial production had grown by an average of 9 percent per year from 1957 to 1976, and most factories were not targeted during the Cultural Revolution. During normal times, no one starved, and everyone had access to at least basic education and rudimentary health care.

There were signs, however, that China would soon face many of the same problems the Soviet Union did during the Brezhnev years—a shortage of investment in everything but heavy industry, a slow rate of technological innovation, an emphasis on the quantity rather than the quality of production, the inability to respond to consumer preferences, supply bottlenecks, irrational prices, and insufficient food production. China had poor communication and transportation networks. The shortage of trained managers had been worsened by the Maoist policy of recruiting cadres on the basis of class background and ideological stance rather than professional qualifications. Most importantly, China remained one of the world's poorest countries and had made only minor steps toward improving the living conditions of its people.

The problems were, if anything, worse in China than in most other poor countries. Mao had all but completely closed off the country, limiting foreign trade to the single city of Guangdong (Canton). No foreign aid or loans were accepted.

The first signs of change came in 1972, when Zhou Enlai announced that China would pursue the four modernizations. It would be another six years before the leftists would finally be defeated and Deng Xiaoping would solidify his hold on power.

Since then, the CCP has enacted a series of sweeping reforms guided by three very non-Marxist principles:

- Private property can play a useful role in a socialist economy.
- Market forces should be used to allocate goods and services and to determine prices.
- Material incentives, including higher wages, personal profit, and the accumulation of wealth, should be the main way to boost productivity and efficiency.

Some Western observers have read too much into the specific reforms to be discussed shortly. The CCP has not come close to fully endorsing capitalism and has yet to introduce reforms in the entire economy. Instead, as implied by the statement that begins the chapter, the

**TABLE 11.4** Economic Growth in China: Annual Rates of Change (percentage)

SECTOR	1980–1990	1990–1999
Gross domestic product	10.2	10.7
Agriculture	5.9	4.3
Industry	11.1	14.4
Services	13.6	9.2
Exports	11.5	12.2

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report, 1998, 1999, 2000*, [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org), accessed 28 Oct. 2001.

party has, above all else, been pragmatic in two ways. First, it has been reluctant to go too far, too fast. Whenever reforms threatened to do so, the party slowed things down. Second, it has avoided reforms that would be likely to threaten its hold on power. Thus, as we will see, it has barely begun restructuring the massive state-owned industries that still employ two-thirds of the urban workforce, because doing so could unleash massive protests.

In other words, both for its own sake and for that of overseas investors, the CCP has sought to create a climate of stability. And, so far, it has been quite successful in this. (See table 11.4.)

### Agriculture

Though it receives the least attention today, the first, and arguably most important, reforms came in agriculture. During the 1980s the Maoist-era communes were abolished and replaced by the household responsibility system. The party divided collective farms into small plots, which are worked by families that, for all practical purposes, own their land. The state also reduced the amount farmers had to sell to it and allowed the market to determine almost all agricultural prices.

The agricultural reforms proved highly popular and successful. Production increased by more than 10 percent per year during the 1980s. Some peasants are now extremely well off, especially those who live in areas in which they can readily sell their produce in the burgeoning urban markets. Overall, the gap between urban and rural standards of living has been cut by about 30 percent.

### Private Enterprise

Even more dramatic has been the development of private businesses, some owned by the Chinese themselves, and others primarily by foreign investors. Indeed, it is the growth of this sector that has led observers to claim that China will soon become one of the world's major economic powers.

The reforms started slowly, and the regime moved gradually until it was clear that private enterprise would contribute to its broader goal of modernization. As in the former Soviet Union, privately owned enterprises started out as small, service-oriented firms mostly in the retail trades. Until the late 1980s they accounted for less than 1 percent of industrial output.

Since then, however, the private sector has begun to boom. The original legislation restricted private firms to eight employees, a figure that has never been seriously enforced. In 1988 the National People's Congress officially created a new category of "private business" to regulate the somewhat larger firms outside the state sector.

In 1980 there were only 1,500 entrepreneurial firms in all of China; a decade later there were about 400,000. Urban co-ops, service organizations, and rural industries together employ about two-thirds of all nonagricultural laborers. Privately owned village industries alone employ at least 100 million people, more than the entire public sector. Most importantly, the private firms are far more dynamic and profitable than the state-owned ones, and thus attract the attention of the reformers, who are, above all else, interested in maximizing the rate of economic growth.

In some areas, opening things up to private industry has led to dramatic improvements in the way people live. In late May 1992 the *Washington Post* reported on the village of Lanchang near Hong Kong and its entrepreneurial leader, Chen Hai, who at age fifty-six had taught himself to read and write. Then, when the opportunity presented itself, he opened a factory that makes tin cans. Chen became tremendously wealthy, driving a Mercedes around town. And the 250 people who worked for him were each making about \$5,000 a year, or more than sixteen times the national average.

There was some concern that the hard-liners would slow the pace of economic reform in the wake of the events in Tiananmen Square. By mid-1992, however, it had become increasingly clear that Deng Xiaoping was throwing his lot in with the reformers. That summer, after visiting a steel factory, he complained that the party had not adequately responded to calls for more rapid economic change. Local officials seized the opportunity, and even horse-racing tracks were privatized. More importantly, private enterprises increasingly provide the high-quality goods that China needs if it wants to sell widely in the global market.

The key to the initial success of the reforms—and a guide to its cautious nature—is the way the leadership opened the economy to foreign investment. Even before Mao's death, the autarkic policies were eased. Foreign aid and investment came to be seen as ways of speeding

## Liberalization in China

**WESTERN JOURNALISTS often hold China up as an example of how helpful it can be to shift to a market economy. Although such benefits are easy to see, we should also point out that China has not made the transition from a planned to an open economy as quickly or as fully as many of the eastern European countries. There has been no shock therapy, and Western economic theorists have had little or no influence on Chinese decisionmakers.**

**Rather, the leadership has shifted toward a market economy in a series of gradual and measured moves. Some of the steps—for example, the family responsibility system in agriculture, the first privately owned "cooperatives" in the service sector, and the creation of the original SEZs—were risky. But none is likely to prove riskier than the one the leadership is still resisting—privatizing the "commanding heights" of the economy, most of which are still state-owned.**

up modernization. To facilitate—and control—foreign entry into the Chinese market, four **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** were created in 1979. In these regions, foreign investors were given preferential tax rates and other incentives. Five years later, Hainan Island and fourteen more cities became SEZs as well. By the mid-1990s market mechanisms and foreign investment had spread to most of urban China, blurring the distinction between the SEZs and the rest of the country.

Joint ventures have been established in dozens of industries and have turned China into a leading exporter of textiles and other low-tech products. It has also made some, albeit more limited, progress in developing high-tech goods, including rockets for launching satellites.

By contrast, the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have lagged behind. Most have been monopolies and models of inefficiency. However, in the late 1990s the authorities began to issue new rules requiring the SOEs to operate more under market conditions, which streamlined some of their operations. This trend toward increased efficiency will continue when China begins to phase in World Trade Organization regulations. The one thing that does not seem to be on the agenda is the wholesale privatization of the SOEs. In October 2001 the government announced that it planned to sell about \$3 billion worth of stock in them, but this amounts to only a tiny fraction of the still nationalized sector of the economy.

The fallout from Tiananmen Square never extended to foreign investors. Investment grew steadily—from

## JIANG ZEMIN



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Presidents Jiang Zemin and George W. Bush at the 2001 APEC summit meeting.

about \$5 billion in 1987, to \$27 billion in 1993, to \$60 billion by the end of the decade. Over half of it came from Hong Kong, Macao, and other overseas Chinese communities. Taiwan, which is still officially at war with the mainland, accounts for about 10 percent of the investment, as does South Korea, which has also had a hostile political relationship with the PRC.

Altogether, the reforms have sparked one of the longest periods of rapid economic growth in history. From 1980 to 1999, GNP quadrupled, although the rate of growth slowed somewhat to “only” 7.2 percent in 1999.

On a more tangible and personal level, most people eat better because better-quality food is available, often at lower prices than before the reforms. Some 80 million peasants have been able to leave the land and take more lucrative jobs in new rural enterprises. The urban standard of living has not improved as much, but most city dwellers still are noticeably better off than they were before Mao's death.

The reforms have also led to some problems that seem likely to pose political as well as economic difficulties in the future. Unofficial estimates put the unemployment rate at close to 20 percent in the cities, and that figure is almost certain to rise when and if the market reforms are extended to heavy industry. There are now

Jiang Zemin has been president of the PRC and chairman of the CCP since 1993. In practical terms, however, he has been the most powerful politician in China only since Deng Xiaoping's death in 1997.

We can see an important generational shift from Deng to Jiang. The former was educated in the classics, studied abroad, and joined the party long before the Long March when he earned his “political stripes.”

Jiang was born in 1926, joined the CCP while an engineering student, and was too young to have participated in the revolution, let alone the Long March. From 1949 until the 1980s, he built his career in his native Shanghai, becoming mayor and then head of the party in the city. Appointed to the Politburo in 1987, he really only reached the top ranks of the party in 1989, when he convinced demonstrating students to leave the central square of Shanghai, thus avoiding a bloodbath like the one in Beijing.

Though seen as a hard-liner at the time, Jiang has solidified his reputation as an economic, if not a political, reformer, smoothly grasping the remaining reins of power after Deng Xiaoping's death.

tremendous regional inequalities, given that four-fifths of foreign investment has gone to the coastal provinces. There are class disparities as well. Millions of peasant and merchant families have become amazingly rich by Chinese standards. However, the 40 percent of the population on fixed incomes saw their incomes drop precipitously for most of the late 1980s and early 1990s until inflation was brought under control.

Moreover, it is commonly believed that only the *guanxi* (people with connections) benefit to any significant degree from the reforms. Such beliefs cannot be supported by hard evidence, though the frequent anecdotal reports about official corruption suggest that they contain more than a grain of truth.

In any case, the very success of the reforms is worsening China's already fragile environment. Even its successful population control program is waning; the birthrate has already risen 0.2 percent since the 1980s, which will add another 15 million people each year. Increased agricultural production and industrialization have cost the country more than a million acres of arable land a year. Peasants who are trying to maximize their income have turned to cash crops such as tobacco instead of following their traditional rotation practices, which replenished the soil with needed nutrients.

And, despite all the reforms, China remains a desperately poor country. In all it accounts for only 2 percent of the world's output of goods and services despite having 23 percent of its population. A typical worker makes barely more than his or her Indian counterpart and only one-tenth that of someone in Taiwan. Put in other terms, the average Chinese factory worker annually earns only half the cost of a color television or one-sixtieth that of a Jeep produced there.

### *Foreign Policy*

Chinese foreign policy has also undergone profound changes that have brought the country closer to the international mainstream. As in domestic policy, there have been significant exceptions to this trend, such as the military exercises China engaged in that seemed to threaten Taiwan in early 1996 and the protracted dispute with Washington after a U.S. spy plane was shot down over Hainan Island in 2001. And the Chinese government still resists international pressure to improve its human rights record. Nonetheless, on balance, China has integrated itself into the world diplomatic and, especially, economic communities in ways no one could have realistically imagined as recently as the early 1970s.

For most of the time Mao Zedong was in power, the PRC pursued the kind of foreign policy Marxist theory would lead us to expect of a communist country that saw itself as one of the leaders of the world revolutionary movement. At least rhetorically, the PRC supported third world militants who fought against the vestiges of colonialism. China was one of the founders of the non-aligned movement and championed national liberation movements that sought independence from their colonizers throughout the third world. Despite its own limited resources, the PRC provided substantial development assistance to a handful of the most radical of the new third world states. China also was the first less developed country to deploy nuclear weapons, and it consistently has been a major supplier of arms, especially in the Middle East.

Not surprisingly, the PRC consistently attacked the United States and other capitalist powers for trying to maintain their political and economic hold on the third world even after those nations achieved independence. Given its role in Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere, and its failure to recognize the PRC, the United States was a frequent target of Chinese criticisms. Most of the time, this conflict was purely rhetorical. Only in 1958 did the two countries come even close to war, during the dispute over Quemoy and Matsu, two tiny islands in the Taiwan Straits.

The Chinese reserved their harshest attacks for their supposed ally, the Soviet Union. The relationship between the world's two largest communist countries had never been smooth. After World War II the Soviets supplied the CCP with only minimal aid—far less in value than the resources they took from northern China as the war was ending.

The rivalry came to the fore in the late 1950s when the Chinese decided that the Soviets had turned their backs on Marx and revolution. Tensions between the two reached a peak in 1969 when the rhetorical battles escalated into skirmishes along their border. Sino-Soviet relations remained highly strained until the collapse of the USSR.

Under Mao, Chinese foreign policy could best be described as autarkic for two main reasons. First, the Chinese assumed that they would continue to face a hostile world and would not be able to get significant help from the outside. Second, the Maoist model provided an alternative approach to development. If the party was able to mobilize the masses, China could modernize using its own resources.

By the 1970s both of those assumptions had been proved to be false, something best seen in China's relations with the United States. The Cultural Revolution taught the leadership something it probably should have learned from the Great Leap Forward: Mass mobilization and commitment to socialism were not the way to industrialize the country. Also, geopolitical realities had changed. In particular, President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger were willing to overlook ideological differences if they could forge alliances that advanced what they took to be America's national interest. China, in short, presented such an opportunity because of its hostility toward the Soviets.

Signs that things might improve began to appear in the early 1970s. A young American graduate student, John Strong, was allowed into the country to claim the body of his recently deceased aunt, Anna Louise Strong, who had spent most of the period since the 1930s in China as a "friend" of the revolution. In 1972 an American table tennis team played in China, lending its name to what soon came to be called "Ping Pong diplomacy." Later that year, Kissinger made a secret trip into China while visiting Pakistan. At that meeting, he, Zhou, and perhaps Mao reached a quick agreement that the two countries could and should reestablish relations. Before the year was out, President Nixon had visited China, and virtually overnight, two of the world's worst enemies became practically the closest of friends.

Relations between the two countries continued to improve. The United States reversed its long-standing

opposition to PRC membership in the United Nations. Formal diplomatic relations were resumed during the Carter administration. Now, no non-Asian country has more invested in China, and only Japan has more extensive bilateral trade.

Relations between China and the United States have not been perfect. U.S. leaders, in particular, have been highly critical of China's human rights record. Critics were most vocal in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square clampdown, but the rhetorical decibel levels have risen almost any time Washington had to make a decision regarding trade or other relations with China.

However, there have been recent signs that Chinese-American relations could improve. To begin with, entry into the WTO will force China to open its markets more for outside investment, including from the United States. What's more, the decision to grant Beijing the 2008 Olympics will bring pressure to open its political and social systems. If this happens, it should satisfy some of Beijing's critics in Washington. Finally, the events of September 11 drew the two countries somewhat closer together because of the Chinese concern that al-Qaeda and other militants were training potential terrorists among China's Muslim minority groups.

It is not simply Chinese-American relations that have normalized since the end of the Cultural Revolution. China has successfully negotiated the return of Hong Kong from Britain and improved relations with most of its neighbors. Given the size of its army and the sophistication of its weapons, China is certain to remain a regional, if not a global, military power. And, if China is able to permanently overcome the regional economic crisis that started in 1997 and to continue anything like its current rate of growth, it will become a global economic force as well.

Indeed, China is now so deeply integrated into the global economy that it is hard to imagine how it could isolate itself again. What's more, as we have seen at numerous points in this chapter, this involvement is fraught with implications for Chinese domestic politics. Millions of people have been drawn to Western values and living conditions as a result of their own travel abroad, their contacts with foreigners visiting China, or, most commonly, their exposure to Western media.

## Feedback

There is probably no better indicator of the limits to liberalization in China than the regime's continued control of the mass media, which are the primary ways people learn about political events. As in the Soviet

Union before Gorbachev came to power, the party determines who is on the air, what is written in the newspapers, and so on. Some journalists did speak their minds in the weeks before the 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square, but they all subsequently lost their jobs. As noted earlier in the chapter, a few independent journals have been able to publish for brief periods, but their circulation was always extremely small.

The best evidence that the CCP is trying to hold onto these levers of power lies in its policies regarding information technology. In 1989 students did use fax machines to keep in touch with each other and with their colleagues studying in the West. Since then, people have tried to feed information into China via the Internet and satellite TV. So far, however, the regime has been remarkably successful at blocking access to foreign-based political web sites, and private citizens are technically not allowed to own satellite dishes. But even here, change is afoot, most notably in a deal announced in October 2001 that grants AOL-Time Warner the first franchise for a foreign company to operate a cable system in the country.

One wonders, however, if the authorities will be able to keep those controls as firmly in place. For example, as this book went to press, an Internet service provider was convicted for piping political news into the country via email, which is not susceptible to the filtering technology that keeps people from accessing World Wide Web sites.

As with so much in this chapter, only time will tell.

## Conclusion: Kadan or Communism?

The dramatic changes that have swept through the communist world since 1989 have abundantly demonstrated that political scientists are not very good at predicting concrete events. This does not mean, however, that we cannot at least anticipate broad future trends.

In this sense, China provides us with a good illustration of the reasons most Marxist-Leninist regimes collapsed and the few remaining ones face uncertain futures at best. The pressures from an ever more sophisticated and impatient population, and these countries' increasing inclusion in global economic and cultural life, weakened all communist states. Some, like the Soviet Union, collapsed in part because the CPSU proved unwilling or unable to apply enough force to stay in power. In China, however, repression has helped keep the CCP in power, at least for now.

But as the cliché has it, the genie probably cannot be kept in the bottle for long. The Tiananmen Square

crackdown showed that desperate leaders can still suppress dissident movements, even ones with widespread mass and elite support. Nevertheless, it seems highly unlikely that such movements can be suppressed indefinitely. In part, this reflects the social changes that are leading to a more educated, sophisticated, and ultimately demanding population. Even more, it reflects one of the most important lessons to be learned from the experiences of either China or Poland during the 1980s. Despite the harsh repression by the elites, reform movements reappeared in both countries. Each time, the movement grew stronger until, in the Polish case, Solidarity was able to defeat the Communist Party altogether even as Chinese tanks were rumbling into Tiananmen Square.

The “thumbs” of the command economies in the few remaining communist countries are also imperiled. Again, we do not know precisely what their economic future holds. No one knows if socialist goals of equality, justice, and dignity can be attained using a market-based economy. No one knows either how far communist elites are willing to go in sacrificing their political and economic power in exchange for economic growth. No one even knows who the elites of these countries are likely to be even a few years from now, let alone what economic path they will pursue. All we can conclude—and it is a very important conclusion—is that they will have to move away from “thumbs” and toward “fingers,” a move that will have political as well as economic repercussions throughout these societies.

As with protest from below, the obsolescence of command economies has two sources. First, domestic changes have eroded all the ways in which central planning worked in the earlier stages of development. Second, and in the long run more important, the global economy has had an inescapable impact on these systems. For good or ill, as long as they retain centralized planning, the communist regimes are simply not going to be competitive in the world marketplace.

Again, communist regimes such as the one in China may hang on. But if they do, they will have to be very different from the powerful ones that hostile analysts once called totalitarian. We could continue to examine more statistics and other “hard” evidence that illustrate these points. However, in closing, it might make more sense to consider four news stories about China from the mid-1990s.

The first is a 1995 report on two illegal fads. It seems that dogs have become a big status symbol in Beijing (“puppies for yuppies,” the *Economist* calls it). A pedigreed dog can cost as much as \$4,500, even though dog

ownership is technically illegal. Dogs and their wealthy owners are so “in” that there are reports of poor people being turned away from (human) hospitals while medical doctors treated dogs whose “parents” were paying customers. Satellite dishes are banned, too. But this does not keep hundreds of thousands of people from buying them. There is no sign that people get them primarily to watch CNN or the BBC’s World Service. Rather, the World Cup and MTV seem to be far more popular. But as was the case in Eastern Europe, entertainment can be just as subversive as hard news.

Second, the authorities know that cyberspace is trouble (remember that faxes from abroad helped students keep in touch in 1989), and all people who use the Internet in China are officially required to report their activities to the Public Security Bureau. This is almost certainly going to be a losing battle. Not only is it hard to police the Internet under any circumstances, but the Chinese lack the resources to do so. One British journalist who reported as directed to the bureau found that it was staffed by only two officers.

Internet use is spreading in China even though the first commercial providers started business only in 1995 and the first Internet café opened in 1996. By early 1996 an estimated 100,000 people regularly logged on each day. Early reports suggest that users are more interested in the financial reports and the computerized data services than they are in the thousands of sources of political information available in cyberspace. Still, there are signs that at least some people are exploring that part of the Net and, worse yet for the authorities, are making contact with people in Taiwan, the United States, and elsewhere.

Third, paradoxically, is a spontaneous, popular cult of personality for the late Chairman Mao. Bus and cab drivers place portraits of the chairman on their dashboards. Mao pins from the Cultural Revolution have become collectors’ items. Drunken middle-aged men sing disco versions of old political songs in karaoke bars. Artists and entrepreneurs are raking in profits from the brisk Mao portrait sales.

Drivers put up the portraits because they are convinced that doing so protects them from accidents. One taxi driver said that Mao was like a god to him and likened the former leader’s picture to the statue of the Buddha he had in his home. Although it may seem peculiar to see drunken businessmen singing Maoist songs in Western-style bars, it certainly does not augur well for a return to either Marxism or Maoism. If these are the values of China’s citizens in the 1990s, it seems hard to imagine how the country could be forced back into the austerity of Mao suits and Maoist politics.

Finally, consider the Kadan (the closest Chinese equivalent of Cardin) Model Training School. Apparently, the school has a long waiting list of young people willing to pay the princely sum of \$42 a semester to strive for a new version of the Chinese dream—wealth and fame. Such private training schools that teach everything from modeling to accounting to foreign languages have sprung up around the country to meet the demands of a growing generation of young people who are aware of the outside world and want to be a part of it. The modeling schools, of course, have a unique Chinese twist. Both men and women stagger round trying to learn how to walk in high heels. Still, all the aspiring models share a common goal that one male student expressed well: “I came because I have a dream. I love this. I would love to travel around the world and be the best model of the century.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>James Steingold, “China in High Heels: A Wobbly School for Models,” *New York Times*, 8 Aug. 1990, A5.



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### Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Cadre	Chen Duxiu	CAC	Central Advisory Committee
Campaign	Chiang Kai-shek	CCP	Central Committee
Capitalist roader	Deng Xiaoping	KMT	Chinese Communist Party
Confucianism	Fang Lizhi	MAC	Cultural Revolution
Cult of personality	Jiang Qing	PLA	Democracy Movement
Democratic centralism	Jiang Zemin	PRC	Democracy Wall
Extraterritoriality	Lin Biao	SEZ	Falun Gong
Faction	Liu Shaoqi		Gang of Four
Four modernizations	Mao Zedong		Great Leap Forward
Mass line	Sun Yat-sen		Hundred Flowers Campaign
<i>Nomenklatura</i>	Wei Jingsheng		Kuomintang
Unit	Zhou Enlai		Long March
Warlord	Zhu Rongji		May Fourth Movement
			Military Affairs Committee
			Nationalist Party
			People’s Liberation Army
			People’s Republic of China
			Politburo
			Red Guard
			Red versus expert
			Sino-Soviet split
			Special Economic Zone
			Standing Committee
			Tiananmen Square

### Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of Chinese politics presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the “right direction” or is on the “wrong track.” If you were asked such a question about China, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?
3. How did Maoism and the Chinese revolution differ from Marxist thought and from Leninism and the Soviet revolution? What difference did this make for the evolution of the PRC?
4. Mao once claimed that the Chinese people were a “blank slate” whose political culture could easily be remade. Did he and his colleagues succeed in doing so? Why (not)?
5. The CCP dominates political participation in China. Why is this the case? Can the party survive?
6. The PRC is the last major country left that relies on democratic centralism and the Bolshevik model of a communist party. What are the pressures on the CCP to change? Do you expect it to follow the example of the former Soviet Union and collapse? Why (not)?
7. China has reformed its economy but not its political system—perestroika without glasnost. Has it worked better than reform in the former Soviet Union? Why (not)?

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Lieberthal, Kenneth. *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform*. New York: Norton, 1995. A comprehensive overview of Chinese politics that is especially good at illuminating the informal power relations that may well be more important than the formal rules and procedures.

Lifton, Robert Jay. *Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution*. New York: Norton, 1976. A biography of Mao by this generation's leading psychological analyst of political affairs.

Nathan, Andrew. *China's Transition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. Mostly a collection of essays by an American academic who has long criticized the CCP for its human rights record. Unlike Blecher's book, it is quite hostile to the Beijing regime.

Nolan, Peter. *China's Rise, Russia's Fall: Politics, Economics and Planning in the Transition from Socialism*. Basingstoke U.K.: Macmillan, 1995. A first-rate comparison of Chinese and Russian reform that emphasizes the gradualism, pragmatism, and stability of the former.

Schell, Orville. *Mandate of Heaven*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994. The most recent book by one of the best American journalists working on China. As with most of Schell's work, this is especially good on issues involving the economy and human rights.

Snow, Edgar. *Red Star over China*. New York: Random House, 1938. The best account of the early years of the revolution, written by an American who spent much of that period with the CCP and Mao.

Terrill, Ross. *China in Our Times*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992. An overview of communist Chinese history that also shows how one observer's views of the country changed along with its politics.

**EXPLORING with the CD-ROM**

Studying the current and former communist regimes requires the most straightforward comparative analyses in this book, which you can do in some depth with the material on the CD-ROM. First, you need to see how the communist regimes (past and present) differed from the other main types of states discussed in parts 2 and 4. Second, you have to compare China and the few other remaining communist countries with those that abandoned Marxism-Leninism after 1989.

For part 3, it makes sense to start with the MicroCase example, which is described on the disk. You can examine the ways in which these countries differ from the liberal democracies and third world societies politically, socially, and economically. In general, you will see that they occupy a middle position—not as democratic, wealthy, or calm as the established democracies, but facing far less trouble than many third world countries on all of those indicators. In considering the differences among the current and former communist countries, you will see that their post-1989 experiences have all been difficult. Most saw their economies shrink during the 1990s, and many of them experienced ethnic strife. However, you will also see that their political experiences have not by any stretch of the imagination been the same. For instance, they have very different types of political regimes today.

The text recommends quite a few general articles on Marxism from InfoTrac College Edition. One of the most useful is Benjamin Barber's "An Epitaph for Marxism," which he wrote in 1995. In it, he tries to make the case that social democracy, if not Marxism itself, remains a viable ideological option in most societies. Do you agree? Why (not) given what have you learned about Russia, China, and Marxist theory?

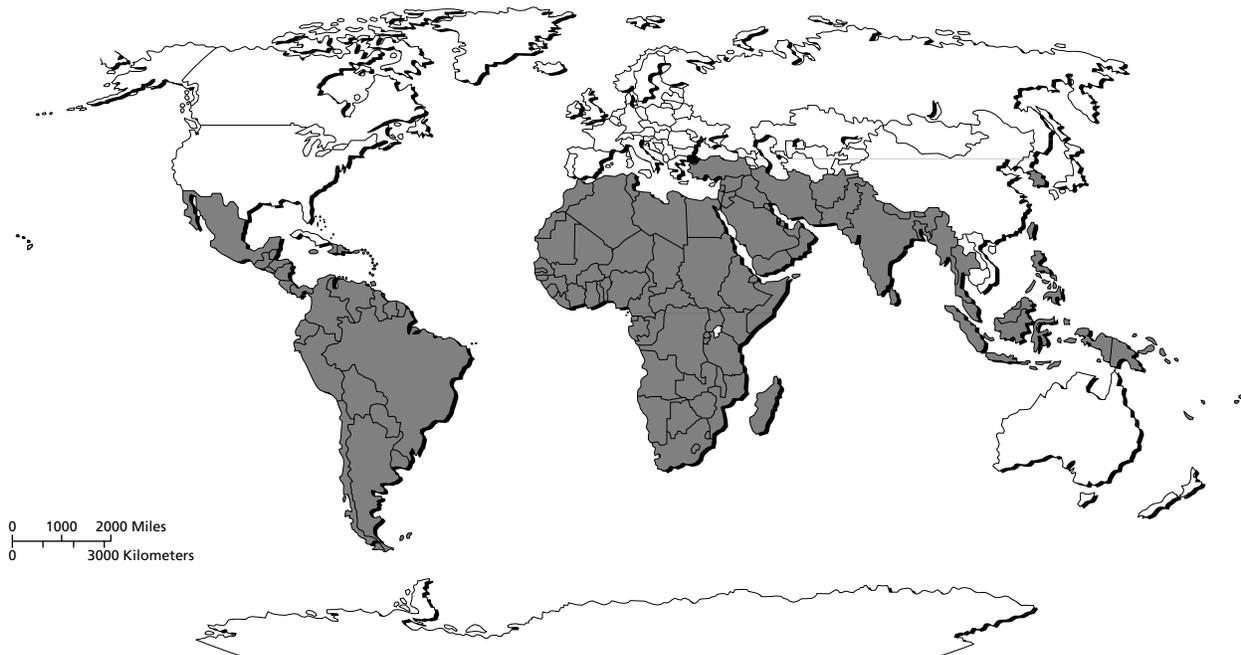
Finally, the CD-ROM has the constitutions of the People's Republic of China and the former Soviet Union. Even a casual reading of them will show you how little they tell us about how political life is/was played out in these countries. Given what you learned in part 3, why are the constitutions such poor guides to day-to-day political events?

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# THE THIRD WORLD

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Coltan and Politics
- Thinking About the Third World
- The Evolution of Politics in the Third World
- Political Culture in the Third World
- Political Participation in the Third World
- Weak States
- Public Policy: The Myths and Realities of Development
- Feedback
- Conclusion: Democratization



*Decisions made in Washington are more important to us than those made here in Dar es-Salaam. So, maybe my people should be allowed to vote in American presidential elections.*

JULIUS NYERERE, FORMER PRESIDENT, TANZANIA

**BASIC DATA: CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE RICHEST AND POOREST COUNTRIES**

	<b>Life Expectancy (years)</b>	<b>Literacy (percentage)</b>	<b>Gross Domestic Product at PPP Rates (U.S.\$)</b>	<b>HDI Score<sup>a</sup></b>
Poorest counties	59.4	61.8	1,910	.549
Richest counties	78.0	97.0	25,860	.926

<sup>a</sup>HDI (Human Development Index) is a statistical measure converting the first three indicators that ranges from 0 (least developed) to 1 (most developed).

Source: United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report: 2001*, <http://www.undp.org/hdro>, accessed 19 February 2002. The literacy statistic for the richest countries is from the 1999 report, which is the most recent available one with that information.

**Coltan and Politics**

On 12 August 2001 the *New York Times Magazine* carried a seemingly minor story about coltan mining in a game reserve in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) ([www.nytimes.com/2001/08/12/magazine/12COLTAN.html?ex=998888435&ei1](http://www.nytimes.com/2001/08/12/magazine/12COLTAN.html?ex=998888435&ei1)).<sup>1</sup>

Coltan contains tantalite, a heavy metal used to make a powder that is a critical component of such high-tech devices as cell phones and video game players. Mining coltan is not difficult. People pick away at streambeds and sift the muck they dig up in washtubs until the coltan settles to the bottom. At the height of the coltan market, the price soared from \$30 to \$400 per pound. Miners could make as much as \$80 per day—in a country in which most people have to survive on less than \$1 per day.

But coltan mining is by no means an unmixed blessing. It is technically illegal in that part of the DRC because it does tremendous damage to the ecosystem of the Opkapi Faunal Reserve and the Kahuzi-Biega National Park. The elephant population has been wiped out, and the number of gorillas has been cut in half. Several other species, which are found only there, are in danger of extinction. The mining has given rise, as well, to camps in which unscrupulous merchants provide provisions and prostitutes, both at outrageous prices.

To make matters worse, the downturn in the global high-tech economy in 2000 and 2001 dramatically reduced demand for coltan and cut the price miners received by 90 percent. Thus ended the new-found wealth

of several thousand miners and their families, all of whom returned to the abject poverty they had experienced before the market peaked.

Most importantly, the profits from the mining contributed to the civil war that pitted rebels in the east against a national government based well over a thousand miles away in Kinshasa. In all, 2.5 million people have died since the fighting began in 1998, though not all of those deaths can be attributed to the issues involving coltan. At the height of the war and of the coltan market, exporters paid rebel authorities a \$15,000 fee and 11 percent of their income in “taxes.” The Rwandan army, which supports the rebels, made an estimated \$250 million from its participation in the coltan trade. At the time the *New York Times Magazine* article appeared, a ceasefire had been in place for over a year, but the government had no real authority in the eastern region, and the combatants had made little progress toward a lasting peace.

Coltan is obviously not as important as many of the issues used to begin chapters in this book. Nonetheless, in a few brief pages, Blaine Harden identified five of the most important issues facing the **third world** today, all of which we will return to in the rest of this chapter and in the four country studies that follow.

The first issue is poverty. The table on the inside front cover provides bone-chilling statistics. Over a billion people—one fifth of humanity—live in utter poverty in countries where the average person makes no more than a dollar a day. In the West, we take safe drinking water, indoor plumbing, a nutritious diet, and adequate health care for granted. But they are all very much the exception to the rule in the third world. What’s more, for Africa at least, the gap between the rich “north” and the poor “south” is actually widening.

<sup>1</sup>Blaine Harden, “The Dirt in the New Machine,” *New York Times Magazine*, 12 Aug. 2001, 35–39.

The second issue is globalization. Neither the people of the eastern DRC nor the Congolese government are masters of their own destiny. Indeed, in part 4 we will see just how important the impact of the global forces alluded to in this book's subtitle are. Most third world countries spent an extended period as colonies, which destroyed much of their preexisting social, economic, political, and cultural life.

Like most African countries, the DRC gained its independence in the 1960s, but the influence of the north did not end. The United States helped plan the assassination of its first president, Patrice Lumumba, and then supported his corrupt and dictatorial successor, Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled for more than thirty years. And, as the coltan example suggest, northern multinational corporations (MNCs) and financial institutions still have a tremendous impact on the local economy—if nothing else, by determining the prices paid for the raw materials most third world countries export.

The third issue is weak states. Many of the poorest third world countries also have what northern analysts call **failed states**, because the national government cannot maintain law and order or provide basic services throughout the country. In the DRC, the national government has little or no influence in the east. In fact, there aren't even any roads that allow people to travel across the country, and there is not a single radio or television station that can be heard everywhere. Not every third world country has a failed state by any stretch of the imagination; however, with very few exceptions, the third world countries are far weaker than those covered in either part 2 or part 3.

The fourth issue is ethnicity. The fighting that has taken such a heavy toll on the DRC and so many other countries has myriad causes. High on any list is the divisions between ethnic groups forced to live in the same jurisdictions by their colonial rulers, who drew often arbitrary boundaries for their own purposes. In the case of the DRC, the impact of ethnicity is particularly tragic because the fighting began in the late 1980s as a by-product of civil wars in Burundi and Rwanda. There, Tutsi and Hutu refugees, fleeing what could only be called genocide, ended up in massive camps in what was then still Zaire and other neighboring countries. The refugees in turn, heightened resentment of their fellow Tutsi and Hutu, as well as members of other ethnic groups, toward the dictatorial regime of Mobutu Sese Seko in Kinshasa.

The final issue is the environment. Press reports about coltan and other seemingly minor issues in the third world also invariably draw our attention to environmental issues. Obviously, there are important environmental threats looming on the horizon—in this case

the shocking decline in the elephant and gorilla populations. More often than not, they are part of a broader danger to the world's ecosystem. To cite but two examples, around the world, species are becoming extinct at more than a thousand times the natural rate, thus depriving the world of plants and animals that could well provide new medicines or otherwise help meet human needs. Similarly, the destruction of rain forests and the expansion of deserts both contribute to global climate change that could jeopardize much of human existence in the decades to come. But, as the journalist Robert Kaplan has most pointedly shown us, environmental decay combines with poverty, ethnic tensions, and a weak state to create a political tinderbox in much of the third world, which he labels "the coming anarchy." In his words,

**it is time to understand "the environment" for what it is: the national security issue of the early twenty-first century [because] an increasingly large number of people will be stuck in history, living in shantytowns where attempts to rise above poverty, cultural dysfunction, and ethnic strife will be doomed by a lack of water to drink, soil to till, and space to survive in.<sup>2</sup>**

We do not have to go as far as Kaplan does in predicting unprecedented levels of political violence and crime in the third world. Nonetheless, as we will see throughout part 4, unmet human needs contribute both to worsening environmental conditions and to heightened conflict.

## Thinking About the Third World

### *Why Study the Third World?*

It is easy to convince students in countries like the United States that they should understand politics in other liberal democracies, because doing so can tell them a lot about their own country and its institutions, values, and problems. At first glance, it is less obvious why we should worry about the third world, because countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have so little in common with the West.

In fact, the third world is vitally important to us all. As we will see in more detail in the final chapter, we live in an interdependent world in which everything that happens affects everyone and everything else. Nowhere is this easier to see than in the speed with which the

<sup>2</sup>Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post-Cold War* (New York: Random House, 2000), 19, 23.

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME

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Academics argue about everything, including terminology. Sometimes these debates help clarify matters; sometimes they don't. Debates over what to call the third world have been particularly intense.

Over the years, each of the following terms have been in vogue: *developing*, *underdeveloped*, *less developed*, *third world*, and *the south*. All were tried as part of the search for a term that would convey the plight of most of these countries but do so in a nonpejorative manner. The situation has only gotten more complicated as some of them have managed to achieve a degree of economic success, giving birth to such new terms as NICs (newly industrializing countries) and the fourth world.

I have decided to stick with the most commonly used term—the third world. It was coined a half-century ago by a French analyst who wished to distinguish the countries shaking off colonial rule from the Western democracies (first world) and the members of the Soviet bloc (second).

United States and its allies launched massive attacks against Afghanistan in the weeks following the 9/11 terrorism attacks.

But there is another, perhaps more important reason. As we will also see, countries in the third world have their own problems. However, to a degree few of us in the West want to acknowledge, the third world has also been a place where the rich countries exported their problems and waged their battles. It was in the third world that Europeans and Americans established most of their colonies. More recently, almost all the wars during the cold war and post-cold war periods have occurred in Asia, Africa, or Latin America.

The events of 9/11 also drove home the fact that many of these conflicts have a direct impact on life in Europe and North America. This is true only in part because the north is subject to attack by terrorists today and may also be vulnerable to attacks by more conventional forces tomorrow.

Even before 9/11, the third world was important because we in the north are dependent on it. Most of our natural resources and more and more of our relatively unsophisticated manufactured goods come from there. As the **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** oil embargo of 1973–74 and the periodic oil crises since then have shown, when third world commodity producers are able to band together, they can wreak havoc on northern economies.

In short, we ignore the third world at our peril. The failure to take the third world and its problems seriously has kept us from seeing two critical trends. First, we have been slow to acknowledge the role of the rich and powerful countries in creating and sustaining the economic and political woes in the third world. Second, we have been even more reluctant to come to grips with the fact that few third world countries can solve their problems without significant support from the north.

## The Basics

### Poverty

The third world is one of the most controversial subjects studied by political scientists today. Indeed, we cannot even agree on what to call this part of the world, let alone which countries to include in it. In practice, however, most of the definitions and lists of countries overlap significantly because they all have one key criterion in common—poverty.

The third world includes the world's poorest countries and three-fifths of its population—three-fourths if we include China. As the map at the beginning of this chapter shows, it covers all of Africa and Latin America and much of South and Southeast Asia. GNP per capita in the richest countries is almost sixty times larger than in the poorest, which also have almost four times as many people. The richest countries consume nearly twenty times as much energy. A quarter of the people in the third world have to get by on less than \$1 a day, including 2.5 million people in the capital city of the DRC alone.

In the United States, only about 10 out of every 1,000 babies die in infancy. For the world as a whole, that number is 75, and for Africa, it is 113.

The average Congolese woman will live to age 51, and the average man to only 46. In the third world as a whole, the lack of access to safe drinking water is the most important—and avoidable—cause of the deaths of more than 40,000 children daily. The United States does not even bother gathering this statistic.

There is one doctor for every 500 Americans, as opposed to one for every 25,000 people in the DRC. As is the case with almost every indicator of social and economic well-being, Africans face the most appalling medical situation. Indeed, as table 12.1 shows, the AIDS epidemic is more widespread in Africa than anywhere else. In addition, because its governments and people cannot afford the “cocktails” of medicines that are keeping many HIV-infected patients alive in the West, the death rate is twenty times that in the rest of the world. The situation is particularly acute in southern Africa, where as

**TABLE 12.1** Estimated AIDS Cases and Deaths, People Aged 15–49, Up to 1997

REGION	CASES PER 100,000 PEOPLE	DEATHS PER 100,000 PEOPLE
Americas	604	31
Europe	153	3
Eastern Mediterranean	136	9
Southeast Asia	737	30
Western Pacific	83	2
Africa	7,463	646
All WHO members	1,009	76

Source: World Health Organization, reported in the *Washington Post*, 9 Aug. 1998, A21.

many as 25 percent of adults are already infected by HIV. The situation is not quite as bad in the DRC. But still, nearly a million children are orphans because their parents died of AIDS.

In Africa and Asia as a whole, fewer than 40 percent of the people can read and write. Yet most of these countries have to cope with a “brain drain,” as highly educated young people emigrate to Europe and North America because of the widespread unemployment among university graduates at home.

It is not just in the poorest third world countries that people suffer. In South Korea and Brazil, the infant mortality rate is, respectively, three and six times that of the United States. In each of these countries, only three-fourths of the people have access to drinkable water, and there are only about a third as many physicians on a per capita basis as in Europe and the United States.

There is no commonly agreed-on measure of the level of wealth or development in the world’s countries. GNP, for example, has properly been criticized for missing the noneconomic side of a country’s quality of life. This chapter’s basic table, therefore, presents the scores on the United Nations Development Program’s **Human Development Index (HDI)**, which combines data on GNP with that on literacy and life expectancy. The fact is, however, that the same depressing picture of the third world emerges no matter which of the available indices we choose.

In the least developed countries, almost 70 percent of the rural population is below the poverty line. For the third world as a whole, more than a third of the rural population does not get enough to eat. And the number of poor people in the countryside has increased by 40 percent over the past quarter-century.

Most third world countries lack anything approaching a diversified economy. They tend, instead, to rely on the export of a few primary commodities, such as oil in

**TABLE 12.2** Debt as a Proportion of GNP (in percentages)

REGION	1981	1991	1998
Sub-Saharan Africa	28.6	107.9	71.8
East Asia and Pacific	16.9	28.2	84.8
South Asia	17.0	35.6	29.0
Middle East and North Africa	31.0	58.8	34.7
Latin America and Caribbean	35.5	41.3	69.0

Source: Data for 1981 and 1991 adapted from R. J. Barry Jones, *Globalization and Interdependence in the International Political Economy* (London: Pinter, 1995), 159. Data for 1998 from World Bank, *World Development Report, 2000*, www.worldbank.org, accessed 9 Nov. 2001.

Iraq and Nigeria, or coffee and cotton in Nicaragua. Often, prices for these commodities fluctuate wildly, and when they fall sharply, there is little hard currency available to pay for food, manufactured goods, or other needed imports. Because their own money is not considered acceptable by northern banks and companies, they have to use dollars, euros, pounds, or other scarce hard currencies to pay for those imports.

The expansion of world trade has brought with it unprecedented levels of debt. At the height of the international **debt crisis** in the late 1980s, Argentina owed “northern” banks and governments over \$60 billion. For Brazil and Mexico, that figure was well over \$100 billion. At the end of the 1990s, the third world owed northern banks, governments, and international financial institutions more than \$2.8 trillion, or more than \$400 per person. In the mid-1990s countries as diverse as Brazil, Cameroon, Guatemala, India, Kenya, and Madagascar all paid more in interest on their loans than they did on social services. (See table 12.2.)

To make matters even worse, the prospects for catching up to the advanced countries are not very good. Although the **newly industrializing countries (NICs)** and some others have done quite well in recent years, per capita GNP in all the low- and middle-income countries is less than 10 percent of that in the countries covered in part 2. And perhaps most depressing of all, because the poorest and richest countries both grew at a rate of 2.4 percent per year during the 1990s, the gap between them has not narrowed at all.

### Environmental Threats

The difficulties facing the third world are magnified by its rapidly growing population. The population in the poorest countries is increasing at three-and-a-half times the rate as in the richest ones. Even this figure underestimates the problem because population growth is exponential—that is, it builds on itself, like compound in-



© Reuters NewMedia Inc./CORBIS

A typical scene in the third world. Children play in water from an open sewer. Not surprisingly, the cholera rate is very high.

terest on a savings account. At 0.6 percent, it will take 120 years for the population of the richest countries to double, a rate they can easily absorb given projected rates of economic growth. At 2 percent, it will take less than thirty-five years, and in countries like the DRC, where the annual increase tops 4 percent, it will not even take a generation. Egypt, with its already overstretched economy and ecosystem, adds a million people to its population every nine months.

Poverty and population growth are combining to produce an ecological time bomb. Population growth puts demands on environments that over the centuries have often provided little more than a marginal existence. Poverty, in turn, has made people desperate, willing to trade the future of the environment for food for themselves and their families today. Thus, many—perhaps most—of the people who slash and burn the trees in the Amazon rain forests are peasants who can provide for their families only by farming that land. In Asia and Africa, about 15 percent of the land has been severely damaged. Everywhere, development is putting marginally adequate water supplies and irrigation systems at risk. In short, throughout the third world, human action is threatening what environmentalists call the **carrying capacity** of the land.

### Ethnicity and Conflict

These problems have been compounded by racial, linguistic, ethnic, and religious conflict. This is especially true in Africa and Asia, where the colonial powers paid little or no attention to traditional alignments when they drew boundaries during the nineteenth century, most of which are still in use. This is less true in the Americas, though almost all those countries have significant minorities of “Indians” and people of African descent.

When political scientists started studying the third world in the 1950s, most of them assumed that the spread of the mass media and Western culture would gradually erode people’s attachment to what were viewed as “primitive” identities.

Put simply, they were wrong. In the past few decades, quite the opposite has happened. If anything, these identities have become much more important, both in and of themselves, and as a source of conflict within and between countries. There will be plenty of examples of ethnic identity and conflict to follow, but none rival the genocide in Rwanda.

On 6 April 1994, an airplane carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down, killing all aboard. This incident set off waves of violence between

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## IF THE WORLD HAD 100 PEOPLE

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The World Game is an educational organization that helps people understand what it means to live in an interdependent world. Its college version involves laying a massive map of the world on a gymnasium floor on which 100 people make some basic decisions about allocating the world's natural and human resources. The basic characteristics of these 100 people reflect current global demographic trends:

- 51 are female
- 57 are Asians
- 14 are from the Western Hemisphere
- 70 are non-White
- 30 are Christian
- 70 are illiterate
- 50 suffer from malnutrition
- 80 live in substandard housing
- 6, all from the United States, own half the wealth
- One has a college education
- None owns a computer

the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi populations in both countries, which Philip Gourevitch chillingly describes in the opening of his award-winning book on the genocide:

**Decimation means the killing of every tenth person in a population and in the spring and early summer of 1994 a program of massacres decimated the Republic of Rwanda. Although the killing was low-tech—performed largely by machete—it was carried out at dazzling speed; of an original population of about seven and a half million, at least eight hundred thousand were killed in just a hundred days. Rwandans often speak of a million deaths, and they may be right. The dead of Rwanda accumulated at nearly three times the rate of Jewish dead during the Holocaust. It was the most efficient mass killing since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>3</sup>**

Rwanda is not alone. At any time, there are twenty to forty wars being fought in the third world, almost all of which have ethnic origins. Although few societies

have had to deal with conflict anywhere near as bloody as that in Rwanda or Burundi, all are bitter and intense. In the case of Sierra Leone, rebels asked tens of thousands of captive male peasants a simple question: “Long sleeves or short?” Then they cut off that person's arm at the elbow or the wrist, depending on how he answered. In chapter 15 we will see that South Africa has made major strides in overcoming centuries of racial division and discrimination. Alas, the experiences of Rwanda and Sierra Leone are far more common.

### Globalization

The final defining characteristic of the third world is the role global forces play in shaping what citizens and leaders alike can do. As the book's subtitle suggests, global forces are limiting the room to maneuver any state has at its disposal. This is especially true of the third world for the reasons former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere pithily laid out in the sentence that begins this chapter.

It may be something of an exaggeration to say that decisions made in Washington, D.C., are more important to Tanzanians than those made in Dar es-Salaam, their capital city. If so, this is not much of an overstatement.

Tanzania *is* a sovereign country that passes its own laws, issues its own decrees, and reaches its own judicial decisions. However, what happens in places like Tanzania is largely determined elsewhere—sometimes by force, and other times as a result of subtler and often unintended consequences of actions by power holders in our increasingly interdependent world.

These relationships are hard to document. And their impact, of course, varies from country to country and from time to time. Nonetheless, they are unquestionably important and cannot be ignored, however uncertain our understanding of them may be.

Whether they like it or not, almost all third world countries are now being integrated into the global economic and cultural systems. However, they are not being brought in as equals.

The most obvious of these links are economic. In the section on public policy later in the chapter, we will explore how third world governments are coping (or not coping, as the case may be) with global economic forces. Here, we will look only at the situations these countries find themselves in.

Political colonialism is long gone. However, the former colonial powers still have considerable economic leverage. In the 1970s and 1980s, radical social scientists popularized the idea of **dependency** to describe a situation in which the legal ties of colonialism gave way to in-

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<sup>3</sup>Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1998), frontespiece.

formal mechanisms of economic control. Such ideas are far less popular in academic and political circles today than they were a generation ago. The shifting tides of political fashion, however, have not changed the reality of third world economic weakness and first world economic strength.

**Multinational corporations (MNCs)** headquartered in the north still dominate the more modern sectors of the economy. (See table 12.3.) Such companies have always repatriated the lion's share of their profits back to their home countries. In recent years, they have tended to locate operations that require the lowest-skilled labor and produce the most pollution in the third world. To be sure, many of the people who work for these companies are better off than they would have been otherwise, and most MNCs do contribute to local economic growth. At the same time, however, these countries are ever more at the mercy of institutions and events outside their borders. The largest of these companies are massive, controlling resources that make them richer than many third world countries themselves. And, as the table also shows, they all have their headquarters in western Europe, North America, Japan, and South Korea.

Some countries have been able to retain a substantial degree of control, especially over their natural resources. The most obvious and spectacular example of this was the OPEC cartel, which forced worldwide oil prices sharply upward in the 1970s and brought untold riches to the member nations. But OPEC is very much the exception to the rule of economic as well as political power concentrated in the north.

Some observers claim that the north is helping out by providing **foreign aid**. But few of the rich countries—and none of the largest ones—have lived up to an international commitment to contribute 0.7 percent of their GNP each year to development and other forms of assistance. There are doubts, as well, about how effective foreign aid has been in helping these countries achieve the kind of development that can sustain domestic growth over the long term. More common are the large factories, dams, and farms that sit idle because the countries themselves lack the money to buy the spare parts or the expertise needed to keep them running.

Finally, there has been a marked shift in global economic preferences that began prior to the end of the cold war and that has accelerated since then. As we saw in parts 2 and 3, almost all northern governments, multinational companies, and independent agencies have opted for liberal, market-oriented development strategies, which the third world countries have “had” to adopt as well. The word *had* is in quotes because no one put a gun to the head of third world officials. Nonethe-

**TABLE 12.3** The Leading Multinational Corporations by Country of Origin

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF MNCS
Japan	21
United States	13
Germany	6
Great Britain/Dutch joint venture	2
France	2
South Korea	2
Italy	2
Switzerland	1
Great Britain	1

Source: Adapted from “The Fortune Global Five Hundred: The World’s Largest Corporations,” *Fortune*, 4 Aug. 1997, F1–F12.

less, as we will see in the country chapters that follow, they had little choice but to open their borders to trade and investment from abroad, export goods for which there is a niche in the global market, and reduce public ownership and other forms of state intervention.

Supporters of this approach, known as **structural adjustment**, assume that in the long run third world countries will find areas of comparative advantage that spark sustained growth. In the shorter term, however, these trends are widening the gaps between the rich and poor within these countries, and between themselves and the countries of the more affluent north.

Just as important, though perhaps even harder to pin down, is the growing spread of a common culture, also dominated by the north and especially by the United States. Such ties have existed since colonial times, with the spread of Western religions and languages figuring most prominently in what many in the third world see as the cultural subjugation of their peoples.

### Key Questions

We will use the same basic framework developed in figure 1.1 in the next five chapters on the third world. However, as this discussion has already suggested, we will have to go farther and ask three more questions that help us understand why so many third world countries face such serious difficulties:

- Why are global forces so much more influential in the third world?
- Why are third world societies so divided?
- Why are most states in the third world so weak?

Including so many countries in one category masks dramatic differences, which have led some observers to question whether any label like the “third world” still

makes sense. Some of these countries are so poor that any discussion of their political or economic conditions can bring tears to the eyes of even the most dispassionate observer. Other countries, especially the NICs, have actually made tremendous strides in recent years and are as well off as Spain or Portugal were a generation ago.

Four countries will be covered in the chapters that follow—India, Iraq, South Africa, and Mexico. They were chosen to reflect the range of issues facing the third world as a whole. They also demonstrate some of the most important differences within the third world in terms of political systems and economic conditions. However, because the four constitute only a tiny fraction of the third world's states, we have included a chapter on Nigeria, as well as briefer discussions of a number of other third world countries, on the web site that accompanies this book.

## The Evolution of Politics in the Third World

### *Imperialism and Its Legacy*

In our examination of the origins of liberal democratic and communist states, domestic forces were more important than global ones. To be sure, the European wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries left their mark on France and Germany. China and Japan suffered at the hands of the imperialists. The carnage of World War I contributed heavily to the collapse of Russian autocracy. But, on balance, those forces paled in comparison with domestic factors, such as the rise of the capitalist and working classes, the power the Bolsheviks amassed in Russia after seizing power, or the “top down” modernization of Japan following the Meiji Restoration.

With but a handful of exceptions, the modern states of Africa, Asia, and Central and South America all have their most important roots in **imperialism**, the one experience they have in common. Almost all of them were ruled by white men from Europe and North America. Even the few countries that retained their legal independence were not able to escape the corrosive effects of northern economics and culture.

From the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, statesmen, entrepreneurs, missionaries, and adventurers flocked to the Americas, Africa, and most of Asia in pursuit of the three Gs: god, gold, and glory. In virtually every case, the colonizers looked down on the cultures they encountered and ignored the wishes and needs of the people they subjugated. Everywhere,

boundaries were drawn to suit the colonizers' wishes—boundaries that often divided existing political units and lumped traditional adversaries together.

There were two distinct phases to European colonial expansion. The first came in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, British, and French carved up the Americas. These countries also established beachheads in Africa to support their expanding commercial networks in India and the Americas, including the infamous slave trade. The second wave came mostly in the nineteenth century, when the forts and trading posts were transformed into full-blown colonies in Africa and much of Asia.

The colonizers were convinced that they had encountered primitive peoples. This prompted the arrogance of what Rudyard Kipling called “the white man's burden,” according to which everything Western was superior while everything in the indigenous culture was inferior:

Take up the white man's burden,  
Send forth the best ye breed,  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need  
To wait in heavy harness  
On fluttered fold and wild,  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples  
Half devil and half child.

Given this arrogance and these cultural blinders, the imperialists proceeded to undermine some highly sophisticated civilizations—the Aztecs, Incas, and Mayans in the Americas; the great kingdoms of precolonial Africa; and the various cultures of India and China. Most of the new colonies had relatively unsophisticated **subsistence economies**. They were not affluent societies, but most produced enough food and other goods to meet basic survival needs.

But the colonizers wanted their newly acquired possessions to turn a profit. Therefore, they introduced commercial agriculture based on one or a handful of crops to be exported back to the mother country. The Central American countries became known as “banana republics” because of the way United Fruit and other North American companies concentrated production. Massive coffee and tea plantations were built in the Central Highlands of Kenya. Cotton was sent back to factories in Britain, destroying long-established Indian spinning and weaving industries. Most tragically of all, regions that had previously been self-supporting now had to import food and other vital commodities.

Soon, minerals, oil, and other natural resources were added to the colonies' list of exports, and eventu-

ally, there was some industrialization. But the general situation remained the same. Decisions about what to grow, mine, or build were mostly made in Europe and North America. The profits mostly went there as well.

These common trends notwithstanding, there was also a great deal of variation in European and North American colonialism, which largely coincided with the time a given region was taken over. In most of the Americas, the colonists gained control of relatively sparsely settled lands and then proceeded to wipe out most of the indigenous population. Where large numbers of native peoples survived, they were integrated into the dominant Spanish or Portuguese cultures. There also was, of course, the forced relocation of millions of Africans, brought to the Americas and Caribbean islands as slaves.

During the nineteenth century, colonization occurred for the most part in Africa and South Asia. There, the colonial powers encountered a more serious “numbers problem.” Because there were many times more Africans and Asians than Europeans, the colonial powers could not hope to govern their new conquests alone. Therefore, they had to incorporate growing numbers of “locals” into a system of government that the British called **indirect rule**.

In East Asia and the Middle East, colonialism came later and had a more uneven impact. Some countries, like Korea, were never fully taken over by the West. Others, like present-day Iraq, were part of the Ottoman Empire, which was not based in the West. In such countries, colonization was not intrusive enough to get very far in breaking down traditional cultural values or social structures.

## *Independence*

There were three waves of decolonization. The first began during the 1770s, with the thirteen colonies in British North America that became the United States, and spread through most of the rest of the Western Hemisphere over the next half century. In every one of these cases, however, it was not the native peoples—the colonized—who rose up and won their independence, but the descendants of the colonizers who had migrated from Europe.

Although one author has described the United States as the “first new nation,” most accounts of decolonization are restricted to the mostly Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the Caribbean and in Central and South America. Independence came early there in large part because of the growing domestic weakness of Spain

and Portugal, which left them unable to maintain their hold over the colonies.

As chapter 16 will make clear, these revolutions settled little. Most of the newly independent countries suffered at least another century of turmoil in which rival elites vied for power. Meanwhile, they remained on the bottom rung of the capitalist world economy, with Britain and the United States taking over Spain’s and Portugal’s economic role and managing the trade of food and other primary products and, later, low-quality industrial goods. Many nominally independent Central American states soon had to deal with the United States as a military as well as an economic power, because it sent in the Marines whenever it felt that its financial or security interests were imperiled.

The second wave was also limited to a single region—the Middle East. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, and some countries that had been in it gained at least their nominal independence. Others, such as Iraq, passed to British or French control, though most of them had become independent before World War II broke out.

The third wave occurred during the second half of the twentieth century. By the beginning of World War II, there was substantial anticolonial sentiment in most of Asia and Africa, the best known of which was the nonviolent protest movement led by Mohandas Gandhi in India. As we will see in the next chapter, Gandhi and his allies pressured the British into agreeing to grant India its independence after the war in exchange for its at least tacit support as long as the fighting continued. Despite some false starts, the British lived up to their word, and India and Pakistan became independent states within the British Commonwealth of Nations in 1947.

Over the next quarter-century, most of the remaining colonies gained their independence. Sometimes, the colonial powers hung on, and independence required a protracted revolutionary struggle, as in Vietnam and Algeria. Other times, independence came rather easily, as in Nigeria. By the late 1970s, this second wave of decolonization was all but complete. Today, Europe and the United States have only a few tiny outposts left.

In a few former colonies, such as India, Israel, Vietnam, and Algeria, independence movements took hold at a time when the Europeans had no intention of letting their colonies go. When independence did come, these new states found themselves with a large proportion of their populations committed to the new regime, which was run by the same groups that had led the struggle against colonial rule. This unity eroded with time, but it did give these countries a host of advantages to start

with, including a well-trained and respected elite that enjoyed quite a bit of legitimacy.

Most of the other former colonies were not so fortunate. By the late 1950s, it had become clear to most Europeans that their colonial empires could not last. Although independence itself therefore came easier in most of Africa and the Middle East, its very ease obscured problems that were to plague these countries almost immediately thereafter. In particular, they lacked either the trained leadership or the unity and commitment on the part of much of the population that figured so prominently in India's nonviolent Congress or Algeria's violent National Liberation Front. In fact, as we will see in the chapter on Iraq, independence often came without any significant development in national identity. These new leaders had support only among either the small westernized elite or their own regional or ethnic constituencies. They lacked the national followings developed by a Gandhi or Nehru in India. In other words, they took over countries that had weak institutions and limited support from the population as a whole, both of which were to quickly worsen once the exhilaration of independence wore off, as it quickly did.

### *Postcolonial Problems*

At first, there was tremendous optimism about these new countries. Most had well-trained and internationally respected leaders presiding over institutions patterned after those in London, Paris, and Washington. Political scientists and political leaders assumed that what they mistook as the enthusiasm of the newly independent peoples, plus aid from the outside, would lead to a rapid improvement in the quality of life and the development of strong and democratic states. (See table 12.4.)

This is not what happened. Almost all of the new governments degenerated into military, single-party, or other forms of authoritarian rule. Many faced bloody civil wars when the antagonisms between the ethnic groups the colonial powers had forced to live together came to the political surface. Regional conflicts often turned into proxy battles between the superpowers, thereby worsening an already difficult situation.

In many former colonies, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and racial tensions disrupted political life and eroded what little sense of national identification and commitment had accumulated during the years before independence. Far from being helpful, northern governments and businesses imposed their economic and, sometimes, political will. Meanwhile, the lack of experience of the new leaders and shortage of resources available to them made maintaining order difficult and made

**TABLE 12.4** Key Events in the History of the Third World

YEAR	EVENT
1450 on	Exploration and then colonization of the "new world"
1600 on	Slave trade
1776	United States declares independence
1810–30	Most of Central and South America gains independence
1867	India formally taken over by British government
1880s	"Scramble for Africa"
1919	German colonies pass to Allied powers as League of Nations mandates
Late 1940s	India and other countries gain independence
1960s	Most remaining colonies gain independence
Mid-1970s	Portuguese African empire collapses
1997	Hong Kong reverts to China

reaching broader social and economic goals nearly impossible. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the business elite, political leaders, the military, and others who felt they had much to lose proved willing to toss out the seemingly democratic institutions most of these countries inherited from their erstwhile colonial masters.

### **Political Culture in the Third World**

In part 2 we saw that a political culture based on a common identity, shared values, and sense of legitimacy plays a vital role in sustaining the established liberal democracies. In part 3 we saw how hard it is for the former communist countries to develop similar attitudes and beliefs. Here, we will encounter even starker evidence of what happens when a country's political culture reflects divisions over basic attitudes about the country and the rules of the political game.

### *Identity*

We cannot blame colonialism for all of the problems with political culture in the third world, especially as colonial rule recedes into history. However, imperialism remains an important long-term cause of the lack of a national identity.

In part 2 we saw that most people in the liberal democracies define themselves first and foremost in national terms. In large part because of the way the colonial conquerors established borders in Africa and most of Asia, this is a hard thing for people there to do.

In West Africa, for instance, different ethnic groups live in what amount to bands stretching east and west and which parallel the Atlantic coast. In the 1880s and

1890s, however, the Europeans established colonial boundaries that ran from north to south, thereby splitting many ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups into several jurisdictions.

In other words, most third world countries are artificial entities, with little or nothing that psychically holds their inhabitants together. To be sure, soccer fans have been treated to the antics of wildly enthusiastic Nigerians at recent World Cups and Olympics. However, international soccer is one of the few things that lead them to think of themselves as Nigerians. More often, their political views are derived from their regional or ethnic identities.

### *Division*

The lack of a common national identity is a major cause of the divisions that have wracked most third world countries, including those covered in detail here. Preexisting ethnic divisions, worsened by the colonial powers' arbitrary drawing of national boundaries, have exacted a terrible cost by diverting scarce resources that could otherwise be used for economic and social development. Dozens of African countries have suffered through bloody civil wars. Even where wars have not occurred, there has been intense conflict, as we will see in all four of the country chapters that follow.

When political scientists first began studying the third world in earnest in the late 1950s, many expected that these predominantly rural and poor societies would give way to Asian, African, and Latin American versions of the industrial democracies. With time, the argument went, education and urbanization would lead people to become more aware of the world and to take on Western values and aspirations.

However, the hoped-for cultural change failed to materialize. Then, as ethnic conflict erupted in much of the third world, political scientists began to explore the resilience of the supposedly weak, "traditional" societies.

Among other things, they found that many institutions reinforcing older values persisted. For example, many countries still have strong informal **patron-client relations** that have their roots in feudalism. As in Europe during the Middle Ages or in the Mafia today, people are tied together in hierarchical relationships in which they have mutual responsibilities and obligations. Lords, bosses, and patrons are more powerful than their clients. Nonetheless, all are tied together through financial, military, and cultural bonds, which have proven remarkably hard to break in most parts of the third world.

Similarly, the assumption that the new nations would become more secular as they modernized has



### USEFUL WEB SITES

There are not all that many web sites on the third world, per se. There are, however, many good ones that touch on much of what is covered in this chapter. The best of these is the new site on globalization created by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

[www.globalization101.org](http://www.globalization101.org)

The Virtual Library also has good sites on sustainable development and on microcredit.

[www.ulb.ac.be/ceese/meta/sustvl.html](http://www.ulb.ac.be/ceese/meta/sustvl.html)

[www.gdrc.org/icm/](http://www.gdrc.org/icm/)

The Center for World Indigenous Studies focuses on the status of ethnic minorities in the third world. The Third World Network is a good, left-of-center source for news and analysis on development issues.

[www.cwis.org](http://www.cwis.org)

[www.twinside.org.sg](http://www.twinside.org.sg)

Many international organizations and NGOs issue regular reports filled with analysis and data, including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and the World Resources Institute.

[www.worldbank.org/wdr](http://www.worldbank.org/wdr)

[www.undp.org/hdro](http://www.undp.org/hdro)

[www.wri.org](http://www.wri.org)

proved unfounded. If anything, religion has become more important and divisive in much of Asia and Africa. To some degree, these conflicts pit Christians against adherents of the religions the colonists and missionaries found when they arrived. Such is the case in much of West Africa, where ethnic conflicts are frequently exacerbated by antagonisms between Christians along the coast and Muslims in the interior. In other cases, such as India, the conflict is between religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups that have been at odds for centuries. Finally, contrary to what scholars initially expected, there has been a tremendous upsurge in **fundamentalism**, especially among Muslims who fear that modernity in the guise of westernization is a threat to what they hold dear and is anything but a step forward.

In some instances, most notably in the Middle East, political cultures have evolved in ways that have left people and leaders strongly preferring *not* to develop along Western lines. The Islamic Republic that has ruled

Iran since the 1979 revolution that overthrew the shah is in many respects a rejection of everything Western and modern. The shah's grandiose industrial and commercial projects, and his increasingly cosmopolitan society, have given way to more traditional customs, including the strict application of Islamic law and the removal of women from almost all arenas of public life.

Of course, it's not just Iran. Throughout the Muslim world, for instance, women are once again wearing the veil that is symbolic of their lower status in Islamic society. More generally, Muslim peoples are coming to see their religion, and the broader values and lifestyle it embraces, as something to have pride in, and even as something far superior to industrialization, democracy, and Western culture.

In short, rapid change can be a destabilizing force. And this is true not only in the third world. As we saw in part 2, many people are struggling to keep up with the technological revolution and with other economic changes sweeping the industrialized democracies. However, social and economic change has been particularly disruptive in the third world precisely because so many of the "new" ideas are Western and thus at odds with traditional values. Also, many of the social and economic developments require the shedding or, at best, alteration of long-standing practices.

Although it is hard to generalize, no doubt one of the by-products of cultural change has been additional demands placed on governments, as depicted in the figure on the inside front cover. To some degree, this simply reflects the fact that more people have the time and skills needed to organize politically and to put pressure on whoever is governing them. To some degree, too, it reflects the fact that changing social, economic, and political conditions have touched raw political nerves. Worldwide, new groups have been spawned all along the political spectrum—if it makes sense to speak of a single political spectrum—including many that want to slow down and others that want to speed up the pace of change. In turn, groups have formed within elites that are increasingly committed to retaining the status quo and, with it, their own power and privileges.

To make sense of these rather abstract points, briefly consider two examples, the first of which we will return to in more detail in the next chapter. In India, a Hindu is born into one of four castes or into the so-called untouchables. These groups, in turn, are subdivided into smaller communities, or *jati*, usually on the basis of their members' traditional occupation (for example, grocer, tanner, or teacher).

The traditional communities remain important despite the many attempts to remove at least the worst of

the discriminatory practices untouchables have been subjected to merely because their ancestors held jobs in which they dealt with animals, dead people, or human excrement. As India has become more urbanized and industrialized, the historical link between *jati* and profession has declined, and some of the restrictions it imposed on people (whom they can marry or who can prepare their food) are no longer as important. However, caste and *jati* remain extremely significant politically, because the patron-client and other relationships that keep them so strong are also the mainstays of the political party organizations at the all-important state level.

In other words, some Hindus have modified some of their cultural norms because they have had to. After all, it is very hard to tell the *jati* of the people who prepare their food when they fly on an airplane! But these values have not disappeared. In some politically important respects, they are, if anything, stronger in ways that tend to deepen divisions and hinder the prospects for either national unity or democracy.

The second example, of course, is the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. These obviously did not reflect a traditional division within a state. Rather, they forced us all to confront just how far some people are prepared to take their hatred of the United States and Western civilization. Analysts are still debating how much U.S. foreign policy toward Israel, for instance, led to the attacks and how much they reflect what Samuel Huntington has called a "clash of civilizations." Although it will probably be years before political scientists and historians reach a consensus on the causes of 9/11, these kinds of factors have to be in the explanatory mix of such tragic events and of contemporary terrorism in general.

### *A Lack of Legitimacy*

Finally, few third world regimes enjoy much legitimacy. There is little of the tolerance of, trust in, or satisfaction with the regime we find in the liberal democracies. It remains an open question whether a democracy needs such a culture. (Also see the conclusion to this chapter.) But clearly the cultural shifts, as well as those in the patterns of political participation we are about to discuss, have heightened *intolerance*, *mistrust*, and *dissatisfaction*.

## **Political Participation in the Third World**

**W**e can divide political participation into two main types: activities that provide support for the authorities, and those that place demands

on them. In part 2 we saw that people in the industrialized democracies resort to the kinds of demands that could threaten the existence of the regime only under the most unusual of circumstances. What's more, they frequently engage in "supportive" participation that, at least indirectly, bolsters the regime. There may not be a lot of political content to such acts as singing the national anthem before a baseball game. Nonetheless, such symbolic forms of participation reflect the widespread support accorded the state, if not the specific men and women who are in office at the time.

Political participation is very different in most of the third world. There are political parties, like Mexico's PAN, that try to forge broad coalitions around a few key ideological positions. Similarly, India has trade unions, women's movements, and other interest groups reminiscent of those in the industrialized democracies.

However, do not read too much into such examples. Even in countries with reasonably open political systems, there is less of the balance between supporting and demanding participation than we find in the industrialized democracies. Over the years, such countries have come to face more and more pressure "from below" that has led to massive waves of protest, if not revolution itself.

In those countries with authoritarian regimes, the patterns of political participation are more reminiscent of what we saw in the former Soviet Union. In the West, we tend to think of participation as a "bottom up" phenomenon, in which citizens participate voluntarily in order to have their views heard by those "above" them. But this is not always the case in the third world. In countries with single-party or military governments, much of the participation comes from the "top down." For example, in Iraq before and after the Gulf War, there were large demonstrations in support of the Iraqi government's intransigence vis-à-vis the West, but most commentators wrote them off because they were orchestrated by Saddam Hussein's regime.

It is a mistake, however, to write such participation off as merely cynical manipulation of the masses by the elite. Like the demonstrations in favor of Chairman Mao Zedong at the height of China's Cultural Revolution, such activities often reflect genuine enthusiasm and add to the commitment of the people involved.

Similarly, there are many examples akin to the Chinese Communist Party's campaigns in which the state mobilizes people in an attempt to implement policies that its weak and unreliable bureaucracies cannot handle. These, too, may be portrayed as cynical and manipulative efforts by the state, as in the literacy campaigns of the Iraqi and Nicaraguan governments in the 1980s.

In other cases, however, even the most skeptical of analysts acknowledge that such campaigns can have a significant and positive impact. Nigeria has few programs it can point to for building bridges across communal lines. However, its Youth Corps sends teams of young people for voluntary service in economic and other developmental projects outside their home states. If nothing else, people in the regions where the volunteers work gain some presumably positive exposure to members of groups they may have antagonistic relations with politically.

Patron-client relations are also more important in the third world than in the countries considered in parts 2 and 3. They have been an important—and non-ideological—part of the LDP machine in Japan. In the chapters that follow, however, we will see that they are an even more central element of politics in the third world in large part because capitalism and the accompanying changes have not gone as far as political scientists first thought they would in destroying traditional social structures. Thus, Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) remained in power for more than seventy years not because of its ideology or accomplishments but because it built a client-based machine that could turn out (and, if need be, manufacture) the vote through the distribution of jobs and other benefits. Similarly, it has been a long time since India's Congress Party was nationalist or socialist in orientation or ideology. It, too, survives largely as an organization of ambitious politicians tied together by their desire for power. In perhaps the most blatant example of "clientelism," there were so many members of the Iraqi elite from Saddam Hussein's hometown that the government decreed that people should no longer include the part of their names that indicated where their family was from, thereby making the number of al-Tikritis in the ruling circles less obvious.

Perhaps most importantly of all is the degree to which political participation is based on **communal groups**. As has been the case with much of political life in the third world, political scientists have sought non-pejorative terms to describe these trends. Terms like *parochial* or *tribal*, which were once in vogue, have now been rejected in favor of less telling but more neutral terms like *communal*.

Whatever term we use, much of political life revolves around religious, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and other "communities." To be sure, there is some of that in the West, including the all-but-total loyalty of African Americans to the Democratic Party. However, such trends pale in comparison with what we will see in the third world.

## Conflict in the Third World

**THE FIRST and most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is that there is more conflict in the third world than in either the liberal democracies or the current and former communist countries. In many cases, conflict targets not only the government of the day and its policies but also the regime. In some, the existence of the nation-state itself is put in jeopardy. The conflict is all the more remarkable because, in the more authoritarian countries, protesters run a major risk by signing a petition, let alone taking to the streets.**

**Not all third world countries are revolutions or civil wars waiting to happen. Still, even in the most stable of them, such as India, deaths during election campaigns are common enough that they rarely draw more than a passing note in the press.**

For instance, it is very hard to assemble a table of Indian election returns like the ones given in part 2 because only three parties run candidates throughout the country. Instead, much of the vote goes to parties that operate only in the single state where their linguistic or religious constituency is clustered. Similarly, the strongest opposition to the regime in Iraq comes from the Kurdish and Shiite communities, which object not so much to Saddam Hussein's religious or foreign policies as to the fact that their people have been systematically discriminated against since the Baath took power in 1969. Even in relatively homogeneous Mexico, the rebellion in the southernmost and poorest state, Chiapas, which broke out in early 1994, has ethnic overtones in that many rebels apparently come from Indian groups that have never been assimilated effectively into the dominant Spanish culture. Finally, the division between the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party in South Africa today has at least as much to do with ethnicity as it does with ideology.

There is one final form of political participation that political scientists are just beginning to pay attention to—the role of **Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)**. As their name suggests, NGOs are unofficial bodies that operate in third world (and other) countries, though many of them are organized internationally and are actually composed of people who are not from the country they are active in. The most visible NGOs, such as *Médecins sans frontières* (Doctors Without Borders) and Save the Children, are not very political. They concen-

trate instead on humanitarian relief during what are euphemistically called “complex emergencies.” Increasingly, however, even the most apolitical NGOs are recognizing that their work invariably brings them into political life. Those that concentrate on development or conflict resolution gladly acknowledge their political role. For countries in which both the state and the formal international community lack resources and credibility, NGOs can play a vital role in efforts to modernize the economy or build civil society from the grassroots level up. (See the discussion of the Grameen Bank later in this chapter and the National Business Initiative in chapter 15 on South Africa.)

## Weak States

### *Types of States*

In parts 2 and 3, the industrialized democracies and the current and former communist regimes were defined in large part in terms of institutional features they shared. There are no such political common denominators for the third world. In fact, we can identify five main types of states found there.

### Democracies

There are a handful of established liberal democracies in the third world. In addition to India, the list includes Costa Rica, most of the island nations in the Caribbean, and several of the smallest and newest African states.

Some observers add a few others, like Mexico, that have maintained some features of democracy. But Mexico cannot be said to guarantee basic individual freedoms, competitive elections, or the rule of law. Similarly, many of us would like to label South Africa democratic, given the remarkable changes there in the few short years since Nelson Mandela's release from prison. However, as we will see in chapter 15, it is far from certain that its multiracial democracy will survive the many social and economic problems facing the country.

Many countries have taken steps toward democracy since the late 1980s. Indeed, 1990 marked the first time that every country in South America had a government chosen through reasonably free and competitive elections. Democratization has occurred more slowly in Africa and most of Asia, but moves in that direction are occurring there as well.

We will return to the issue of democratization at the end of this chapter and as a central theme in the coun-

try chapters to follow. Here, it is enough to note that democratic regimes are very much the exception to the rule and that most of those that do exist are quite fragile, to say the least.

### Single-Party Regimes

Most of the new nations initially adopted liberal constitutions with multiparty systems patterned after those of their colonizers. Few of them, however, lasted.

Especially in Africa, the struggle for independence was typically dominated by a single movement, which became the dominant party after the transfer of power. Often, this group quickly abandoned the liberal democratic constitution and made itself the only legal party.

In some cases, there were elaborate and plausible justifications for such a move. Former president Nyerere of Tanzania likened competitive party systems to a soccer game in which a lot of energy was expended for only a goal or three—energy a new and poor country like his could not afford. More often, the shift to a single-party regime was little more than a power play by one faction in the country's elite, often representing a single ethnic or religious group.

In Tanzania attempts were made to provide for democracy within the Tanzanian African National Union (TANU) in ways that resemble primaries with the Democratic or Republican parties in the United States. In most countries, however, the single party has amounted to little more than political window dressing for a dictatorship.

None of the four countries considered in the rest of part 4 currently has a classic single-party regime. Iraq's started that way under the Baath Party, but as Saddam Hussein consolidated his personal power, the party per se lost influence. Similarly, in Mexico, although other parties existed, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) controlled the Mexican state and dominated policy making for almost the entire twentieth century before it was finally defeated in 2000.

### Military Regimes

Multiparty regimes have also frequently succumbed to military coups. Even though wars between states have been relatively rare in the third world (there were none in South America, for instance, for most of the twentieth century), the military has been involved politically everywhere. In other words, the military has seen itself as having a dual role: to protect the country not only from external threats but also from civil unrest. From the military's perspective, multiparty regimes have turned



Agence France-Presse

Sani Abacha, military leader of Nigeria from 1993 to 1998.

chaotic far too often. Throughout Africa and South America, the twin fears of instability and communist insurrection led the military to seize power time and time again. Consider Nigeria. Under its first two republics (1960–66, 1979–83), the political parties were organized almost exclusively along ethnic lines, making effective government all but impossible. The ensuing instability prompted the military to intervene to quell ethnic protest and political corruption. As has often been the case elsewhere, not only has the military overthrown civilian governments, but one group of soldiers has overthrown another on five occasions there as well.

Some military leaders have tried to do more than simply maintain law and order or enrich themselves. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, many political scientists and other observers believed that, for good or ill, these were the only kinds of regimes that could start third world countries on the road to development. By the end of the decade, however, such governments were in trouble everywhere. Economic growth had started to slow, making the uneven distribution of its benefits a more significant political issue. Protest over economic

conditions combined with opposition to human rights abuses to create powerful movements that removed the military from power throughout South America and, to a lesser degree, in the rest of the third world.

### Personal Dictatorships

Perhaps the most tragic form of government in the third world is dictatorship, such as those run by the Somozas in Nicaragua, Mobutu sese Seko in Zaire, Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos in the Philippines, or, the case we will consider in detail in chapter 14, Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Sometimes, these rulers were the product of military coups; other times, they were able to consolidate power after more or less open elections. Almost always, they were able to stay in control because one of the superpowers was convinced that they were vital allies in the cold war.

The Somozas of Nicaragua are a painfully typical example. For all intents and purposes, the United States put the “dynasty’s” founder, Anastasio Somoza, into power. A succession of administrations had believed that this tiny Central American country was vital to U.S. national security interests and so had periodically sent the Marines in to keep people it opposed from taking control. During the 1930s the Marines were used to help defeat a rebellion led by Augusto Cesar Sandino, whose primary goal was to force the United States out of his country.

Afterward, the Americans made the young Somoza head of the country’s National Guard in large part because he had been educated in the United States and spoke English fluently. Thus began four and a half decades of arbitrary and often brutal rule by the first Somoza and by his two sons, Luis and Anastasio. Opposition was not tolerated, and dissidents were routinely killed. The National Guard was given free reign to strong-arm the Somozas’ political opponents and engage in a wide variety of corrupt activities, including prostitution and gambling. The Somozas themselves stuffed their pockets. By the 1970s they owned the country’s airports, electrical system, cigarette and match companies, the Mercedes-Benz dealership, and as much as half of the land. After the 1972 earthquake that devastated the capital city of Managua, Anastasio Somoza kept most of the millions of dollars in foreign aid sent to rebuild the city, claiming that the weather was warm, so people really didn’t need houses.

The Somozas are all too typical of this kind of ruler. Mobutu built dozens of palaces for himself even though a third or more of his people were starving. After her husband was overthrown, people around the world were

shocked by Imelda Marcos’s collection of thousands of pairs of shoes. Dozens of former dictators have, like former Haitian ruler Jean-Claude Duvalier, led lives of luxury in exile after being forced out of power.

Relatively few of these rulers made it to the end of the 1980s. The Somozas, for example, were finally overthrown in 1979 by revolutionaries inspired by the memory of Sandino. “People power” brought the Marcoses down eight years later. Mobutu was forced into exile and died in 1997. Unfortunately, their successors have not had an easy time of it. Typically, the new leaders took office only to find the treasury looted, the country’s natural resources depleted, and the people extremely impatient. In other words, the dictators’ impact on their countries continued long after they were thrown out of office.

### Failed States

In the regions of the third world states most affected by communal violence, we can no longer speak of sovereign states. In fact, observers are beginning to speak of failed states instead, because the government has lost the ability to exercise the most basic functions. All have governments and officials, but they resemble the Wizard of Oz more than a leader of an effective state. Once we work through the uniforms and the trappings of office, we can see that the leaders are little more than figureheads for a state that at best can control only a tiny fraction of its crime- or war-torn country.

For reasons of space, we will not cover any examples of failed states in this book. However, some observers are convinced that Mexico, India, and Iraq could fall apart if conditions continue to deteriorate. In other words, we will see some of the dynamics that have led to the collapse of governments in such countries as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia in the chapters to follow.

### States and Power

Of the three types of countries considered in this book, those in the third world face the most daunting problems and so are most in need of a reasonably strong state. But few have one.

At first glance, this might come as a surprise. After all, the stories we see in the news often stress the apparent power of these authoritarian rulers. This certainly was the case in accounts of Saddam Hussein after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the Nigerian regime that executed Ken Saro-Wiwa and other environmental activists in 1995, and, most recently, the Taliban in Afghanistan.

But few third world states have been able to do much more than maintain law and order by suppressing dissent, and many have not even accomplished that. There are some exceptions, such as in India, whose state-sponsored “green revolution” has improved agricultural output so much over the past generation that the country no longer has to import food. Far more common, though, is the disheartening history of Nigeria, where the average citizen is worse off than forty years ago despite the billions of dollars the government has taken in from the sale of oil.

In the chapters that follow, we will see evidence of this weakness in three overlapping ways. The first is as a by-product of their poverty. No government in a country with a GNP of \$500 per year will have much money to devote to education or health care. The lack of resources also leaves such a country with a weak infrastructure because it cannot afford to pave roads or lay cables for modern telecommunications systems.

More than just a lack of money is involved. In the poorest countries, the government may not “reach” everyone in the ways we in the north take for granted, including enforcing the law and collecting taxes. And these states are often short on human resources. For example, at the time of independence, there were only thirteen university graduates in all of what is now the DRC. Although there have been marked advances in education, life expectancy, and other areas of social life, none of these countries benefit from the kind of highly trained workforce that could produce the iron triangles of France or Japan.

Second, many third world countries have had trouble developing regimes that last for more than a few years. As we saw in parts 2 and 3, it takes both time and a degree of political success to develop strong institutions that are not dependent on the power or personality of individual leaders. Time allows people to establish routines and expectations for the institutions that govern them. Success helps build legitimacy.

But this has not happened in most of the third world. In part, the failure to develop effective states reflects the fact that most African and Asian countries are still quite new. More importantly, all have had to face heavy demands telescoped into a short time frame. Thus, many people expect what happened over two or three centuries in the West to be squeezed into two or three decades. Put simply, people run out of patience with states that are not providing results fast enough.

Weak institutions are a particular problem in countries that have had a personal or military dictatorship for an extended time. For reasons we do not fully understand, these kinds of leaders tend not to concentrate on

building institutions that will function effectively after they depart the scene.

Third, many third world countries with weak states are also plagued by widespread corruption, which extends far beyond the loss of scarce resources that leaders like the Marcoses, Somozas, Duvaliers, or Suhartos spirit out of their countries. The corruption often extends far into the bureaucracy, especially in countries that lack a strong legal system and other institutions that could keep state employees in check. Thus, in Nigeria, civil servants are frequently referred to as “lootocrats” or “kleptocrats.”

## Public Policy: The Myths and Realities of Development

Given the poverty described earlier, it is hardly surprising that attempts to foster and speed economic development have been at the heart of most public policy making in the third world, as well as most analyses of its political life. It should also come as no surprise that the inability to make much progress on this front is seen as yet another example of the weakness of most third world states.

Timing is vital here. Economic and political development in western Europe and North America took the better part of three centuries. In the few cases in which it happened more quickly (for example, Imperial Germany and Meiji Japan), it still took decades and required stiff repression.

Most third world countries—including those in Latin America that have been independent since the nineteenth century—embarked on their own developmental odysseys only recently and under much less promising circumstances. Britain, France, and the United States industrialized at a time when they also were the world’s dominant economic and military powers, and thus were largely free to marshal needed resources as their leaders saw fit. Quite the opposite is the case in the third world today. Most countries are playing a game of political and economic catch-up in which they lag way behind the north and have few opportunities to close the gap.

To make matters even more difficult, there is no agreement about what “development” itself means. Some observers argue that it involves creating an urban, industrial economy that would turn, say, India or Mexico into a carbon copy of Germany or Japan. Others doubt that there is such a “linear” or common path to development and that third world countries will have to

come up with their own ways of sustaining growth, adding to their wealth, and improving their people's standard of living. And, in recent years, some observers have questioned how much third world countries should be allowed to develop given the pressures economic growth places on our fragile ecosystem.

In any case, third world countries have adopted two general development strategies. The first—**import substitution**—was most popular from the 1950s into the 1980s. Since then, it has been all but completely abandoned for the more capitalist-oriented structural adjustment.

### *Import Substitution*

Import substitution was designed to do just what the term suggests. If a country could replace expensive imported products with goods made locally, it would conserve more of its hard currency and other scarce resources, which could then be used to speed up development of its own industrial base.

It is easiest to see why such approaches were popular not by looking at what those governments did but by first exploring **dependency theory**, which suggests why countries were eager to pursue what amounted to economic nationalism. First developed by radical analysts in Latin America, dependency theory is now thought to be something of an overstatement. Still, although it may not explain every trend, it does go a long way toward helping us understand why the third world is finding it so hard to develop.

Dependency theorists divide the world in two. On one side are the wealthy, capitalist nations of the north. On the other are the poor, underdeveloped third world nations that remain victims and de facto colonies of the north, whatever their legal status. In other words, dependency theorists focus on the economic rather than the political implications of imperialism and stress how the regions that became the third world were forced into the global capitalist system.

From this point of view, the capitalists restructured local economies for the worse. Instead of encouraging them to grow food or manufacture commodities for domestic consumption, the imperial powers forced their colonies to produce a few raw materials for export: coffee and tea in Kenya, bananas in Guatemala, copper in Chile, and so on. In turn, first the colonies and then the new nations provided markets for the north's finished goods, which earned massive profits for the already rich countries.

Dependency theorists do not deny that there has been considerable industrialization and economic development in the third world in recent decades. Rather,

they argue that such development has left the third world even more dependent on the north than ever before. The latter's banks and governments provide aid, but they invariably attach strings to it. These same institutions have issued loans that have left many third world governments owing hundreds of billions of dollars they cannot afford to repay. Northern corporations decide much of what is to be produced and ensure that the lion's share of the profits go back to their headquarters and shareholders.

Most third world countries are left with narrowly based economies that are highly vulnerable to the vagaries of the international market. The industrial development that has taken place there benefits only a tiny proportion of the population and has often left everyone else worse off. Foreign investment is increasingly oriented toward industries the northern countries no longer want because they degrade the environment. Most importantly, decision-making power remains overwhelmingly in foreign hands.

Leaders who accepted all or part of this explanation adopted policies that sought to reduce such dependency by strengthening their economy and their own control over it. Most tried to develop a manufacturing base independent of the multinationals in such vital areas as steel, automobiles, clothing, and agricultural equipment. This involved, among other things, erecting tariff and other barriers that made it more difficult for foreign goods and businesses to penetrate their markets. This way, they could protect their own fledgling manufacturers from competition from cheaper and higher-quality imports. Most set up publicly owned or controlled companies, often called **parastatals**, through which the government could steer the development of a domestic industrial base.

Of the countries covered here, India most consistently pursued import substitution. For the first thirty-five years after its independence in 1947, it enacted high tariffs and passed other laws that made it hard for foreign companies to invest there and impossible for them to buy more than a minority share in an Indian corporation. Available resources were concentrated on Indian manufacturers, most of which were government owned or controlled. The goods they made were rarely competitive in open markets, which meant that India could not export much and that the overall growth rate remained low, but at least it did control its own development, however limited it was.

Many countries stuck with import substitution well into the 1980s. By then, however, two things had happened that undermined support for it just about everywhere.



A woman being carried away from the explosion of the Union Carbide chemical factory in Bhopal, India.

First, it had become clear that the countries using it were growing far more slowly than those that had aggressively tried to build niches for themselves in global markets. In India, it was derisively known as the “Hindu rate of growth”—steady but far too slow.

It was at about this time that observers began noticing the NICs and their often spectacular development record. Indians, for instance, had to acknowledge that they were now far worse off than the Taiwanese, who had been as poor as they were in the 1940s.

In short, India may have charted its own development. The problem was that there was just too little of it.

Second, geopolitical changes had all but forced third world countries to become more active participants in the global economic system. The most important events in this respect, again, were the OPEC-induced “price shocks” of 1973 and 1979. Most third world countries traditionally have had to import not only oil but dozens of other products that are made using petroleum and its by-products. And they have had to pay for these goods in dollars or other **hard currencies**. At best, this meant that they had to export more to earn that money, which, in turn, implied meeting global price and quality standards. At worst, they had to borrow ever more from northern banks, governments, and agencies, which left many of them so deeply in debt that there seemed no way they could ever pay back even the interest on the loans, let alone the principal.

In other words, dependency theory may have taken scholars and policymakers a long way toward explaining

why the third world was in such dire economic straits. Indeed, the debt crisis and the other post-OPEC difficulties reinforced many of its conclusions about the power of the north.

It did not, however, help the third world countries develop policies that would actually work. Then, when conditions worsened in the 1980s, and the end of the cold war removed socialism as an attractive option for leaders around the world, the political momentum shifted toward a dramatically different approach to development.

### *Structural Adjustment*

Currently, most economists and political scientists prefer the more conservative approach to economic growth known as structural adjustment. According to its proponents, the global capitalist market is not the problem but the solution. They are convinced that import substitution was a disaster and believe that the third world’s best chance of developing lies in integrating itself into the global economy as quickly and as fully as possible. This can be achieved by following a mix of policies designed to open up the domestic economy to imports and investments, reduce government spending and national debt, slash inflation and restore a macroeconomic equilibrium, and sell off state-owned enterprises. Few third world governments have willingly embraced structural adjustment. However, most have been convinced, and in some cases compelled, to do so by northern



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Downtown Seoul, South Korea. Countries like South Korea—the so-called NICs—have made a lot of economic progress.

governments and the international financial institutions, as will be discussed in the next two sections.

Studies conducted by the World Bank, among others, divided the third world according to the degree to which countries were “outward” or trade oriented. Contrary to dependency theory’s predictions, the countries that traded the most—that is, the countries that played by the rules of the capitalist economic game—grew the fastest. From 1973 to 1985, these countries grew, on average, 7.7 percent per year overall and 10 percent per year in manufacturing. By contrast, the least trade-oriented states grew by only 2.5 percent overall and 3.1 percent in manufacturing.

The evolution of South Korea is instructive. Prior to the Asian economic crisis beginning in 1997, it grew at a rate that exceeded even Japan’s and was one of the most trade-oriented countries in the world. At first, the growth was concentrated in low-quality, low-tech industries in ways that mirrored what the dependency theorists would lead us to expect. During the 1970s, however, the nature of that growth changed. Korean companies started making steel, automobiles, and electronic goods, and became major players in global markets.

There are many reasons the South Korean economy boomed, including its strong and often repressive state. Nonetheless, high on any list of explanations for its success has to be the way Korean companies, with the encouragement of the state, learned to operate effectively on the world’s economic stage.

Structural adjustment’s supporters tend to exaggerate its benefits and ignore its shortcomings, including the fact that it does little to help the plight of the poor. Nonetheless, they are correct in their basic assertion that the countries which grew the most in the 1980s and 1990s were those that, as the term itself suggests, adjusted their policies to the realities of global economic conditions.

Structural adjustment may not be the panacea its supporters think it is. However, there is no escaping the fact that it is now being followed almost everywhere. As with any major shift in public policy, there are many reasons leaders throughout South America, Africa, and Asia have turned to structural adjustment. None, however, is more important than the fact that most loans and offers of aid have been made contingent on its adoption.

### *The International Financial Institutions*

The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** ([www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org)), the **World Bank** ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)), and the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** ([www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org)) have been critical forces in the shift toward structural adjustment in the third world. The three are often called the Bretton Woods organizations because the first steps toward creating them occurred at a 1944 meeting at that New Hampshire resort.

Originally, the institutions were designed to spur economic recovery and stabilization in the war-torn countries of Europe and Asia, because most of what we now call the third world was still in colonial hands. However, as Europe recovered and as more and more countries gained their independence, the focus of the three organizations turned to the third world and, to a lesser degree, the current and former communist countries.

In recent years these organizations have also become controversial. Each one of their major meetings since the protests against the WTO in Seattle in 1999 has been disrupted by demonstrators who accuse them of everything from destroying the environment to reinforcing poverty and sexism in the third world and beyond ([www.50years.org](http://www.50years.org)).

The World Bank (officially the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) is the largest—and perhaps the least well understood—of the three. Today,

the Bank primarily makes loans and also issues a smaller number of direct grants to developing countries. Some of its funds come from member countries, but most come from the private financial market. The Bank is controlled through a system of weighted voting in which the countries that contribute the most funds (the richest countries) have by far the greatest influence. Early on, the Bank supported many large-scale industrial projects that were consistent with import substitution. But as the Bank has moved increasingly into the private financial sector, it has also made more of its loans along strictly commercial lines. This orientation is one of the reasons antiglobalization critics have attacked the Bank's policies. However, its supporters point to change in the Bank's family of institutions, including the creation of units to promote the environment, postconflict reconstruction, environmental protection, and the reduction of poverty.

The IMF, by contrast, is far more unambiguously in the structural adjustment camp. It was created at the same time as the World Bank, and the headquarters of the two organizations are located next to each other in Washington, D.C. The IMF was originally designed primarily to stabilize international currency flows at a time when other currencies were fixed to the value of the U.S. dollar, which, itself, was determined to be worth \$35 per ounce of gold. In the early 1970s this system collapsed, and the role of the IMF shifted to that of lender of last resort for troubled economies in the third world and, now, the former Soviet bloc. It is governed in roughly the same way as the World Bank, though the rich countries have even more voting power in the IMF. In recent decades the IMF has insisted on **conditionality**, or the acceptance of structural adjustment and other policy-related "conditions," before granting a country a loan. Thus, far more than the World Bank, it has been directly responsible for the often grudging adoption of these policies, something we will see most clearly for Mexico but also for India and South Africa.

The WTO is the newest of the three organizations. Originally, the negotiators at Bretton Woods hoped to create a permanent institution that would work to reduce tariffs and otherwise open up international trade. For reasons we do not need to get into here, that organization was not created. Instead, the far looser General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was drafted in 1947. Its original agreement and subsequent "rounds" of negotiations gradually lowered tariffs and eased other restrictions on trade around the world. Finally, the leaders of over 130 countries agreed to form the permanent WTO in 1994 and granted it powers to enforce rules that would further free trade and resolve commercial dis-

## Liberalization in the Third World

**STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT is, in fact, little more than another term for liberalization. Unlike in the former communist countries, however, the emphasis in the third world has not been primarily on privatizing publicly owned corporations. This has occurred in countries like Mexico, which had a large and inefficient state sector. But most international banks and agencies have insisted that third world leaders get their countries' macroeconomic life in order in two main ways—reducing inflation and cutting the national debt. Doing so, it is argued, will enable these countries to participate more effectively in the international economy.**

**This may make good sense from the perspective of classical economics. But it is less clear whether these countries use structural adjustment either to catch up with the north or to close the gap between their own rich and poor citizens by enacting such policies.**

**Finally, it has to be stressed that few countries have adopted structural adjustment policies voluntarily. There are exceptions—for example, Chile under General Augusto Pinochet. For most countries, however, liberalization has been urged on them by northern governments, banks, and agencies that made adopting structural adjustment a precondition for receiving further aid and other forms of support.**

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putes among member states. In other words, the WTO, too, is a strong supporter of structural adjustment and related policies. With China's and Taiwan's accession to membership in 2001, all the world's major economies other than Russia are members of the WTO.

### *Foreign Aid*

Long before countries began declaring their independence after World War II, it was clear that the third world would not be able to develop on its own. Therefore, the leading industrial nations—which, of course, included the leading colonial powers—realized that they would have to help out.

The same sort of naïve assumptions we saw regarding state building operated here as well. The hope was that a limited amount of money and material aid would lead to what analysts at the time called an economic "takeoff" that would propel these countries to modern industrialized capitalist economies.

But this was to happen only to a tiny handful of NICs. There are many reasons for this, a number of which have to do with the internal politics of the countries themselves. Much, though, also is a function of the

way the distribution of foreign aid has evolved since the 1950s.

There are several types of foreign aid. Northern governments make some grants and loans directly to third world governments. In recent years, international agencies have become more involved, most notably in providing loans both for long-term investment and to help countries work their way out of the **debt trap**. In a sense, multinational corporations also offer a form of aid when they invest in the third world and create jobs and other indirect economic benefits. Finally, the past few years have seen a growing role for nonprofit NGOs, some of which have been attempting to counter what they see as the negative impact of aid from these other sources.

Foreign aid as we know it today began with the Colombo Plan. Signed in 1950, it committed the British government to providing developmental assistance to its former colonies in South and Southeast Asia. Soon, the United States (1951) and Japan (1954) signed on. Since then, most of the industrialized democracies have been providing some developmental assistance, which at one point they have agreed should equal at least 0.7 percent of their GNP each year.

However, few of the industrialized democracies come close to reaching that goal. (See table 12.5.) What's more, the amount of direct aid and business concessions they give has been declining since the beginning of the 1990s, and there are serious moves afoot to cut foreign aid further, if not eliminate it altogether. To make matters even worse, some funding that might otherwise have gone to the third world has been sent to the former Soviet Union and to eastern Europe instead. (See table 12.6.)

There are also serious criticisms of the nature of the aid itself that parallel those of the international financial institutions. Too much, it is said, goes for large-scale industrial projects that cannot be readily maintained and operated using domestic resources. Similarly, little of the aid is used to help people in the recipient countries develop the skills and other resources that will help them achieve some degree of self-sustained development, thereby reducing the need for aid. Recipient countries are expected to use the grants or loans to buy material or hire consultants from the donor country. Also, a surprising amount of the aid is aimed not at civilian but at military development, whose benefits for the economy as a whole are limited. Finally, many donor countries do not target their aid at the regions that need it the most. Rather, they send it to countries whose support they want for their own geopolitical reasons. Thus, the United States gives the lion's share of its aid to Egypt, Israel, the Philippines, and other hot spots left over from the cold

**TABLE 12.5** Aid as a Percentage of Donor GNP

COUNTRY	1960–61	1980–81	1992–93
United States	0.56	0.23	0.17
France	1.35	0.67	0.63
Germany	0.38	0.45	0.38
Great Britain	0.56	0.39	0.31
Japan	0.22	0.30	0.43
All OECD <sup>a</sup>	0.52	0.32	0.32

<sup>a</sup>OECD = Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Source: Adapted from William Ryrie, *First World, Third World* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 7.

**TABLE 12.6** Aid to Developing Countries  
(in billions of 1987 U.S. dollars)

TYPE OF AID	1961	1971	1981	1991	1993
Concessional aid	15.3	18.0	30.4	50.3	44.6
Official development finance	24.0	23.4	53.7	63.2	55.4

Source: Adapted from William Ryrie, *First World, Third World* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 6.

war, and now to Pakistan after it agreed to support the U.S.-led military campaign against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Similarly, almost all British and French aid goes to their former colonies.

### *Microcredit*

There is one promising sign in what has so far been a relatively disheartening saga—**microcredit**. Some people in the third world have established their own small-scale financial institutions that enable them to determine and implement more of their own development policies and thus avoid the problems associated with foreign aid. In one form or another, each of these financial institutions tries to mobilize local people to control their own resources, which, in turn, can be used to help finance others.

The best known of these institutions is Bangladesh's Grameen Bank. The bank was founded in 1976 by Muhammad Yunus, an economics professor at Chittagong University. Unlike most Western experts, Yunus was convinced that average Bangladeshi peasants could use banking services to create businesses they could run, and profit from, themselves.

The Grameen Bank's principles are simple and clear. As Yunus put it recently:

**Their [the peasants'] poverty was not a personal problem due to laziness or lack of intelligence, but a structural one: lack of capital. We do not need to teach them how to survive: they know this already.**

**Giving the poor credit allows them to put into practice the skills they already know. And the cash they earn is then a tool, a key that unlocks a host of other problems.<sup>4</sup>**

The Grameen Bank lends money only to destitute people; 94 percent of its clients are women because they are better credit risks. To obtain a loan, a person has to pass a test on how the bank works and has to join a group of fellow borrowers who provide support and apply pressure to repay the loan if need be. The bank does not provide business training, but it does expect its borrowers to abide by “sixteen decisions,” including a pledge to send their children to school and not to pay dowries when their daughters marry. Loans are for a year and may be renewed and extended for up to five years. Repayments are made at weekly meetings in which eight to ten of the loan groups gather.

In one typical case, a villager could not afford to feed her three children and her blind, unemployed husband. After overcoming her husband’s objections, she passed the bank’s test, got her loan, and bought a calf. Within a year, she used money from the sale of the calf to pay off the loan. She then took out another loan, with which she bought another calf and land for banana plants. Within five years, her farm had grown to include a rice paddy, goats, ducks, and chickens. Her family has three meals a day, and she can even consider sending her children to high school. As she told a British reporter, “You ask me what I think of Grameen? Grameen is like my mother. She has given me new life.”

This is not an isolated example. A World Bank study found that over 95 percent of Grameen loans were repaid on time. Even more impressively, within five years, half of the borrowers were above the poverty line, and another quarter were close. The scale of the bank has grown as well, to the point that as much as 10 percent of the Bangladeshi poor have been aided by its 1,068 branches in 36,142 villages. The Grameen Bank’s operations have expanded, too, and it now gives \$300 home mortgages to families who have taken out and repaid at least three loans. It also has begun giving its village leaders cell phones, which serve as the only local pay phones. And, in 1999, the bank became Bangladesh’s leading Internet service provider—on the profits from its cell phone business.

Microcredit has become a global movement since the mid-1990s. In February 2001 over 2,600 people from 137 countries met in Washington for the first Microcredit

## Globalization and the Third World

**WESTERNERS OFTEN think of globalization in their own terms. For the optimists, it is bringing unprecedented riches, instant communication, and affordable global travel. For the pessimists, it is eroding working-class jobs and harming the environment.**

**When we shift our attention to the third world, the picture looks less clear—from either an optimistic or pessimistic perspective. Globalization is drawing more and more people into international networks, commercial and otherwise. However, there are still upwards of a billion people whose lives are barely touched by global forces. Moreover, a case can be made that globalization is contributing to a growing gap between rich and poor, and is reinforcing traditional values and religions, thereby sparking conflict the third world can ill afford.**

summit. U.S. senator Hillary Clinton and World Bank president James Wolfensohn shared the stage with women from around the world who had taken major strides in improving their living conditions through microcredit loans. Attendees pledged to reach 100 million of the world’s poorest people by 2005.

## Feedback

**F**eedback occurs in very different ways in the third world—ways that reflect many of the broader themes of this chapter.

Because of poverty, relatively few people have access to television, which has become the primary source of political information in the rest of the world. Indeed, in 1985, when an American peace group wanted to do a global televised presentation of its annual awards, it encountered what seemed to be an insurmountable obstacle. Tanzania, where one of the recipients lived, had no television at all. And it’s not just television. Whereas two out of three Americans have access to the Internet at home, in the third world that figure does not even come close to one in three thousand. In fact, a major breakthrough occurred in the 1990s for the world’s poorest people, who do not have electricity, when a British inventor developed an affordable radio that used a hand crank to generate its own power.

Many third world countries also do not have a free press available to their citizens who can read and/or afford to buy a newspaper or magazine. The authoritarian

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in Alan Jolis, “The Good Banker,” *Independent on Sunday Magazine*, 5 May 1996, 15–16.

regimes, in particular, are quite effective when it comes to censoring the news or, in the case of Mexico, limiting the ability of newspaper owners, should they be too critical, to obtain such vital supplies as newsprint.

As a result, patron-client networks and other “traditional” institutions provide critical feedback “services” in the third world. In the process, the patrons reinforce their own strength, as well as the dependency of their clients on them.

## Conclusion: Democratization

A generation ago, an introductory chapter on the third world would have ended with a recap of its economic and/or environmental woes. It would have been even more depressing than this one, given the rampant and deepening poverty, the debt crisis, and environmental degradation. Today, those problems remain, and most of them are as serious as they ever have been. Nevertheless, we can end this chapter on a slightly more upbeat note.

For the past decade or so, the most exciting trend in the third world has been democratization. In 1990 all the Latin American countries south of Mexico had a democratically elected government—the first time this had ever happened—and most have kept those regimes. The Nigerian military has turned control of the country over to a third republic, and a few other African governments were experimenting with competitive elections, the first time the momentum had swung in that direction since the early 1960s. A number of the previously authoritarian regimes in East Asia have taken substantial, though still incomplete, steps toward democracy, including the Philippines and South Korea.

Democracy may well be taking root in places that were as far from it as one could imagine a decade or so ago. South Africa, in particular, has made remarkable strides in moving from apartheid to majority rule. Most remarkably, the core leaders of the old Afrikaner regime made their peace (albeit reluctantly) with the African National Congress and served in the government of former president Nelson Mandela for two years before quitting in May 1996. As we will see in chapter 15, the fledgling South African democracy has made great strides with its Truth and Reconciliation Commission and has survived Mandela's retirement.

During that same decade plus, political scientists have been focusing more of their attention on why some democracies survive and thrive while others do not. Although they are far from reaching anything like defini-

tive conclusions, they have come to six preliminary conclusions that offer some reason for hope.

First, much will depend on the attitudes and behavior of average citizens, many of whom are less than forgiving toward dictatorial regimes that have done little or nothing to improve basic standards of living. The experience of South Africa today and India over most of the past half-century suggests that people may come to support a regime and temper their own demands not out of some abstract commitment to democracy but because they are convinced that it is working. In other words, short-term pragmatic considerations, which states may actually be able to do something about, can be as important in building a basis for democracy as the forging of the more difficult-to-achieve sense of commitment to the abstract principles and procedures underlying it. After all, in poll after poll, many Americans reject some of the provisions in the Bill of Rights when asked about them on their own rather than as amendments to the Constitution. This suggests that democratic principles are not always that deeply supported in the north.

Second, for this kind of “pragmatic support” to build, the state has to be reasonably effective. One of the misreadings of contemporary and historical trends that has come with the rightward shift in recent years has been the assumption that if the state merely “gets out of people's lives” things will improve. But the historical record reviewed in part 2 reveals something quite different. Democratic regimes succeeded in part because their states were capable of making tough decisions about the allocation of resources, the shape of institutions, and the handling of disorder.

Third, timing is important. The first years in the life of any regime are especially important because it is new and fragile. Therefore, it does seem to be the case that, if a democracy can get through the first few elections and, as we saw with France's Fifth Republic, survive the transition from the first government to the opposition, it is usually much stronger and more likely to endure.

Fourth, there probably is a link between democracy and capitalism. However, it certainly is not as simple or as automatic as the strongest advocates of structural adjustment would lead us to believe. Markets are not natural phenomena but have to be created and sustained, reinforcing the importance of a reasonably strong state. Also, the purported benefits of markets do not come quickly—if they come at all—whereas, as the history of all democratic regimes suggests, people tend to be impatient and to expect dramatic improvements in the short run. There is also evidence that democracy may have a good chance of succeeding only after societies

have reached a certain level of wealth. The most recent research has put that figure at a per capita income of about \$5,000 per year, which is well above what most third world states can dream of.

Fifth, for all the reasons discussed earlier, international factors will become more and more important as the world continues to “shrink.” (See chapter 17.) There is growing awareness that northern policy toward the south should be made with more long-term goals regarding development and democracy in mind, which might mean sacrificing some shorter-term profits and/or market share. However, there are stronger signs that the shift toward market-based policies will continue, which might actually worsen conditions for most people in the politically all-important short run.

Finally, we should definitely *not* expect the democracies that might emerge in the third world to resemble those in the West. As we saw in part 2, the Western democracies there developed as a result of a long historical process that cannot be replicated because conditions are so dramatically different today. Indeed, it may well be that democracy in the third world will not be much like what we saw in part 2 at all.



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- Leftwich, Andrew. “Bringing Politics Back In: Towards a Model of the Developmental State.”
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- Mitchell, Michael. “Explaining Third World Democracies.”
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### Key Terms

Concepts	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Carrying capacity	HDI	International Monetary Fund
Communal group	IMF	Multinational corporation
Conditionality	MNC	Nongovernmental organization
Debt crisis	NGO	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
Debt trap	NIC	World Bank
Dependency	OPEC	World Trade Organization
Dependency theory	WTO	
Failed state		
Foreign aid		
Fundamentalism		
Hard currency		
Human Development Index		
Imperialism		
Import substitution		
Indirect rule		
Microcredit		
Newly industrializing country		
Parastatal		
Patron-client relations		
Structural adjustment		
Subsistence economy		
Third world		

### Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of the third world presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the “right direction” or is on the “wrong track.” If you were asked such a question about the third world, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?
3. The chapter asserts that global forces have been more influential in the third world than in the countries covered in parts 2 and 3. Do you agree? Historically? Today? Why did you reach this conclusion?
4. Many third world countries have had trouble building a sense of national identity or other cultural values that could lend legitimacy to their states. Why is this the case?
5. Most third world countries have weak states. What does this concept mean? Why are weak states so common in the third world?
6. Development has been the most important issue in most third world countries. What does this concept mean? Why have we seen such a sweeping change from import substitution to structural adjustment in recent years? What kind of impact has this change had?
7. Political violence and conflict are common in the third world. Why? How do the conflict and protest differ from what we find in the rest of the world?
8. Democratization is on the agenda of most third world countries. Should we be optimistic or pessimistic about it? Why did you reach this conclusion?

### Further Reading

- Arnold, Guy. *The Third World Handbook*, 2nd ed. London: Cassell, 1994. A wealth of statistical data and capsule summaries about the third world.
- Dickson, Anna K. *Development and International Relations: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Polity Press, 1997. A valuable resource. Don't be put off by “international relations” in the title. Because the two fields overlap so much, this is as useful in comparative politics and the one source that truly tries to assess the various theories, including those focused on here.
- Easterly, William. *The Elusive Quest for Growth*. Boston: MIT Press, 2001. An exploration of how the conventional wis-

dom and policy on development have evolved over the years, and the costs associated with those changes, by a leading World Bank economist.

- Ellwood, Wayne. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*. London: Verso, 2001. Though written from an explicitly anti-globalization perspective, a book worth reading by us all because it contains one of the best short descriptions of what globalization entails and why it is happening.
- Fisher, Julie. *Non-Governments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World*. West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian Press, 1997. By far the best source on NGOs, by a woman who combines the insights of an academic with the enthusiasm of an activist.
- Haynes, Jeff. *Third World Politics: A Concise Introduction*. London: Blackwell, 1996. A basic text organized conceptually that goes beyond the basic issues to get at such themes as gender and the environment.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking the World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. A highly controversial book, by one of the most respected (and conservative) analysts of the third world, that focuses on essentially cultural arguments in anticipating the next round of global conflict, domestically and internationally.
- Kaplan, Robert. *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post-Cold War*. New York: Random House, 2000. A depressing, journalistic account of looming conflict and its implications. This book is a collection of short essays, but interested readers with time would do well to consult his longer *The Ends of the Earth*.
- Migdal, Joel S. *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988. Although limited in its geographical scope, a useful discussion of the idea of strong and weak states in ways that amplify the central theme of this chapter.
- Przeworski, Adam. *Sustainable Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Probably the best book written so far on the subject. Actually written by a committee of twenty-one well-known social scientists who combine a lot of important ideas about democratization and economics in the “east” and “south” into 112 pages. A difficult read, but well worth it.
- Ryrie, William. *First World, Third World*. Basingstoke, U.K.: Macmillan, 1995. A succinct exploration of aid and development questions, by a retired World Bank official.
- Sorenson, Georg. *Democracy and Democratization*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993. Part of an outstanding series of books on international relations written for undergraduates. This one is more about comparative politics issues and is probably the most readable book on democratization, including in the West. It does, however, frame the issues a bit differently from the way they are presented here.

# INDIA

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Who Gives a Dam?
- Thinking About India
- The Evolution of Indian Politics
- Political Culture
- Political Participation
- The Indian State
- Public Policy
- Feedback
- Conclusion: Democracy in India and the Third World

0 300 Miles  
0 300 Kilometers



*As Indian citizens, we subsist on a regular diet of caste massacres and nuclear tests, mosque breakings and fashion shows, church burnings and expanding cell phone networks, bonded labor and the digital revolution, female infanticide and the Nasdaq crash, husbands who continue to burn their wives for dowry and our delectable stockpile of Miss Worlds. What's hard to reconcile oneself to, both personally and politically, is the schizophrenic nature of it.*

ARUNDHATI ROY

## Who Gives a Dam?

**O**n 18 October 2000 the Indian Supreme Court allowed authorities in the state of Gujarat to continue construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam in the Narmada River valley (see the map on the preceding page). When completed it will be an impressive structure—almost 137 meters (460 feet tall)—and will irrigate 1.8 million hectares (over 4.3 million acres of land). It is also but one of about thirty large dams planned for that region of India ([www.narmada.org/sardarsarovar.html](http://www.narmada.org/sardarsarovar.html) and [www.sardarsarovardam.com](http://www.sardarsarovardam.com)).

For their supporters, such big dams will bring unprecedented economic growth and prosperity to the world's second-most-populous country, and also one of its poorest. Half of India's population lies below one of the most widely used measures of poverty—surviving on less than a dollar a day. According to this same measure, a third of the world's poor live in India. The water from the dams could be used to irrigate crops and boost agricultural production on the region's arid land, and the electricity they generate would provide energy for new factories and offices in a country that is developing a modern industrial sector.

The Sardar Sarovar Dam also has many opponents. Criticisms range from the devastating effects such dams will have on the daily lives of poor peasants to broader statements linking them to the corrosive impact of globalization. If the critics are to be believed, more than 30 million people have been displaced by the construc-

## INDIA: THE BASICS

Size	3,287,590 sq. km (about 1.3 times the size of the United States)
Population	1.03 billion, growing at 1.7% per year
GNP per capita	\$450
Currency	48.75 rupees = \$1
Ethnic groups	72% Indo-Aryan, 25% Dravidian, 3% other
Religion	81.3% Hindu, 12% Muslim, 2.3% Christian, 1.9% Sikh, 2.5% other
Capital	New Delhi
Head of state	President Kocheril Raman Narayanan (1999)
Head of government	Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998)

tion of more than three hundred big dams in the past decade. The Sardar Sarovar Dam alone will force a half million people to move from villages that will be flooded. Despite the legal requirement to do so, no plans had been made to resettle about half of them. Most of those affected will come from the so-called untouchables and people of tribal origin who are outside the caste system but probably even worse off than the untouchables.

The economic growth just mentioned occurred as India opened its economy to international trade and investment, as called for by proponents of structural adjustment (see chapter 12). Tariffs have been slashed and other restrictions on imports eliminated. Dams themselves have become a big business worth \$40–45 billion per year, and most of that money comes from multinational corporations. Opponents of the dams, however, question the alleged benefits of this kind of investment and outline scenarios in which large multinational agricultural firms will undercut the livelihood of poor peasants, just as other foreign firms are siphoning off market shares for Indian cars and other manufactured goods.

## Thinking About India

**T**he controversy surrounding the Sardar Sarovar Dam is very different from the vignettes used to begin the chapters on individual countries in parts 2 and 3. That's because India and the other countries discussed in part 4 are very different from those we

explored in the first two thirds of this book. In other words, as chapter 12 implied, studying India in particular and the third world in general means shifting gears once again to consider widespread poverty, ethnic conflict, and weak states, as well as a far greater impact for globalization.

## *The Basics*

### **A Nation of Contrasts**

As the chapter-opening quote by Arundhati Roy (a leading opponent of the Sardar Sarovar Dam) suggests, India is a land of stark contrasts and contradictions. Depending on your perspective, it is one of the most backward or one of the most promising countries on earth. It is one of the poorest countries, yet it is also the world's tenth-largest industrial power. Only the United States and Russia have more scientists and engineers. About 60 percent of Indians are illiterate, yet rural India is connected by a network of satellite stations that have brought television to more than 80 percent of its 700,000 villages. At home, its people seem reluctant to work hard and take risks, yet Indians abroad are known for their business acumen.

Politically, India is the land of the world's most famous and influential pacifist, yet it has one of the largest armies in the world and is one of but nine countries (as far as we know) to have developed nuclear weapons. India was a founder of the nonaligned movement that tried to avoid taking sides during the cold war. Yet it has also fought several wars with neighbor (and now fellow nuclear power) Pakistan, imposed an economic and military blockade on Nepal, and sent 50,000 troops to protect the Tamil minority in neighboring Sri Lanka.

### **Size and Diversity**

The other striking thing about India is its size and diversity. Only China has more people. Seven of its states have more inhabitants than Britain or France. Despite its family planning program, India adds the equivalent of Argentina to its population each year, and in 2000 it topped a billion.

India's population is also among the most diverse in the world, which is most evident to outsiders in the languages its people speak.

Nearly 60 percent of the population speaks one of the Indo-Aryan languages used mostly in northern India. Of them, about half speak Hindi. However, even though all these languages are related, people who speak Hindi, Bengali, or Gujarati do not fully understand each other. The 30 percent of the people who live in the south mostly speak one of the Dravidian languages, which are completely dif-

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## LANGUAGE AND POLITICS

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As is the case in many third world countries, Indians speak many languages, and there is no common one they all understand. Hindi is the most widely spoken, but most speakers of other languages opposed its use in commercial and official communication so strongly that there were anti-Hindi riots in much of the south in the 1960s. As a result, the language of the colonial power—English—remains the *lingua franca*, although several prominent leaders do not speak it.

The role of English also reveals a lot about the elite domination of political life in India since colonial times. According to one recent count, about 33 million Indians speak English, which makes it the third largest English-speaking country in the world after the United States and the United Kingdom. However, that number also represents less than 4 percent of the total Indian population, and almost all English speakers are highly educated, wealthy, and influential.

ferent from those used in the north. About 5 percent of the people (mostly Sikhs) speak Punjabi, an offspring of Persian and Urdu, the dominant language of Pakistan.

The constitution lists fourteen official “principal languages.” (See table 13.1.) In fact, the situation is much more complicated, because there are hundreds of distinct dialects subsumed in these linguistic families, and as many as 100 million people speak languages that do not figure on the list in any form. As in much of South Asia and Africa, the only language educated Indians have in common is English. Thus, the language of the colonizer has become the *lingua franca* in much of business and government.

The government has drawn the twenty-five state and seven union territory boundaries so that each has a dominant language and culture. Nonetheless, they all have large minorities that have played a significant and often violent role in local as well as national political life.

India also has three main religious groups. Slightly over 80 percent of the population is Hindu, but each major regional/linguistic group practices a different version of the religion. Approximately 10 percent are Muslim, but they run the full range of belief from fundamentalists to highly assimilated and secularized people who have, for all intents and purposes, stopped practicing their religion. Most of the rest are Sikhs. This religion has at its roots an attempt to blend Hindu and Muslim traditions emphasizing peacefulness and other-worldliness even though Sikhs now are known for their ferocious

**TABLE 13.1** India's Principal Language Groups

LANGUAGE	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION	WHERE SPEAKERS ARE CONCENTRATED
Assamese	1.4	Assam
Bengali	7.6	West Bengal
Gujarati	4.9	Gujarat, Bombay
Hindi	38.6	Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi
Kannada	3.9	Karnataka
Kashmiri	0.5	Jammu and Kashmir
Malayalam	3.8	Kerala
Marathi	7.2	Maharashtra
Oriya	3.3	Orissa
Punjabi	2.7	Punjab
Tamil	6.5	Tamil Nadu
Telegu	7.9	Andhra Pradesh
Urdu	5.2	Most Hindi-speaking regions

Source: Adapted from Robert W. Stern, *Changing India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 19.

fighting ability and their dissatisfaction with their status in the Punjab.

Like language, religion has been politically important since the Muslims first arrived before the **Mughal** conquest more than five hundred years ago. Independent India came into existence amid communal violence as millions of Muslims tried to escape India for Pakistan and millions of Hindus fled in the other direction. In the 1980s the most difficult problem involved Sikhs, who sought their own homeland and who saw the national government attack their holiest shrine, the Golden Temple at Amritsar, and kill thousands of their most militant leaders. In the 1990s violence most often occurred along religious lines, as in the case of the Hindu/Muslim conflict over the temple/mosque site at **Ayodhya**, which we will examine in more detail later. Here, it is enough to note that the attempt by Hindus to build a new temple there led to riots in which thousands of Hindus and Muslims were killed throughout the northern part of the country.

Finally, India is divided along **caste** lines. Historians trace the caste system back nearly four thousand years, when in all likelihood the lighter-skinned Aryans established it to minimize "mingling" with the darker-skinned Dravidians. There are four main castes. The Brahmans historically were the priests and the most prestigious caste, the Kshatriyas were rulers and soldiers, and the Vaisyas were merchants. These three upper castes are often referred to as "twice born," reflecting the belief that they are further along in the Hindu cycle of death and reincarnation. The lowest-caste Sudras were traditionally farmers but did "respectable" enough work to warrant their inclusion in the caste system. Below them are the **untouchables**, or **dalits**, who are outside the caste

system altogether because their ancestors were sullied by their occupations as scavengers and collectors of "night soil." Outcastes thus occupied a position at the bottom of the social hierarchy in much the same way and for many of the same reasons as the *burakumin* in Japan did.

Each caste, in turn, is broken into hundreds of sub-castes known as *jati*. The castes and *jati* have elaborate rules for most social situations, including such things as what clothes to wear and what food to eat. Until very recently, people rarely broke out of their caste's restrictions.

The constitution officially abolished the status of outcaste and outlawed discrimination against untouchables and tribals who are outside the caste system. In practice, caste remains a volatile political issue and the most divisive aspect in Indian society. Discrimination against those at the bottom of the hierarchy is still as pervasive as racism is in the United States or western Europe. In summer 1990, for instance, Prime Minister V. P. Singh proposed reserving about a quarter of all new positions in the civil service for members of the lower or "scheduled" castes in an Indian version of American affirmative action. The proposal so incensed upper-caste young people that they staged demonstrations in which some burned themselves alive.

### Poverty

The most important fact of life in India is poverty. It is so widespread and has proved so difficult to reduce that we will devote much of the public policy section to it. As the table on the inside front cover shows, India's average per capita GNP is barely over \$300 per year, making it the poorest country covered in this book. Despite recent gains, the gap between India and other countries that started out as poorly as it did, such as China, continues to grow.

The statistics are remarkable. One Indian baby out of ten will die before reaching the age of one, and overall life expectancy is only about fifty. For most people, health care is rudimentary at best. Although the "green revolution" of the 1960s all but eliminated mass starvation, most Indians eat a diet that does not quite meet the minimal caloric intake needed for a healthy life. And in 1998 a doubling in the price of onions took millions of people to the brink of starvation and cost the ruling **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** control of three states.

The statistics tell only part of the story of Indian poverty. The cities are crowded and filthy, something that Indo-Caribbean and Nobel Prize-winning writer V. S. Naipaul put powerfully when describing his arrival in Bombay during only his second visit to India in the late 1980s:

Traffic into the city moved slowly because of the crowd. When at certain intersections, the traffic was halted, the pavements seethed all the more, and such a torrent of people swept across the road, in such a bouncing froth of light-weight clothes, it seemed that some kind of invisible sluiceway had been opened, and that if it wasn't closed again, the flow of road-crossers would spread everywhere, and the beaten-up red buses and yellow-and-black taxis would be quite becalmed, each at the center of a human eddy.

With me in the taxi were fumes and heat and din. Bombay continued to define itself: Bombay flats on either side of the road now, concrete buildings mildewed at their upper levels by the Bombay weather, excessive sun, excessive rain, excessive heat; grimy at the lower levels, as if from the crowds at pavement level, and as if that human grime was working its way up, tidemark by tidemark, to meet the mildew.<sup>1</sup>

### Key Questions

Because India is the first country considered in detail in part 4, this section has to do two things—outline general questions to ask of all third world countries, as well as specific ones about India.

- What are its political origins?
- How do people participate politically?
- How is it governed?
- How has it coped with poverty and unemployment?

Like most of the third world, India suffered from centuries of occupation and colonization, first under the Muslim Mughals and later under the British.

India's experience with imperialism was typical in many ways. Foreigners made all the decisions that mattered, which, among other things, served to destroy much of its economic base. However, in other ways, it was unusual. The British never directly ruled the entire country. Moreover, they allowed a massive proindependence movement to develop following the creation of the **Indian National Congress** political party in 1885. As a result, the Indian regime that gained its independence in 1947 had widespread popular support and experienced leaders who were committed to democracy. That group of leaders, headed by the first prime minister, **Jawaharlal Nehru**, gave the country a generation of stability that deepened popular support for democracy and

that has helped the country survive more serious conflict since the late 1960s.

India has been able to sustain its democracy in large part because its citizens supported it, especially during the country's critical formative years. Although we have to ask why this was the case, it is more important today to probe why there has been so much more protest in recent decades than there was during the heyday of Congress's rule under Nehru.

Then Congress was what political scientists call an inclusive party that found a way to appeal to people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and political beliefs. Once Nehru's daughter, **Indira Gandhi**, became prime minister two years after her father's death in 1964, the party system began to fragment. National opposition parties, including the predecessors of the BJP, began to gain strength by appealing to segments of the electorate. More importantly, regional parties began scoring impressive victories, often winning control of state governments and electing up to half of the members of the lower house of parliament from "their" state. The fragmentation has not just been electoral. As noted earlier, communal violence has been widespread since the late 1970s. Violent protests and riots occur on a regular basis, and disaffected members of minority ethnic groups assassinated both Indira Gandhi and her son **Rajiv Gandhi**, who also served as prime minister.

The obvious question to ask in terms of how India is governed is whether or not Indian democracy is cut from the same political cloth as the version we saw in part 2. On paper, the answer is an obvious yes. India's institutions were patterned closely on Britain's parliamentary system and have changed surprisingly little since independence. In practice, however, democracy there has some decidedly Indian characteristics. They start with the dominant role Congress has played, having controlled the government for all but five of India's first fifty years as an independent country. Under Indira Gandhi and her successors, Congress transformed political life by centralizing political power to the point that the Indian state can now be more repressive and certainly is more corrupt than anything we saw in part 2.

Finally, we have to ask why India's public policy has become so much like that in the rest of the third world despite its unique characteristics, which we will focus on in the first three-quarters of this chapter.

From independence until the late 1980s, India was one of the world's strongest supporters of import substitution and of the autarkic strategy of industrialization it led to. Since then, however, India has adopted the more liberal policies of structural adjustment, although it has done so more gradually and grudgingly than has Mexico, as we will see in chapter 16.

<sup>1</sup>V. S. Naipaul, *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (New York: Viking Press, 1991), 1.

## The Evolution of Indian Politics

### *The Weight of History*

As we have seen throughout this book, we cannot understand politics in any country today without first coming to grips with how it evolved over time. (See table 13.2.) Most third world countries are relatively new as independent states. But the impact of history is, if anything, more extensive in the third world because of the additional factor of colonialism, which touched all areas of life there but did not figure prominently in most countries covered in parts 2 and 3.

In India's case, this means going back more than three thousand years. As early as 1500 B.C., light-skinned Aryans from the north began developing what became the Sanskrit language, Hindu religion, and caste system. Many of the classics of Indian literature and culture antedate the birth of Christ. During the third century A.D., the Mauryan Empire was able to unite almost the entire subcontinent during the reign of Ashoka, who remains an inspiration to many Hindus today ([www.historyofindia.com](http://www.historyofindia.com)).

Until A.D. 1000 or so, Indian culture flourished. More literary classics were written, and Buddhism spread through most of Asia.

The last thousand years have been a different story. For all but the past fifty years, most of India was dominated by outsiders—first the Muslim Mughals and then the British.

In the centuries after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslim armies set out to conquer and convert the world. They got as far west as Spain and were gaining ground in France when they were beaten at the battle of Tours. Their influence extended all the way to the Atlantic coast of Africa. And, most importantly for our purposes here, the Muslims moved east as well, reaching well beyond India to the Philippines.

Beginning in the tenth century, Muslims made inroads into India. Although the Persian-based Mughals were able to gain control of most of India by the middle of the fifteenth century, there was nothing approaching a central government for the subcontinent.

In 1526 some of the regional rulers turned to Babur, a descendant of the great Mongol warrior Chinghiz (Genghis) Khan. Babur took Delhi and was named the first padishah, or Mughal emperor, of India. It was only after the accession of Babur's grandson Akbar in 1556 that the Mughals consolidated their rule. Through a combination of negotiation and force, Akbar united most of the subcontinent and built an elaborate and efficient bureaucratic system. This system was far superior to anything in Europe at the time and allowed the

**TABLE 13.2** Key Events in Indian History Prior to Independence

YEAR	EVENT
Circa 1000	Beginning of Islamic impact
1556–1605	Mughal unification of much of the subcontinent
Circa 1600	First significant European impact
1707	Start of Mughal decline
1857	Sepoy mutiny
1858	Government of India Act
1885	Formation of Congress
1919	Jallianwala Bagh massacre
1920	Gandhi's first <i>satyagraha</i> campaign
1930	"March to the Sea" against the salt tax
1937	Elections
1939–45	World War II
1947	Independence

Mughals to run a country that already had over 100 million inhabitants.

The Mughals never managed to subdue all their opponents and almost always faced violent opposition, either from rival Muslim claimants to the throne or from Hindus and, later, Sikhs seeking to regain control over their own land. More importantly for the long run, the Mughals never tried to change mass values, including religion, outside of their bastions in the north. As a result, Islam remained a minority religion, and the Mughals adapted to local conditions and became every bit as much Indian as they were Muslim. Among other things, they did not seek to eliminate the caste system. In fact, because many *jati* seem to have converted to Islam en masse in an attempt to improve their social and economic lot in life, there are some castes in the Indian, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani Muslim communities.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the last of the great Mughals, Alamgir, dedicated the last quarter-century of his life to uniting the entire subcontinent. He assembled an army of unprecedented proportions and traveled with it in a "moving capital" that was thirty miles in circumference and had 500,000 "residents." On average, 100,000 people died each year of the campaign, which did ultimately end with the Mughals' conquest of the bulk of India in 1707. It proved, however, to be a Pyrrhic victory. Alamgir himself died two years later, leaving an overextended empire that quickly fell prey once again to infighting among the Mughals and opposition from the countryside.

### *British Colonialism*

Ultimately, the greatest threat to Mughal rule came from a new source: Europe. Portuguese traders had established a beachhead in India as early as 1498. By the middle of the eighteenth century, British and French mer-

chant companies, supported by private armies, operated from coastal bases. Gradually, the British emerged as the most powerful of the European forces in India, largely because of their victories in wars fought back in Europe.

From its base in Calcutta, the **British East India Company** began to expand its influence. It should be stressed that this first stage in the British takeover was not carried out by its government, but by a private corporation—albeit one with strong state support—and its architects thus stressed profit rather than political conquest. At that time, the British were more than willing to allow local rulers to remain in power if they helped the company's commercial operations. Indeed, its policy was to find or, if necessary, create a class of leaders who would be loyal to Britain and who could themselves profit from the trading networks the British established.

By the early nineteenth century, the company had spread itself too thin. There were years when it lost money, leaving it unable to pay its debts to the Crown. Meanwhile, it also lost its monopoly over British trade to a new generation of merchants who undermined the weaving industry of Bengal by sending Indian cotton to the new factories in Manchester.

In so doing, they magnified the anger many Indians already felt, which led the British to take more and more territory under their military “protection.” Tensions boiled over in 1857 when the British introduced the Enfield rifle for use in its army, which already had a large number of Indian soldiers. The rifle used grease from cows and pigs, which offended Hindus and Muslims, respectively. In the first anticolonial mutiny, they killed a

number of British soldiers, freed some prisoners, and captured Delhi at the cost of hundreds of British lives, including women and children.

The British fought back with what Stanley Wolpert calls “terrible racial ferocity.”<sup>2</sup> Although the outcome was never in doubt, the British wreaked a savage vengeance on the Indian population, destroying the bridges that had been built between them and the Indian population. The mutiny also proved to be the death knell for the peculiar mix of state and private colonization.

On 2 August 1858 the British Parliament passed the **Government of India Act**, which transferred all the company's powers directly to the crown. As the map in figure 13.1 shows, the British never took direct control of the entire country, but even in the areas where “princely states” continued to exist, the British called the political shots. The British raj was an elaborate bureaucratic system that relied heavily on the cooperation of the Indian elite. It could hardly have been otherwise, given that the Indian population outnumbered the British by more than ten to one. Indeed, this was a problem colonial rulers faced everywhere, as we will see with colonial rule in South Africa and the puppet monarchy in Iraq.

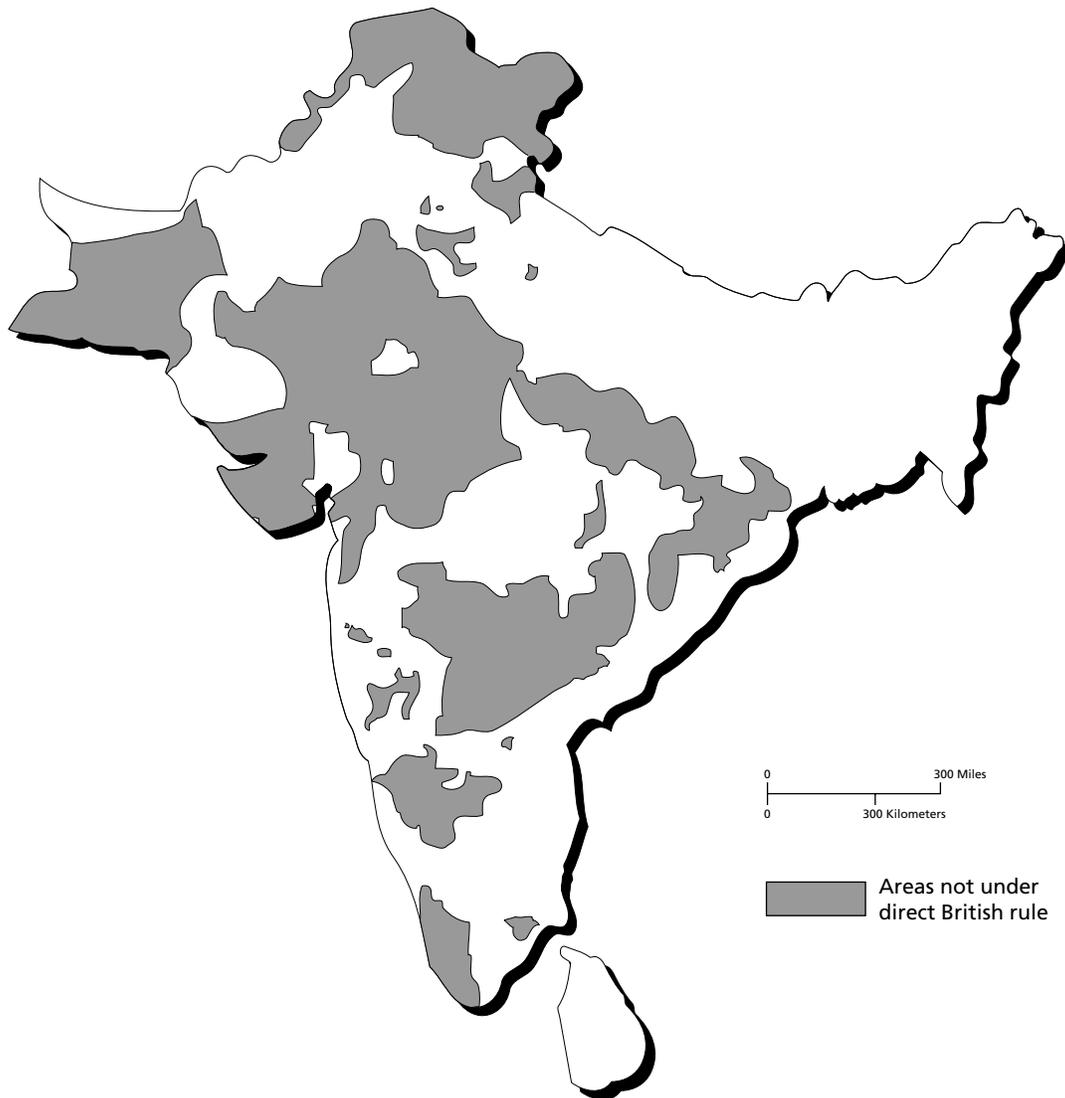
At the top of the raj system was a secretary of state in the British cabinet in London who was responsible for Indian affairs. He, in turn, appointed a viceroy who served in India, usually for five years. The administration

<sup>2</sup>Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 237.



The Mary Evans Picture Library/London

The Endfield mutiny.



**FIGURE 13.1** British India Circa 1900

was dominated by the **Indian Civil Service**, which, despite its name, was chosen on the basis of competitive examinations given only in London until 1923.

### *The Struggle for Independence*

As was the case throughout the empire, British colonial rule in India planted the seeds of its own destruction. Its oppression of the Indian people and, ironically, its use of Indian elites in business, education, civil administration, and the military created an ever growing body of people who objected to the raj. What makes India unique is the way this opposition to colonial rule came together in a mostly unified and nonviolent movement that achieved

independence very early and that endowed the new state with a consensus its first generation of leaders could use to get the country off to a good start.

Opposition to British rule continued after the Enfield mutiny. By the 1880s a group of well-educated, upper-caste Indians began talking about **swaraj**, or self-rule. Some were merchants who had benefited from British rule. Others were intellectuals who had discovered their Hindu or Muslim roots while receiving a British education.

Their frustrations with colonial rule came to a head in 1883 when the British enacted a new law that actually was designed to aid Indians by allowing some of them to serve on juries that tried Europeans. The 100,000 or so

British then living in India forced the government to back down and remove all Indian control over European legal affairs. As Wolpert, again, put it:

**It soon became painfully clear to more and more middle-class Indians, however, that, no matter how well intentioned or powerful individual Englishmen might be, the system they served was fundamentally unresponsive and hostile to many basic Indian needs, aspirations, and desires.<sup>3</sup>**

In December 1885 seventy-three Indians met in Bombay to form the Indian National Congress. The Congress advocated *swaraj* and demanded that Indian Civil Service exams be given simultaneously in India as well as England so that Indians would have a better chance of gaining admission to the increasingly powerful service.

Meanwhile, the British raj became more powerful and, if imaginable, more ruthless and arbitrary. Costly wars were fought to conquer and then retain land on the frontiers of the subcontinent in what is now Myanmar (Burma), Afghanistan, and Tibet. Then, in 1905, the British decided to split Bengal into two.

This action infuriated the nationalists, leading Congress to launch its first widespread protest movement, a boycott of British imports. The polite petitions and requests of Congress's first twenty years turned into the first steps of what would be a nationwide, nonviolent revolutionary movement. By 1908 imports had been cut by more than a quarter. Indians, instead, started buying the more expensive *swadeshi* (of our country) cloth woven in new factories in Bombay and in other northern cities.

The British responded by arresting and prosecuting hundreds of Congress leaders, which further incensed younger Congress activists, many of whom now turned to violence against the British. The adoption of what could only be called terrorist tactics split Congress and enabled the British to gain the upper hand.

World War I fueled hopes for independence among Indian leaders. Most agreed to support the British war effort on the assumption that doing so would enhance their chances for freedom. More than a million Indian soldiers served in the British army.

Those hopes were quickly dashed, however. Proposed political reforms died in the British House of Lords. Meanwhile, Indian soldiers were being killed by the thousands in distant lands while the economy suffered from the loss of its huge markets in Germany. To make matters worse, Indian troops, including Muslims, were used in the invasion of parts of the Muslim Otto-

man Empire. The end of the war brought anything but the hoped-for transfer of power to Indian hands. All political meetings were banned, and in April 1919 troops led by Brigadier R. E. H. Dyer opened fire without warning on a group of Hindus at Jallianwala Bagh, killing four hundred and wounding more than one thousand. At that point, thousands more Indians joined the movement, demanding outright independence.

For the next twenty years, the Indian independence movement was to be dominated by Congress and its remarkable leader, **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi** (1869–1948). In the early 1920s Gandhi led a massive boycott of British goods that landed hundreds of Congress leaders in jail. By the end of 1921, it was clear that the boycott was not going to lead to independence any time soon. Frustration with the Gandhian approach set in, which led to violence between Hindus and Muslims that would culminate in the partition of the subcontinent into two countries in 1947.

Meanwhile, Gandhi was sent to prison, where he served two years of a six-year term. Nonetheless, claiming that India was not ready for a nonviolent movement, Gandhi pulled back from active politics for the rest of the decade.

Despite the failures of the 1920s, two important breakthroughs had occurred. First, until then Congress had been a movement of intellectuals and other upper-class and upper-caste leaders. Gandhi's personal integrity, simple life, and political strategy brought the broad masses of the Indian population into the struggle for independence. Second, new leaders emerged within the Congress who added a more modern approach to Gandhi's traditional spiritualism. Most important of these was the young, British-educated Brahmin Jawaharlal Nehru, who by the end of the 1920s was already mayor of Allahabad and was exploring ways of combining socialist ideas with *satyagraha* and *ahimsa*.

The independence movement took on new life in early 1930 when Gandhi proclaimed a salt boycott. Salt was one of the few commodities all Indians needed, and it had been heavily taxed by the British. Gandhi and seventy-eight other *satyagrahis* began a two-hundred-mile march to the sea, where they would gather salt as a symbol of their resistance against the British. The sight of the tiny sixty-one-year-old, half-naked man leading his band inspired millions of other Indians and led to yet another wave of arrests that included both Gandhi and Nehru.

Talks between the British and prominent Indians soon began, but Congress was excluded, which led to even more support for the opposition. Gandhi launched one of his famous fasts. More demonstrations occurred, culminating in the Government of India Act of 1935,

<sup>3</sup>Wolpert, *New History*, 56.

## MOHANDAS GANDHI



© Bettmann/CORBIS

Mohandas Gandhi in the simple clothing he always wore, as in this case, even when meeting with top British officials.

**M**ohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869. His family was reasonably upper caste, and his father was the chief minister in a small, unimportant princely state.

Like many privileged and ambitious Indians of his day, Gandhi studied law in England. He then spent twenty years in South

Africa, where he served as a lawyer and as the informal political leader for the large Indian community there. In 1914 he returned to India and began pressing for independence. By 1920 he was already a prominent Congress leader, and in the aftermath of the violence of the immediate postwar years, the other leaders made him their de facto leader, in part because he had such a broad appeal based on his commitment to nonviolence.

Gandhi was a remarkable man whose views, power, and impact cannot readily be summarized in a few sentences. He was one of the few truly charismatic leaders of the twentieth century, whose power stemmed not from his personality or oratory but from his conduct, in which every action was based on humility and principle.

Gandhi was a devout Hindu. Despite his worldly success first as a lawyer and then as a political leader, he lived the ascetic life of a Hindu *sadhu*, or holy man, wearing only plain white robes made of cloth he spun and wove himself. Gandhi and his family lived in rural communities known as ashrams, where they forswore almost all modern (that is, Western) human pleasures.

Personally, Gandhi rejected all forms of violence. Moreover, he realized that, given the British war machine, there was no way India could win its independence through the use of violence.

In its place, Gandhi offered a radically new strategy based on two Hindu concepts—*satyagraha* (holding fast to truth) and *ahimsa* (nonviolence toward all forms of life). Instead of violence, Gandhi offered fasts, boycotts, and marches. Instead of consumption of British goods, Gandhi offered self-reliance, especially the use of only homespun cloth.

Because of his spirituality and devotion, he was known as the Mahatma, or holy one.

which expanded the franchise and enabled Congress to take over eight provinces two years later.

The experience of governing frustrated Gandhi, Nehru, and their allies. In particular, they proved unable to maintain any semblance of intercommunal unity as Hindu and Muslim nationalists grew further and further apart.

World War II was to bring an end not only to British rule but also to Gandhi's dream of a united and peaceful India. When the war broke out, most Indians seemed to be either apathetic or vaguely supportive of the Allied cause. Gandhi himself led thousands of *satyagrahis* in a campaign demanding that the British "quit India." A few of his former rivals in Congress even collaborated with

the Nazis, forming an Indian National Army that fought against the British.

The British sent a high-ranking delegation to stabilize the situation on the subcontinent, which everyone now acknowledged would gain independence after the fighting ended. However, negotiations between Congress and the Muslim League broke down, which also made it likely that colonial India would be divided into Hindu and Muslim states.

Talks about how to partition India began in earnest right after the war but got nowhere during 1945 and 1946. In February 1947 Prime Minister Clement Attlee told Parliament that Britain had decided to relinquish power to "responsible Indian hands" by June of the fol-

lowing year. He dispatched Lord Mountbatten, the dashing commander of British forces in Southeast Asia during the war and Queen Victoria's great-grandnephew, to be the last viceroy and to supervise the transition to independence.

Within weeks of his arrival, violence broke out throughout the country. Mountbatten helped convince the key Indian leaders that the creation of a separate Muslim Pakistan was inevitable. Only Gandhi refused to accept partition and roamed the country trying to quell the rioting. But the inevitable came sooner than anyone expected. By the summer of 1947 an agreement was reached making about 80 percent of colonial India part of a new and independent India and turning the rest into Pakistan, itself divided in two parts in the northwestern and northeastern (now Bangladesh) corners of the subcontinent.

Even though the new countries were to be overwhelmingly Hindu and Muslim, respectively, as many as 50 million people were caught within the borders of the "other" country. Within days most of them started to migrate in both directions. The outbursts of communal violence that accompanied the refugee movement continued beyond 15 August 1947, the day India and Pakistan both formally gained their independence.

All this happened over Gandhi's objections. He began yet another fast to try to get the people to end the communal violence, especially that committed by his fellow Hindus. From almost everyone's perspective, however, Gandhi and his ideals were a thing of the past. The demands of governing independent India seemed to call for practical leaders such as Nehru. Gandhi accused Congress of corruption and its leaders of engaging in power politics. He even went so far as to demand that the venerable old organization be dissolved.

Meanwhile, because of his support for all Indians, including outcastes, Muslims, and Sikhs, Gandhi had earned the enmity of militant Hindus. At dusk on 30 January 1948 a member of one of those groups assassinated Gandhi while he was on his way to lead a prayer meeting. That evening, Nehru announced during a national radio broadcast that "the light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere." Though Nehru was only talking about one man, his words were prophetic, because the assassination also marked the death of Gandhi's principles. (See table 13.3.)

### *The New Republic*

The movement for Indian independence was not as unified, principled, or nonviolent as Gandhi would have wanted. However, it did have two legacies that helped the Nehru-led republic maintain its democratic regime

**TABLE 13.3** Key Events in Indian History Since Independence

YEAR	EVENT
1947	Independence
1950	Constitution goes into effect
1964	Nehru dies, replaced by Shastri
1966	Shastri dies, replaced by Indira Gandhi
1975	Emergency Rule begins
1977	Emergency Rule ends; first non-Congress government
1979	Congress returns to power
1984	Indira Gandhi assassinated; Rajiv Gandhi succeeds her
1989	Second non-Congress government
1991	Rajiv Gandhi assassinated; P. V. Narasimha Rao becomes prime minister
1996	Congress suffers its worst electoral defeat; BJP comes in first
1998	BJP elected; nuclear weapons tested
1999	BJP government reelected

and make progress on a number of social and economic fronts in its first twenty years of independence. In fact, no other third world country has started with so much working in its favor.

Because of the tactics Congress followed and because the independence movement lasted so long and developed as it did, there was a strong sense of national identity. This identification with India was a highly positive one, which for most people probably was as important as any religious, ethnic, caste, or linguistic attachment. People had little trouble thinking of themselves as both Indian and, say, a lower-caste Hindu, which was rarely the case in the new countries of Africa and Asia.

The new country had a strong and popular political party in charge. In the early elections, Congress got the lion's share of the votes and seats in the **Lok Sabha** (lower house of parliament). Even more importantly, because of the way the independence movement had developed, Congress also set about forging coalitions with other parties and organizations as part of the consensus building that was at the heart of Nehruvian values. (See table 13.4.)

Congress sought to be an inclusive political party. As we will see later, although the party had opposition, it also included groups representing all the major ideological and social groups in Indian society. Thus, when problems arose, Congress was able to take positions that would appeal to the disaffected groups, if not co-opt them into the party altogether.

### *Centralization and Fragmentation*

Indian political life has changed dramatically since Nehru died in 1964. This is why the historical section of this chapter included some quite recent events. Indeed,

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 THE NEHRU CLAN
 

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Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, holding his grandson Rajiv Gandhi on his knee. Gandhi eventually succeeded his mother and became the third family member to hold India's highest office.

some observers argue that it has changed so much that we can almost think of it having a new regime even though the basic institutions have changed little, if at all.

This starts with the concentration of power in fewer and fewer hands under Indira Gandhi (1917–84) and, to a lesser extent, her successors. Nehru was one of the last preindependence stalwarts, and there was no obvious candidate to succeed him. The Congress party machine leaders—later known as the **Syndicate**—turned to Lal Bahadur Shastri. However, he never gained more than the grudging support of his fellow Congress leaders and had not left much of a mark on political life when he died suddenly in 1966.

This time, conflict between the party's left and right wings became public. In the end, the conservative Syndicate chose Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi (no relation to Mohandas), to be prime minister. As a woman with little political experience, they assumed that she would be more manipulable than any of the other contenders.

Perhaps because she had begun her political career at the top, and so had never developed strong ties to average Indians or to local political elites, Gandhi quickly adopted an authoritarian leadership style that alienated many of her colleagues within the party. Within a matter

**N**o democracy has ever had one family exert as much influence as the Nehru-Gandhi clan in India.

The patriarch, Jawaharlal Nehru, was one of the two most important leaders of the independence movement, and he also served as prime minister during the new country's first, critical years. His daughter, Indira, was as influential (although often less constructively so) from the time she became prime minister in 1966 until her assassination in 1984. At that point, her elder son, Rajiv, became prime minister, but only because his younger brother Sanjay had been killed in an airplane crash.

The Nehru-Gandhi clan has been out of office since Rajiv's assassination in 1991. However, his Italian-born widow, Sonja, became leader of the Congress Party in 1999 and presided over its third consecutive defeat at the polls. Most observers doubt that she will ever lead the country and look instead either to her teenage sons or to another Nehru grandson, Arun, to carry on the family tradition.

of months, Congress split when the business-oriented **Morarji Desai** formed a rival faction.

After an election victory in 1971, Gandhi announced a series of bold new economic policies. More land was given to the peasantry, coal mines were nationalized, and harsh new taxes were imposed on the rural and industrial elite. The Fifth Five-Year Plan called for the "removal of poverty" and the "attainment of self-reliance."

Not everyone was happy with Gandhi's policies or her heavy-handed rule, which included appointing her son Sanjay as head of the new state automobile enterprise, thereby catapulting him onto political center stage. Protests against inflation and corruption within Congress became more frequent and strident. Desai became the focal point of an increasingly unified opposition.

Then, on 12 June 1975, the Allahabad High Court found Gandhi guilty of two counts of illegal practices during the 1971 election campaign. Technically, Indian law required her to resign, but Gandhi gave no indication that she planned to do so. Politicians around the country urged her to step aside at least temporarily, until her legal predicament was resolved. She did nothing of the sort.

Instead, on 26 June Gandhi invoked the constitution's provision for **Emergency Rule**. Civil liberties were

**TABLE 13.4** Indian Prime Ministers

NAME	YEARS IN OFFICE
Jawaharlal Nehru	1947–64
Lal Bahadur Shastri	1964–66
Indira Gandhi	1966–77
Morarji Desai	1977–79
Charan Singh	1979–80
Indira Gandhi	1980–84
Rajiv Gandhi	1984–89
V. P. Singh	1989–90
Chandra Shekhar	1990–91
P. V. Narasimha Rao	1991–96
H. D. Deve Gowda	1996–98
Atal Bihari Vajpayee	1998–

suspended, and press censorship was imposed. In addition, twenty-six political groups were banned, and all major opposition leaders were arrested. In July the remaining MPs passed a law extending the Emergency indefinitely, enacted constitutional amendments that banned any legal challenges to it, and retroactively cleared Gandhi of any wrongdoing. Parliamentary elections were “postponed” a year until 1977.

Democracy was in jeopardy. Then, on 18 January 1977, Gandhi suddenly ended Emergency Rule, released all political prisoners, and called for national elections in March.

The pre–Emergency Rule opposition was now more united than ever around Desai, the Gandhian socialist Jayaprakash Narayan, and other anti-Indira leaders at both the national and state levels. Their new **Janata** Party had beaten Congress by 43 percent to 34 percent, winning an overwhelming majority of seats in the Lok Sabha.

But the Janata coalition was a “negative” majority united only in its opposition to what one historian has called the “Indira Raj.” Within two years it collapsed. New elections were held, which Congress won, bringing Indira Gandhi back to power in 1979 after only two years in opposition.

Gandhi’s second term in office was just as tumultuous as her first. Hopes for radical economic reform disappeared. Many states elected legislatures hostile to central rule, and in a number of cases, Gandhi dissolved those governments and replaced them with officials loyal to her.

Her biggest problem, by far, was the increase in ethnic antagonism toward central rule, especially in the Punjab. As we will see in more detail later, there was growing and widespread protest from Sikhs who had begun demanding independence from India and who often used violence in pursuit of their political aims.

In May 1984 Indira Gandhi imposed martial law in the Punjab. The next month Indian troops attacked the

Golden Temple in Amritsar, leaving it in ruins and killing hundreds of the most militant Sikh activists. Finally, on 31 October, Sikh members of her own bodyguard assassinated the prime minister, setting off yet another wave of violence, in this case with Hindus taking revenge against Sikhs living outside of the Punjab.

Indira Gandhi’s domination of Indian politics for nearly a generation remains a subject of controversy to this day. There is, however, one point on which her supporters and critics agree. Gandhi and her policies permanently ended Congress’s role as a consensus builder. Instead, she centralized power within the party, driving out factional leaders and other politicians who either rejected her vision of India’s future or who balked at the concentration of power in her hands. And, as a result, for the first time in Indian history, a strong opposition was created that was capable of winning elections.

Indira Gandhi had been grooming her son Sanjay to succeed her, but he was tragically killed in an airplane accident. Therefore, her other, and previously apolitical, son Rajiv (1944–91) became the heir apparent. No one was surprised when he became prime minister and immediately called for new elections while sympathy for his mother remained high. Rajiv proved to be an effective campaigner, building support around his youth and his image as “Mr. Clean” in an otherwise corrupt political system. Congress won an unprecedented 80 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha.

Congress’s victory marked the entry of a new generation of leaders into Indian politics. Rajiv Gandhi and his closest advisers were young, well-educated, westernized, and affluent. They did not share the older generation’s commitment to a planned economy, but instead were highly impressed with the market economies in the Western countries they had studied and worked in. At first, then, they seemed to be ideal candidates to implement an Indian version of structural adjustment.

In his five years in office, Gandhi did introduce the first market-oriented reforms. However, his reputation for honesty was undermined by the Bofors scandal, in which the government and the Congress party machine were implicated in a kickback scheme in their dealings with a Swedish arms manufacturer. Moreover, to keep itself in power, the government had to resort to the same kind of centralizing tactics that had gotten Indira Gandhi’s government into so much trouble.

In 1989 Rajiv Gandhi’s term came to an end. Congress was still the only party with a truly national base, but it could not beat another loose opposition coalition, the **Janata Dal**. As in 1977, the Janata Dal was a classic “negative coalition,” brought together in common opposition to the incumbent government but with little or no agreement about what it should do when it won.

## Coalition Politics

In one key respect, the 1989 election marked the last major turning point in Indian politics. With it, Congress lost its traditional role as a hegemonic party because it lost its ability to build consensus. Since then, India has been governed by broad-based coalitions because no national party has any realistic chance of winning either a majority of the vote or a majority of the seats in the Lok Sabha. Further, the balance of power is held by politicians with regional, ethnic, or caste bases of support, a point we will return to in the section on political parties.

The Janata Dal coalition elected in 1989 lasted only months, and after two more weak governments fell, early elections were scheduled for 1991. The polls again showed that Congress was in trouble, though no single party mounted a serious challenge.

In the middle of the two-week voting period, however, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by Tamil extremists. The elections were postponed, and Congress desperately sought a new leader. Rajiv's Italian-born wife, Sonja, turned down an offer to head Congress and keep the dynasty alive. Thus, the party had to turn to the seventy-year-old former foreign minister **P.V. Narasimha Rao** (1921–), a longtime party loyalist.

When the elections were finally over, Congress won, though it fell sixteen seats short of an overall majority. The BJP came in second, well ahead of the Janata Dal and the regional parties. Narasimha Rao proceeded to form a coalition government with a few of the minor parties. No one expected the new government to do very well given the problems it inherited. Surprisingly, however, it lasted its entire five-year term, during which time it accelerated the pace of economic reform. It was not, however, a strong government. It was tainted by corruption (Narasimha Rao ended up in jail after he left office) and internal bickering, and it did little to address the country's problems other than by opening up its economy. It is thus hardly surprising that Narasimha Rao and Congress went down to such a crashing defeat in 1996.

As had been the case the other two times Congress lost, a divided coalition won in 1996. This time the erstwhile opposition turned to H. D. Deve Gowda (1933–), a little-known politician from the southern state of Karnataka, who was the first prime minister who did not speak Hindi.

Like all of his non-Congress predecessors, Deve Gowda headed an unwieldy coalition consisting of thirteen political parties. Therefore, no one was surprised when it collapsed after less than a year, as did the government of his successor, Inder Gujral.

## Democratization in India

**INDIA IS one of the few third world countries that has been able to sustain a democratic regime for an extended period of time.**

**The reasons for this are not clear, largely because we do not understand all that well how democratization works in general. Nonetheless, two main factors stand out. First, India's independence movement and first governments were able to build a strong sense of national identification and support for the new state. Second, despite the difficulties of recent years, the government has functioned reasonably well and has avoided the kind of serious centrifugal conflict that has disrupted political life in so many other third world countries.**

Early elections were held again in 1998, which cemented coalition politics, though with a new and—for some—worrisome twist. This time the BJP came in a strong first and was able to form a government with twelve other parties under Prime Minister **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** (1924–). Many observers feared that the BJP would stress its fundamentalist Hindu roots and deepen the divisions and intolerance that had marked Indian politics for the preceding generation (also discussed shortly). However, Vajpayee and his colleagues understood that they had to govern from the center both to retain the support of their coalition partners and to have any hope of gaining new voters for the BJP.

Congress was able to convince enough of the BJP's partners to defect that the BJP lost a vote of confidence by one vote in March 1999. When early elections were held yet again in September, the BJP's coalition increased its support in the Lok Sabha following a disastrous showing by Congress, now lead by Sonja Gandhi. Vajpayee was able to put together an even broader coalition of twenty-four parties and, as of this writing, seemed likely to remain in office until the end of the parliamentary term in 2004.

## Political Culture

**T**he historical coverage in this chapter was longer than most, because it was only in the past few years that the basic contours of contemporary Indian politics were set. This means that we have already seen some of the key themes in Indian politics and that the remaining sections can be shorter than their equivalents in most other chapters.

As far as political culture is concerned, this long history combines with the diversity of India in two ways that might seem contradictory at first glance. On the one hand, the growing identification with region, caste, and religion has spawned considerable conflict, some of which has turned extremely violent. On the other hand, ever since independence, there has always been widespread identification with and support for the Indian regime. A decade or so ago, many observers thought that the growing intolerance might tear India apart. Now, however, there is widespread agreement that Indian democracy is secure.

We will explore these two points in the rest of this section, and each will appear in one form or another in the rest of the chapter. Keep in mind, however, that because public opinion polling is not very well developed, it is easier to see these points in the way Indians act than in the way they think.

### *Challenges to Culture and Country*

As we saw earlier, Indira Gandhi's eighteen years in and out of office marked a major turning point in Indian politics, as consensus and coalition building gave way to more centralized power and adversarial politics. This new political style has had its echos in a culture marked by more division and conflict.

By far the most important manifestation of this has been the rise of regional identification and, with it, periodic demands for the creation of new states along ethnic or religious lines and even for secession from India itself. This topic is important enough that we will defer dealing with it until the section on public policy. Here, it is enough to note that in such different regions as Assam, Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, and Punjab the growth in ethnic and regional identification has presented the central state with serious challenges on and off since the 1970s. In the late 1990s, according to one study, as many as 200 of India's 534 districts (the administrative unit below the state level) were experiencing intense conflict.

Next to the growth of regional identification, the most disruptive force has been the rebirth of religious fundamentalism, especially among Hindus. As remarkable as it may seem, many Hindus think of themselves as an oppressed group, even though they make up over 80 percent of the total population. Politically organized Hindu groups have existed since the formation of the **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)** early in the twentieth century. The RSS and other organizations, which are sometimes called Hindu fundamentalists, have become an important and troubling force on the Indian political landscape. In some states, Hindu groups are

pressing for reforms that would put the secular commitment of the country's founders into question, including special provisions on divorce and other legal issues for Muslims. Because the growth of Hindu nationalism has been inextricably intertwined with the meteoric rise of the BJP, we'll defer dealing with it, too, in more detail until we cover the party system.

Last but by no means least, we cannot ignore the continued importance of caste. Although the constitution and subsequent legislation banned discrimination against *dalits* (formerly the untouchables) and other backward castes and tribes, caste continues to have a major impact on people's daily lives—from what they do for a living to whom they vote for.

Recall that the 50,000 or so castes and *jati* (sub-castes) are social structures that reflect centuries-old social, racial, and economic divisions. For Hindus, caste is not merely a social category one is born into. It has a religious side as well that carries with it duties and devotions commensurate with one's position in the hierarchy. Caste can still spark protest if members believe that their interests are in jeopardy. For instance, the creation of the reserved-places scheme (a kind of affirmative action) for untouchables, members of scheduled tribes (low-status, non-Hindu groups), and lower castes touched off massive protests among the upper castes, which included the ritual suicide of hundreds of young Brahmins. More recently, a mere typographical error led to rioting. An official document included "Gond-Gowari" instead of "Gond, Gowari," which legally meant that there was no Gowari caste eligible for the set-aside jobs. Furious Gowaris protested in the state of Maharashtra where most of them lived. By the time the rioting ended a few weeks later, at least 113 Gowaris had died.

### *Support for the Regime*

At the same time, there is compelling evidence that most Indians are actually satisfied with the regime in New Delhi. To see this, note that India has held thirteen national and countless state and local elections since 1947, and only once—during Emergency Rule—did the democratic process fail to hold. In that case, the Indian people repudiated Indira Gandhi and Congress at the first possible opportunity.

The elections are remarkable events. Every time Indians go to the polls, it is the largest event ever organized by humans. Turnout has averaged 57 percent in each national election, which is roughly comparable to that in the United States. But in India over half the electorate cannot read enough to comprehend a ballot and has to rely on a well-established set of pictures to identify



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A yogi with his head buried in the sand on a busy street in the center of Calcutta's business district. India is known for its blend of the "traditional" and the "modern."

which party and candidate they prefer. In fact, the poorest Indians vote at a rate three times that of the national average.

Generally, poorly educated Indians are remarkably well informed about what the issues and who the politicians are before they go to the polls. In a survey conducted in the mid-1990s, almost 7 in 10 respondents thought that parties and elections made government function better, as opposed to only a little more than 4 in 10 in 1971. Similarly, 6 in 10 agreed that voting made a difference, and, again, the poorest voters were disproportionately likely to take that point of view.

Indian voters do have a penchant for electing movie stars, former bandits, and politicians who had previously been convicted of corruption. That said, they also have reelected only about half of the incumbents in most recent elections, compared with an average of about 90 percent in elections for the U.S. House of Representatives.

Most political scientists are convinced that this supportive side of Indian political culture exists because of the way Indian democracy was created and has evolved since independence. Dozens of events, from the way independence was forged to India's ability to build and test nuclear weapons, have added to the pride most Indians feel in their country. Perhaps more than any other mass public in the world today, they have no trouble combining a positive identification with the nation-state and those with their caste, religion, or ethnicity.

Congress's remarkable leadership in the years before 1947 did a lot to create both this sense of Indian identity and the consensus regarding certain broad public policy goals before independence was achieved. In

short, nation building occurred along with and, in some ways, even ahead of state building.

This undoubtedly helped India survive the first years after the communal strife of partition, when many observers doubted that an egalitarian democratic political system could be grafted onto a society that was both deeply divided and rigidly hierarchical. Some observers, too, thought that elements of Hindu culture, including its emphasis on harmony, pluralism, and spiritual rather than worldly matters, helped smooth the process. Whatever the exact constellation of causes, there is considerable evidence that by the late 1960s India had developed the kind of political culture that helps sustain democracy in Britain and the United States.

### *The Challenge of Modernization*

There is one other cultural question looming on the horizon that is typical of many rapidly changing countries in the third world. How will India's culture evolve as the country's economy grows and develops more of a Western-style middle class?

There is some evidence that Indians will adapt quite easily.

The best estimate is that there are about 100 million Indians who can today afford such things as a car or cable/satellite television. Middle-class Indians have become the world's biggest market for blenders, which they use to grind the chilis and other spices they need to make their traditional dishes. Similarly, it seems to take only about six weeks to train English-speaking Indians to sound as if they are from Birmingham, England, or from Birmingham, Alabama, so that they can work in call centers that handle routine requests for businesses in Europe and North America.

As rural India has become wealthier, more and more consumer goods have become available. Younger people are, of course, the ones most attracted by these new luxuries. This does not mean, however, that traditional values have disappeared. For example, even though the government ruled dowries illegal years ago, many couples who clamor for Western products still submit to arranged marriages with dowries that can top \$6,000 and include a television, refrigerator, or motor scooter.

But there are worrisome signs as well. In most parts of India, boy babies still are prized whereas girls are seen as a burden (not only because their parents will have to pay those dowries to get them married). Medical care for girls has always been worse. If there is a food shortage, boys are more likely to be fed and girls more likely to be allowed to starve. The now widespread use of ultrasound tests for pregnant women has added a new twist to the

© Pablo Bartholomew/Getty Images



Indian election officials counting the vote in May 1996. Because so many Indians are illiterate, ballots have pictures as well as words to identify each candidate's party affiliation.

discrimination against girls. Thus, there are only about 850 live births of girl babies for every 1,000 boys, because parents are far more likely to choose to abort a fetus if they know it is a girl.

It is too early to tell what the overall impact of economic growth on cultural values will be. There have been some protests against the presence of Western institutions, including, surprising as it may seem, Coca-Cola's sponsorship of international sporting events. However, there has been little of the open and visceral rejection of Western culture we see in much of the third world, including among the overwhelming majority of India's 150 million Muslims.

## Political Participation

The overlap among and tensions between ages-old traditions and modern democratic practices extend beyond the political culture to the day-to-day behavior of India's people and the organizations they form. As in any long-standing democracy, this, in turn, means focusing on political parties and elections. As we explore political participation here, you will see yet again the interplay between the two and the challenges they pose.

### *The End of the Congress System*

There are a handful of democracies in which a single party has dominated political life for an extended period of time—the Social Democrats in Sweden since the de-

pression, the Christian Democrats in postwar Italy, and, of course, the LDP in Japan.

Congress was one of them. Although never able to win an outright majority at the polls, it routinely took advantage of India's British-style single-member-district electoral system and the division of its opponents to win overwhelming majorities in the Lok Sabha until the onset of coalition politics in 1989.

Congress was successful then for the same reasons it had been prior to independence. Paradoxically, it both stood by its basic principles and proved to be remarkably flexible in dealing with allies and potential adversaries.

After independence, Nehru committed the party to central planning and social democracy. But he also forged a style of leadership in which the party elite incorporated ideas and even included politicians from the opposition.

Of all the liberal democracies covered in this book, India is the one in which class has played the least important role, even during Indira Gandhi's most radical years. Rather, the Indian party system and politics in general involve many different, overlapping cleavages. As a result, a party that hopes to win enough votes to govern has to be able to balance the interests and demands of enough of the groups spawned by India's many divisions to forge a majority coalition in the Lok Sabha.

Nehru's Congress party did that extremely well. However, the fragile balance that gave the party its hegemonic power was not to survive the leadership struggle after the unexpected death of Prime Minister Shastri in 1966.

As we have seen, Indira Gandhi challenged the Syndicate and won, but her victory had tremendous costs

**TABLE 13.5** Congress's Share of the Vote and Seats in the Lok Sabha

YEAR	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE	NUMBER OF SEATS
1952	45.0	364
1957	47.8	371
1962	44.7	361
1967	40.8	283
1971	43.7	352
1977	34.5	154
1980	43.7	353
1984	48.1	415
1989	39.5	197
1991	36.0	226

for Congress. Over the next decade the Congress system fell apart in three ways. Its share of the vote declined, its organization deteriorated, and it faced new opposition. (See table 13.5.)

The decline began with the 1967 elections in which Congress's majority in the Lok Sabha was reduced to 54 percent. Congress also lost six states, in every case as a result of its inability to respond to local pressures. Those defeats, combined with the first signs of Gandhi's heavy-handed leadership, provoked the first postindependence split within the party. Gandhi was unwilling to become a pawn of the powerful Congress factional leaders. Her relationship with them worsened, and the tensions erupted during the 1969 election for the largely symbolic presidency. Against the wishes of the Syndicate, Gandhi supported the incumbent, V. V. Giri, who was running as an independent. The Syndicate then threw her out of the party. Congress MPs, however, voted overwhelmingly in her favor.

Despite her personal victory, the party split, ironically, during the one-hundredth anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi's birth. Now there were two Congress parties: the Syndicate's Congress (O, for organization) and Indira Gandhi's Congress (I, for Indira). Congress (I) now lacked a working parliamentary majority, and the Gandhi government stayed in power only through the support of former opposition parties, including the Communists and Tamil nationalists.

In 1971 Gandhi dissolved the Lok Sabha and called for new elections. In the campaign, it became clear that Congress (I) was going to be a very different kind of party in at least two respects. First, it ran on a far more radical platform to appeal to the poor and disadvantaged, especially the scheduled castes, youths, and Muslims. Second, the campaign and the party were personalized around Gandhi's rule in ways never before experienced in Indian politics. Not only did Gandhi centralize her power in the new party, but the opposition made her the

focal point of its campaign, with the slogan *Indira hatao* (Indira out of power) as its centerpiece.

Gandhi confounded the experts by winning 44 percent of the vote and 352 of 518 seats. State legislative elections the following year gave Congress (I) even wider margins of victory. Gandhi and Congress (I) won in large part because the opposition was so divided and ineffective, which is typically the case in other countries in which a single party has dominated for a long period of time.

From that point on, Gandhi's activities as prime minister and as head of the Congress (the other faction soon disappeared, so we can drop the [I]) contributed to the collapse of the system in later years. Perhaps the most damaging of her actions was the imposition of Emergency Rule. Almost as important was the prominence given her younger son, Sanjay, who was widely viewed as little more than a power-hungry young man. Sanjay pushed such controversial policies as family planning and forced sterilization. He also controlled access to his mother, the "household" of personal advisers to the prime minister, the Youth Congress, and much of the government's repressive apparatus.

In 1977 Gandhi made yet another of the mistakes that typified her final decade. She decided to end the Emergency and hold new elections on the assumption that she would win again.

This time she got it wrong. There was widespread opposition to the Emergency, her policies, and Sanjay's style. More MPs quit Congress, including Jagjivan Ram, a senior cabinet member, Congress leader, and the most prominent untouchable in political life. Meanwhile, Morarji Desai forged the Janata Party, a coalition of four opposition groups.

Congress was routed, dropping to 34.5 percent of the vote. Both Indira and Sanjay Gandhi lost their bids for reelection. Janata and its allies won a clear majority, with 298 seats. In addition, the election revealed a new regional split in the vote. Congress was all but totally shut out in the heavily Hindu north, while Janata made few inroads into the south.

During the last four years of her life, Gandhi did build a new Congress organization, but it was totally different from anything her father and his generation had envisioned. Gone was the decentralization and inclusiveness that had made Congress one of the world's few dominant parties and one of the keys to India's democratic success. In its place was a new kind of political machine, wholly dependent on its leader, her family, and her close advisers.

The new Desai government brought Gandhi to trial and sent her to prison for a brief period. Quickly, however, it became clear that nothing held Janata together



## USEFUL WEB SITES

As one might expect of a country with such a large high-tech community and such a large diaspora, there are several good portals on Indian affairs, all of which have links to political sites and news feeds. Among the best are:

**[www.outlookindia.com](http://www.outlookindia.com)**

**[www.indiainfo.com](http://www.indiainfo.com)**

**[www.india-web.com](http://www.india-web.com)**

Asianinfo.org is also a general site, but it is more focused on making information on Asia (including India) available to the rest of the world.

**[www.asianinfo.org/asianinfo/india/politics.htm](http://www.asianinfo.org/asianinfo/india/politics.htm)**

Finally, there are some good sites on Indian politics, including the Virtual Library, Professor Gene Thursby's collection, and an India-based site that has material on elections, parties, and public opinion polls.

**[www.india.com.ar](http://www.india.com.ar)**

**[www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/ind/politics.htm](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/ind/politics.htm)**

**[www.indian-elections.com](http://www.indian-elections.com)**

other than its desire to drive Gandhi from office. By 1979 the coalition had fallen apart, and the following year Prime Minister Charan Singh realized his minority government could not survive and called for new elections.

For the first time, an Indian election had turned into a personalized contest primarily about three candidates for the prime ministry: Singh, Ram, and Gandhi. This time support swung to Congress, which won about 43 percent of the vote and an overwhelming two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha. As in 1972, victory at the national level was followed by even victories at the state level.

But all was not well with Congress. Gandhi had taken the party even further to the left. She also insisted on personal loyalty to herself, her family, and her household as the key to success within the party. Then, on 23 June 1980, Sanjay died. Afterward, to drive home just how personalized politics had become, Gandhi brought in her elder son, Rajiv, who until that point had shown no interest in national affairs.

Rajiv Gandhi quickly took to political life, and by 1982 he had established himself as his mother's likely successor, a role he took on following her assassination. He hoped to modernize the country by breaking away from many of the traditional political practices and eco-

omic policies Congress had followed since independence in favor of a more pragmatic approach emphasizing modern management systems. Indeed, Rajiv used the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Congress in 1885 to launch a broadside attack against what the party had become, at least implicitly criticizing both his mother and the remaining party oligarchs.

As we will see in the policy section, most of those reforms never got off the drawing board. Rajiv Gandhi suffered a series of defeats in state elections. Moreover, the new government faced unprecedented challenges from dissidents in a number of states. Finally, Gandhi's reputation as Mr. Clean wore off as his government was implicated in scandals much like those that had tarnished his mother's reputation.

In short, Rajiv Gandhi and his advisers quickly realized that, despite the magnitude of their victory in 1984, their hold on power was tenuous at best. They stopped taking risks, in terms of both policy making and reforming the Congress Party. In fact, by 1989 Rajiv was running Congress in much the same way his mother had done—with an iron fist. Further, the party itself had lost virtually all the enthusiasm for and commitment to social change that had characterized it during his grandfather's time.

The deterioration of Congress's fortunes has continued since the death of Rajiv Gandhi, despite the surprisingly effective leadership initially exercised by Narasimha Rao. But, as we saw earlier, he could not stem the public's dissatisfaction with the party, and it went down to another crushing defeat in 1996.

The defeat and corruption charges he was facing forced Narasimha Rao from the party leadership. He was replaced by seventy-eight-year-old Sitaram Kesri. Kesri was responsible for bringing down the Gujral government, which forced the 1998 elections in which Congress saw its seat total decline once again. It lost despite the fact that Rajiv's widow, Sonja, finally joined the party and campaigned actively on its behalf.

Sonja Gandhi then became party president and led its 1999 election campaign. But everything went wrong that possibly could have. The fact that she was born and raised in Italy (though she became an Indian citizen in 1983) cost her votes. So, too, did a series of tactical blunders that convinced many voters she would not be as effective a leader as the BJP's Vajpayee. Finally, the polls suggest that there is a widespread desire—even inside of Congress—to put an end to the Nehru-Gandhi clan's domination of the party once and for all. (See table 13.6.)

Whether that can happen and whether Congress can become an effective opposition political party both remain to be seen. Few observers are optimistic.

**TABLE 13.6** Seats in the Lok Sabha: Major Parties and Their Allies

PARTY GROUP	1996	1998	1999
Congress and allies	139	148	134
BJP and allies	186	251	296
United Front	111	97	–
Others	98	51	107

Note: The first three rows include only major political parties and minor parties that had firm alliances with them. Other winning candidates are included in the "others" category. Also, seven seats were not filled following the 1999 election.

## The BJP

Ten years ago the BJP would not have featured prominently in a book like this. It had topped 10 percent of the vote in 1989 and won eighty-five seats, but few serious observers thought it could do much better, let alone become India's largest party ([www.bjp.org](http://www.bjp.org)).

Although the BJP itself is quite new, its roots lie in the revival of organized Hindu fundamentalism that began with the formation of the RSS in 1925. It was a disgruntled RSS member who assassinated Mohandas Gandhi in 1948. In the 1950s and 1960s, the RSS and similar organizations led campaigns opposing the slaughter of cows, the presence of Christian missionaries, and other alleged evils.

It also had a political party, the Jan Sangh, which won more than 7 percent of the vote only one time and was part of the Janata coalition that won in 1977 but lost two years later. The current prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, served as foreign minister in that short-lived coalition government. The party left Janata and ran on its own under the new BJP label in 1984, winning exactly the same percentage of the vote as in 1971.

In fact, the party was already beginning to score major breakthroughs in the northern "cow belt," where it had won control of four states during the 1970s. There, it did particularly well among younger men from upper castes who felt threatened by affirmative action and other programs they believed would undermine their social status and economic power.

The BJP's symbolic breakthrough occurred as the result of a clash centered on the disputed Babri mosque/temple in the northern city of Ayodhya. The building that stood there had been a mosque that some Muslims claim had been built by the first Mughal conqueror, Babur, during the sixteenth century. Some devout Hindus disputed that claim, arguing that the site was the birthplace of one of their major gods, Lord Ram, which made it one of the holiest places in that tradition.

Not surprisingly, the building had long been a source of contention between Hindus and Muslims. For

most of the past century or so, however, a modus vivendi had been worked out in which Muslims used it on Fridays and Hindus were free to pray there during the rest of the week.

Controversy broke out again in 1986 after a judge's ruling closed the building to everyone. The rapidly growing Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), or Worldwide Hindu Brotherhood, which made the freeing of such properties its highest priority, entered the scene. It routinely gathered 100,000 devout Hindus along the banks of the river next to the temple/mosque. Within two years, the VHP had mustered enough support to convince a judge to open the facility to Hindus. This, in turn, led to Muslim counterprotests. In one typical 1989 incident, a riot broke out after the VHP announced that it would add on to the building using specially consecrated bricks. More than 150 people were killed.

Later that year, Congress was defeated at the polls and replaced by a government that convinced the VHP to postpone construction of the new addition. Pressures around Ayodhya then eased until a Hindu mob destroyed the mosque and started building a new temple in December 1992.

The violence soon spread far from Ayodhya. Hindu revivalist movements, such as the Shiv Sena in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), took to the streets, demanding vengeance and attacking individual Muslims who obviously had nothing directly to do with the situation in Ayodhya. At least 1,700 died in Bombay alone.

The BJP and related organizations had thus built a base of support reminiscent of France's National Front. Its leaders had taken extreme positions and used what can only be described as thinly veiled racist rhetoric.

Most notorious on that score has been the BJP's ally the Shiv Sena and its leader, Bal Thackeray, cartoonist and former gang leader. Thackeray is now mayor of Mumbai, the most important politician in Maharashtra, and a vital cog in the BJP machine. He rose to power by, among other things, refusing to allow Kentucky Fried Chicken to open restaurants in Maharashtra. There had been some minor health code violations in KFC restaurants elsewhere in the country. It was hard, however, to raise too much of a fuss about a restaurant using excess amounts of MSG or having a dead fly in the batter when street vendors in the same neighborhood were selling cucumbers soaked in water that came from open sewers. Thackeray's supporters charged (with some degree of accuracy) that the grain needed to raise KFC's chickens would be better put to use directly in feeding people. Most observers, though, were convinced that his real anger was rooted in the fact that the chain was foreign and that its parent company, PepsiCo, did business in Pakistan.



© Robert Nickelberg/Getty Images

Hindu protesters destroying the mosque at Ayodhya.

It is easy to not take such actions seriously. However, Shiv Sena and other groups loosely affiliated with the BJP are responsible for widespread violence against Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and other minorities. They maintain paramilitary organizations, some of which are armed and can mobilize tens of thousands of activists for major protests such as those over Ayodhya.

The BJP also has a strong nationalist streak. Some of its more extreme leaders have argued against economic reforms because they will open the country up to foreign economic and cultural influences. And few analysts who were familiar with the BJP were surprised when the Vajpayee government tested nuclear weapons in 1998, given that doing so had long been a part of the party's platform.

In power, however, the BJP has proved to be far more moderate, in large part because it has to in order to retain the support of its coalition partners. Vajpayee's government has continued the liberal economic reforms to be detailed later in the chapter. It has not proposed legislation that would make India into a Hindu country or in any significant way undermine the commitment to secularism expressed in the constitution. In fact, it has taken a strong nationalist stance only in regard to relations with Pakistan (including its testing of nuclear weapons) and the related issue of the fate of Kashmir. But even there, the BJP has not acted in dramatically different ways from what a Congress-led government would probably have done. What's more, although its hostility toward Pakistan is real, this did not keep Vaj-

payee and his colleagues from supporting the U.S.-led war against terrorism in which Pakistan has played a central role.

### *The Other Parties*

It is difficult to cover all the other Indian political parties in an introductory text. Because there are so many of them, it is impossible to present the kind of tables used in earlier chapters to document election results. What's more, almost all of them operate within a single state or appeal to only a single ethnic, linguistic, or religious group. This is true even of those whose name or ideology might suggest a national appeal.

Things have not always been this way. Under Nehru, several opposition parties enjoyed nationwide appeal, including the Communist Party of India and the Socialists on the left and the Jan Sangh and Swatantra on the more traditionalist right. As noted earlier, however, Congress had factions of its own with similar beliefs. Further, Congress found it fairly easy to adopt at least some of the opposition's goals, as in the redrawing of the boundaries so that each major linguistic group was predominant in at least one state.

During the 1960s, however, more and more politicians left Congress to form new parties of which only the regional ones ever truly prospered.

More importantly, these politicians went through a radical transformation of their own. Most were arrested



Bal Thackeray, along with other right-wing Hindu activists at a meeting during the 1996 election campaign in which the Hindu BJP party came in first.

AP/Wide World Photos

during Emergency Rule, which only served to harden their opposition. It also led them to the realization that, whatever their many differences, they had to work together. As a result, most of the former Congress politicians, plus some of the others from the original opposition, formed Janata in 1977. However, as we saw earlier, these groups had only one thing in common—opposition to Congress.

These parties can be divided into three main types:

- **The remnants of the traditional left.** Two parties call themselves communist. The traditional, orthodox Communist Party of India (CPI) has seen its support dwindle to under 3 percent of the national vote. The more radical Communist Party of India—Marxist (CPM) has support primarily in the state of West Bengal, where it is the largest party. There are also some even weaker Socialist parties. In practice, these are all regional parties with no illusions about winning nationwide support.
- **The remnants of the Janata Dal.** It won the most seats in the 1989 elections but within two years had slipped to a distant third.
- **Regional parties.** Every state that has been subject to ethnic, linguistic, or religious unrest has spawned a political party that claims to speak for those interests, including the Akali Dal in Punjab, the DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, and the Telegu Desam in Andhra Pradesh.

These last three groups formed the United Front that brought Deve Gowda to office in 1996. The fact that they represented parties with such different goals and constituencies helps explain why the coalition collapsed so quickly.

The status of these parties is not likely to change dramatically. Most have strong enough regional bases that they are not likely to disappear. However, they are so different from each other and so hostile to Congress (the feeling is mutual) that it is hard to see them and the old dominant party coming together in an anti-BJP coalition that can actually govern.

### *Interest Groups*

Because India has been a functioning democracy for more than fifty years, it has the range of interest groups we saw in the countries covered in part 2—and then some. However, this does not mean that interest groups in India look and act the same as those in the West.

Thus, India has an extensive labor movement that seeks to organize and improve the lot of mostly manual workers. India, in fact, has more than 25,000 unions because the labor law allows any group of seven or more workers to organize one. However, only about 10 million people—a tiny fraction of the labor force of nearly 400 million—are unionized. Moreover, the unions themselves are fragmented. Most major unions are extensions of political parties rather than autonomous organizations such as the American AFL-CIO or French CFDT.

## Conflict in India

**AT FIRST glance, it might seem as if India's democracy is threatened by conflict that, for example, kills at least a thousand people during each election campaign.**

**In practice, however, the conflict is not that serious. In part, this reflects the size of the Indian population.**

**More importantly, the conflict does not have as serious implications as the disputes we will see in the next two chapters, largely because even the most outspoken critics of the current government accept the basic "rules of the game" in India.**

Congress controls the Indian National Trades Union Congress (INTUC). The All-Indian Trades Union Congress (AITUC) is associated with one of the Communist parties, and the Congress of Indian Trades Union (CITU) is linked to the other. What's more, few of the unions seem to be gaining strength. The one exception to that may be the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), which is associated with the BJP.

They have a limited impact, too, because they primarily cover workers in the "organized" sector of the economy, in which people are employed for cash wages. Virtually unrepresented are the poorest people, who work in the "informal economy," or black market, and who are more desperately in need of help. Perhaps most importantly, when unions have chosen to strike, they have rarely been able to overcome the resistance of the state or private employers.

Similarly, India has no shortage of business associations. The most important of these is the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, which represents some 40,000 enterprises. Unlike the unions, business groups do not have formal ties to parties but have historically supported the conservative wing of Congress and some of its right-wing rivals. Individual business leaders also gain some leverage because of the substantial contributions they make to individual candidates.

Business, like the unions, has not been particularly powerful in India. This reflects, in part, the traditional Brahmin disdain for business. It also grows out of Congress's preference for socialist policies in the years before Rajiv Gandhi came to power. Most importantly, business traditionally has been weak because the modern sector of the economy has been dominated by the state. As recently as 1982, for instance, state firms had three times as much capital as private ones, and the sales of the ten largest public firms averaged about eight times those of the equivalent private sector ones.

To understand the pressures facing India today, it's important to recognize that both business and labor are far less important than the religious, linguistic, and ethnic groups that have gained newfound influence over the past quarter-century. To see this, consider a single example—protest in Assam.

Assam is a poor state in the northeastern part of the country. During the 1950s and 1960s, its fortunes improved when the tea it produces became a significant moneymaker in global markets. But its economy was always fragile, and native Assamese never constituted more than a bare majority of the state's population.

In the 1970s tensions began to mount after significant numbers of Hindus and Muslims fled into the state from war-ravaged and even more impoverished Bangladesh. Not surprisingly, there was widespread concern among the Assamese that they would be a minority in their own state. Not surprisingly as well, the 1970s saw the emergence of a number of organizations that sought to mobilize Assamese worried about the state's future.

In 1978 eleven organizations came together to form the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP), or Popular Movement Front. The AAGSP protested the continued immigration of Bengalis, from both India and Bangladesh. The All Assam Students' Union even went so far as to demand the expulsion of all foreigners.

The issue was hardly new. Attempts to block the immigration of Muslim Bengalis dated back at least to 1926. But it was a particularly charged issue in the 1970s when the redrawing of Assam's borders reduced the state in size.

The various groups launched a campaign to remove non-Assamese from the list of registered voters, a figure some estimated to be 7 million. They also organized massive protest movements that all too frequently launched savage attacks on Muslim Bengalis. In February 1983 a crowd of about 12,000 Assamese killed an estimated 1,400 Bengalis in what has come to be known as the Nellie Massacre. In all, well over 10,000 died before an agreement was reached in early 1985 between the Assamese leadership and Rajiv Gandhi's government. There is less violence now, but a number of farmers and business leaders have raised private armies because neither the central nor the state government can ensure law and order.

Today, however, it is not at all clear how far such protest movements can or will go. Thus far, the violence has been contained in the sense that it has not led to serious calls for a new regime or the breakup of India itself. Whether this remains the case is anybody's guess, especially if the recent pattern of weak coalition governments and sociopolitical fragmentation continues.

## The Indian State

India has more than its share of problems, most of which are typical of those in the third world in general. It is unique, however, in that it has kept its democracy alive—if not always flourishing—for more than a half-century. If nothing else, this means that the section on formal state institutions will be longer and more detailed than the comparable ones on Iraq, South Africa, and Mexico, where the personality of individual leaders is often more important than institutions in determining what the state does.

India's democracy has endured in large part because Indians have adapted to inherited European institutions and practices and have created a political hybrid that in some ways very much resembles and in others markedly differs from British-style parliamentary democracy. (See figure 13.2.)

### The Constitution

Like the leaders of most of the new states in Asia and Africa, India's founders gained independence under a system they inherited from their colonial masters. They confirmed that legacy when they wrote their own constitution, which went into effect in January 1950 ([www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/in\\_indx.html](http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/in_indx.html)).

It is not a carbon copy of the British constitution. For one thing, it is written. Indeed, with nearly four hundred articles and eight schedules, the Indian constitution is one of the longest in the world. And because it can be amended by a simple majority vote in both houses of parliament, it is among the easiest to change.

The constitution defines India as a secular republic, guaranteeing a degree of freedom to the roughly 20 percent of the population that is not Hindu. It also guarantees an extensive list of individual civil liberties and forbids discrimination along religious, caste, racial, and gender lines.

However, the constitution also allows the prime minister to exercise emergency powers during a crisis. These provisions have been used only the one time, in 1975. During the nearly two years of Emergency Rule, the constitution was drastically amended. After the 1977 elections, however, the Desai government repealed most of those amendments and limited the conditions under which emergency powers could be used to an invasion from abroad or an armed rebellion at home.

As with most recently formed states, India has no king or queen. Instead, a president plays the symbolic role of head of state, much as we saw in Germany. Most

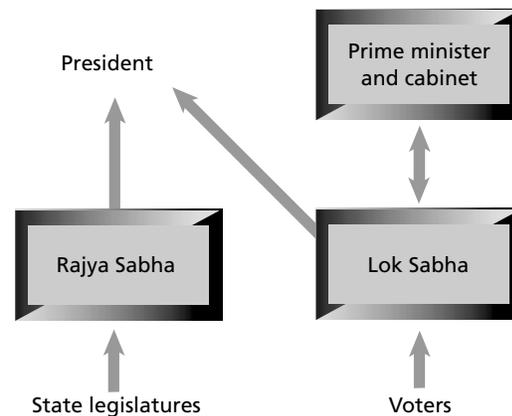


FIGURE 13.2 Decision Making In India

presidents have readily accepted their secondary role; the exception is Zail Singh, who frequently complained that Rajiv Gandhi failed to keep him informed about government policies and plans. The president has had a substantial political impact only during the brief periods when there was no majority party or coalition. At those times, the president played the role expected of him, helping find a prime ministerial candidate who might forge a majority coalition and, if that proved impossible, paving the way for the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and for new parliamentary elections.

### Parliament

As in Britain, the key to power in India lies in the lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha. All but 2 of its 545 members represent single-member constituencies (those two are appointed by the president) in which elections follow the same kind of **first-past-the-post**, or winner-take-all, system used in the United States and Great Britain. It should be noted, though, that, given the size of the Indian population, the average MP represents 1.5 million people ([alfa.nic.in](http://alfa.nic.in)).

The upper house, or **Rajya Sabha** (House of the States), has 250 members. Of those, twelve represent the artistic and intellectual community, and are appointed by the president. The rest are elected by the state legislative assemblies, making the Rajya Sabha much like the Bundesrat in Germany in the way it is chosen, though it is nowhere near as powerful.

Nominally, the president appoints the prime minister, but in reality he has little or no leeway, because the prime minister must be the head of the majority party or coalition in the Lok Sabha. As in Britain, the prime minister appoints the other members of the Council of Min-

isters, all of whom must already be members of parliament or must win election to it in a by-election within six months. Of the council members, the prime minister will invite some twelve to eighteen to join the cabinet. And, because a group even that size can be ungainly, there is normally a smaller group of cabinet members and other informal advisers (for example, the “household” of Indira Gandhi’s years) who wield the most power.

The decision-making process is very similar to that in Britain. The cabinet initiates almost all significant legislation. Other business, including private-member bills, receives less than a day’s attention per week when the Lok Sabha is in session.

Bills receive the same three readings they do in Britain, with the most important being the second, when the Lok Sabha votes on the principles of the legislation after it has been examined by the relevant committee. Voting is almost always along party lines, which all but ensures that the government’s legislative proposals are passed, except during periods when there is no clear majority.

Party discipline in the Lok Sabha has not always been quite as strict as it is in Britain’s House of Commons because the parties themselves are often in flux. Thus, traditionally, it was not uncommon for an individual MP to quit his or her party and join a new one during the middle of a term. These defections caused so much uncertainty at both the federal and state level that recent legislation requires MPs who quit their party to leave parliament as well unless one-third of their delegation joins them. Not surprisingly, these rather draconian rules have led to a sharp reduction in the number of defections and to less uncertainty in the Lok Sabha.

Once passed by the Lok Sabha, a bill is sent to the Rajya Sabha. If the two houses do not agree, a variety of consultative mechanisms are used in an attempt to iron out the differences. If they don’t work, the two houses meet together and vote on the bill—a vote the Lok Sabha invariably wins, given its more than two-to-one size advantage over the upper house.

On balance, though, the Lok Sabha is even weaker than the House of Commons as a legislative body. To begin with, there is far more turnover. In recent elections, as many as half the MPs were elected for the first time, which leaves the Lok Sabha with fewer experienced members than in most liberal democracies. Even more so than in Britain, MPs also lack the staff, offices, and other facilities that would enhance their ability to assume an effective oversight role. Finally, and most importantly, the opposition has been so fragmented that it has been hard for it to effectively utilize question time

and other mechanisms that give oppositions elsewhere a modicum of leverage over the majority party and the executive.

### *The Bureaucracy*

Another vital British inheritance that is a cornerstone of the state is the **Indian Administrative Service (IAS)**, which sits atop the country’s monstrous bureaucracy. The British established the Indian Civil Service in the nineteenth century, and over the last half-century of colonial rule, more and more positions in it were filled by Indians.

After independence, the service was renamed, but little else changed. The Union Public Service Commission supervises annual examinations through which about 150 extremely talented young men and women are admitted into the IAS and a few other top civil service corps. In all, this bureaucratic elite has about 4,000 members and thus constitutes but a tiny fraction of a civil service that employs something approaching 15 million people.

The rest of the civil service is a different story. Below the IAS level, the bureaucracy is generally seen as overstaffed and inefficient. Although bureaucrats have job security, their salaries are quite low. Many, therefore, tend not to work very hard; many also take bribes. Informal groups of fixers and brokers act as intermediaries (paid, of course) between average citizens and the bureaucracy. For instance, it is often only through these intermediaries that villagers gain access to development assistance. In short, in contrast to the impersonal, legally structured civil services in the advanced industrialized democracies, power in the Indian civil service—and hence in the effectiveness of policy implementation—revolves around personal connections, which are typically based on family, caste, or religion.

### *Federalism*

The British were never able to bring all of India under a single, centralized government. And their successors never tried. A series of “reorganizations” since the constitution went into effect have left India with twenty-five states and seven union territories, the boundaries of which have been drawn so that the major linguistic groups each predominate in one of them. Some of the states are the size of a major European power.

Each has a government patterned after the national one. A governor appointed by the central government is the official head of state. Real power, however, is supposed to lie with a state legislature (bicameral in some but not

all states) and a council of state ministers responsible to the lower house. The exact names of these bodies vary from state to state and language to language.

What matters here is not how these state governments are structured or what powers they do or do not have. Rather, the states are of interest because they demonstrate the importance of caste and other informal social relationships in political life.

At first, Congress dominated at the state level as well, not losing control anywhere until 1967. Since then, its support has declined even more rapidly in the states than in New Delhi. But even this picture is misleading, because much of state politics is not about ideological issues. Rather, the competition is mostly between factions based on **patron-client relations**.

Patrons can be party, caste, or religious leaders (they, of course, overlap), who offer their clients jobs, infrastructural projects, or other benefits in exchange for votes. Local patrons tend to be clients of more prominent leaders who weave the networks together into what are all but ideology-free factions. Above all, factional leaders want and need to win in order to obtain the resources and benefits that keep their clients loyal. So, they can seem quite fickle, casting their lot with one party or leader today but shifting to another tomorrow as a result of their constant calculations about how best to maximize their power and influence. Robert Stern has described this process well for Congress, though his analysis also applies to most of the other parties:

**Parties or factions, unburdened by ideological commitment, inclined to promote middle-class welfare, purposeful primarily in winning elections and positioned to deliver the goods to its voters, the Congresses have patched together their pluralities and majorities from India's vast heterogeneity. Here from one village, there from another. Here from one jati or jati subgroup, there from their rivals. From a state coalition here that depends on the support of dominant and twice-born jatis, from another there dependent on the support of other backward classes. The myriad, separate cost-benefit calculations that have held the Congresses together in fragments and factions can, however, undo them in fragments and factions. Factions want to know what's in it for them.**<sup>4</sup>

The combination of factional politics with growing linguistic, religious, and ethnic tensions has also made most states hard to govern. Few elect clear and disciplined majorities to their lower houses, which means

that state governments have often been unstable. Moreover, all-too-many factional leaders have condoned the use of violence, engaged in corruption, and relied on organized criminals (it is worth noting that *thug* is one of many English words of Indian origin) in seeking power.

In part to maintain their own power, central governments controlled both by Congress and its opposition have been increasingly willing to suspend normal state politics and to impose **Presidential Rule**, the state-level equivalent of the federal emergency powers. For example, the Narasimha Rao government imposed it on Bihar at the end of March 1995. To some degree, this represented an attempt to restore order in a state that had seen more than its share of violence. Its non-Congress state administration was still in office despite passing the end of its five-year term and still had not appropriated money for civil servants' salaries and other vital government expenditures. To some degree, though, the move was a rather blatant attempt by the central government to influence the direction of a state in which the local Congress was all but certain to lose the elections that were about to be held. The incumbent chief minister, of course, complained loudly, not on ideological grounds but on the grounds that Congress and the BJP were supporting higher-status castes against the *dalits* and lower-ranking *jati*, which were critical components of his government's coalition.

Each example of Presidential Rule is somewhat different. All, though, combine a legitimate concern with disorder with political opportunism. Whatever the balance between the two in an individual case, each involves practices that are quite different from what we saw in the industrialized democracies.

## Public Policy

**T**he continuity of India's democracy may be unusual by third world standards. The travails it has encountered with its public policies are not.

As is the case in most of the third world, the weakness of India's state is evident in virtually any policy area in which the domestic and global forces summarized in the figure on the inside front cover come into play. Lacking economic and other resources to start with, India faces increasing pressures from "below" in its own society and from the outside, most notably as the global economy impinges ever more closely on it. In India's case, the two sets of pressures are easiest to see in successive governments' attempts to confront ethnic, linguistic, religious, and caste-based conflict and to speed up economic growth.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Stern, *Changing India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 189.

## Confronting Communal Violence

The issue of ethnic conflict crops up in a number of places in this chapter, as it will throughout part 4. What is important to see at this juncture is that the violence and the state's reaction to it created a situation in which such conflict has become an all-but-permanent part of the Indian political landscape and has contributed to the rise of the BJP and the regional parties. Alternatives involving, for instance, strengthening federal institutions, which seemed plausible a generation ago, would now be much harder to implement, given the resentments that have built up over the years. In other words, India will all but surely face serious ethnic tensions for years to come in large part because of the policies pursued by national and, to a lesser degree, state governments since Indira Gandhi's time.

In the first years after independence, Indian governments did fairly well in settling communal conflict short of violence, because they followed two key principles, the second of which is less important today. First, all governments have been committed to maintaining the unity of India. Second, the government tried to work out accommodations with linguistic groups desiring more autonomy. However, given its commitment to India as a secular state, the leadership was unwilling to allow religious groups to stake territorial political claims. Although specific policies have varied from state to state and group to group, it is safe to say that, on balance, the net effect of public policy since the mid-1970s has been to exacerbate—not ease—ethnic, religious, and linguistic tensions.

During the Nehru years, Delhi did redraw some state borders so that each major linguistic group would have a state it could govern. Once those states were created and/or restructured in the mid-1960s, however, the government faced an impasse, because the remaining issues generally involved conflict within individual states, pitting the majority linguistic or religious group against a minority or, as in Assam, minorities. Moreover, these more difficult issues emerged at the same time that the Congress's majority was eroding. Therefore, unlike in the 1950s and 1960s, the party had to pay more attention to holding onto its core electoral constituencies, which included key groups that were hostile to further accommodation with minorities.

Ethnic conflict worsened under Indira Gandhi, with her contradictory desires to control as many states as possible but to do so with as weak leaders as possible. As Paul Brass put it, the

**relentless, unprincipled intervention by the center in state politics has been the primary cause of the troubles in the Punjab and elsewhere in India since**

Indira Gandhi's rise to power. A structural problem arises from the tensions produced by the centralizing drives of the Indian state in a society where the predominant long-term social, economic, and political tendencies are towards pluralism, regionalism, and decentralization.<sup>5</sup>

It needs to be recognized, therefore, that the flourishing of local communal violence has been enhanced since Nehru's death by the political uses to which it has been put in competitive politics at the national and state levels and by the entrenchment of an ideology of the secular state which, in its tolerant face, justifies pluralist practices but can also be used to condemn minority demands as a danger to national unity and the integrity of the Indian state.<sup>6</sup>

To see the general patterns of ethnic conflict and the way public policies contributed to it, we will focus on the Punjab and Kashmir.

### The Punjab

The Punjab lies along the Pakistani border to the west of New Delhi. The original state of Punjab was ethnically mixed. In 1951 a bit more than half of its 16 million people were Hindus, but it also had the country's largest concentration of Sikhs. By the 1960s they were the only large ethnic group that did not have its own state.

Negotiations to create a majority Sikh state were complicated by the fact that they are a religious as well as a linguistic group, and granting them a state would call the commitment to a secular India into question. Nonetheless, an agreement was finally reached to split the old Punjab, creating a new state with the same name whose population was about 60 percent Sikh. Some difficulties remained, including the status of Chandigarh, which was to serve as a shared capital for Punjab and one of the other new states. Still, most people expected this to be another of the largely successful settlements that had marked the history of ethnic conflict in India up to that point.

This was not to happen. Observers are still having a hard time disentangling all the reasons protest increased. Most, though, cite two main factors.

The first was the social and economic changes that swept the Punjab and left many members of its Sikh

<sup>5</sup>Paul Brass, "The Punjab Crisis and the Unity of India," in *India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations*, ed. Atul Kohli (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 212.

<sup>6</sup>Paul Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 202–203.

majority dissatisfied. The Punjab had been one of the poorest regions in the country. However, the state-sponsored “green revolution” (discussed shortly) and the hard work of thousands of Punjabis had turned it into one of the richest.

As this happened, some Sikhs began to fear that traditional Sikh culture and values would be lost, while others remained dissatisfied with the resolution of the issues remaining after the state borders were redrawn. To make a long story short, a new generation of Sikh militants emerged, the most militant and charismatic of whom was a young cleric, **Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale**.

Most Sikhs rejected the extremists’ call for an independent Kalistan or Sikh state. Nonetheless, tensions mounted as more militant Sikhs came to demand a larger slice of the political and economic pie, including, for instance, a greater share of water from the rivers that flowed through the state. Moreover, a Sikh party, the **Akali Dal**, mounted a serious challenge to what had been Congress domination of state politics. Finally, employing a strategy that has become quite common in the third world, Bhindranwale and other leaders used the mass media to spread their message, including their growing hatred of a central government that they thought was ever more pro-Hindu and anti-Sikh.

Second, after Indira Gandhi took office, the government became far less accommodating. And after the creation of the new Punjab, the government rejected further Sikh demands. Gandhi never dealt gently with people who disagreed with her. She took a particularly hard line toward the Punjab because the Sikhs and the Akali Dal had been among the most effective opponents of Emergency Rule.

As support for the Akali Dal grew in the late 1970s, Congress actually tacitly supported Bhindranwale and other Sikh extremists. But this support backfired on Congress once it returned to power.

During the late 1970s tensions mounted. More and more Sikhs endorsed the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973, which apparently called for a dramatic transfer of power away from New Delhi and to the states (“apparently” because the resolution was never actually written down, and the people who were there disagree about exactly what was included in it). More importantly, a growing number of Sikhs launched a series of attacks against Hindus, some of whom assaulted Sikhs as well. Meanwhile, Bhindranwale and other extremists gained more and more influence, especially among young men.

In 1981 Bhindranwale was accused of murder. When, two years later, it seemed as if the government might finally take him into custody, Bhindranwale and his supporters occupied the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the Sikhs’ holiest shrine.

In a typically opportunistic move, Indira Gandhi overthrew the elected Akali Dal state government, imposed Presidential Rule, and sent one of her most trusted lieutenants to oversee the arrest of the alleged terrorists. Despite Presidential Rule, violence continued. Clashes between Sikhs and Hindus threatened to undermine Congress’s electoral base among Hindus outside of the Punjab, who were frustrated by the government’s inability to protect their coreligionists. Congress also had lost any meaningful contacts and relationships within the Sikh community that it might have used to defuse the increasingly tense situation.

In March 1984 the All India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF) was abolished. One hundred fifty companies of police troops were stationed in the Punjab, including ninety at the Golden Temple alone. In response, AISSF members occupied more temples and turned them into arms warehouses and terrorist sanctuaries. Meanwhile, in neighboring Haryana, Congress chief minister Bhajan Lal at the very least condoned what could only be described as organized mob violence against Sikhs who lived in his state.

Finally, in June 1984, Gandhi ordered troops to storm the temple. Bhindranwale, at least five hundred of his supporters, and eighty-three soldiers were killed. The surviving Sikh leaders, including most prominent Akali Dal officials, were arrested. Sikh soldiers in other units mutinied and rioted in the most serious breach of army discipline since independence.

Then, in October, the circle was squared when Sikh members of her own security detail assassinated Gandhi. The assassination was followed by nights of rioting in which Hindus killed hundreds of Sikhs in Delhi and other cities—individuals who, of course, had had nothing to do with Gandhi’s murder or, for that matter, Sikh nationalism. Last but not least, Rajiv Gandhi won his landslide victory at the polls in part because he appealed to Hindu chauvinism in ways no Congress politicians ever had before.

In short, Indira Gandhi behaved very differently from her father, who typically took powerful politicians from the states and incorporated them into the national elite. His daughter did everything possible in the Punjab and elsewhere to undercut such powerful local politicians and to replace them with weak chief ministers who were personally and politically beholden to her. When the crisis came and unifying leadership was needed both in New Delhi and in Chandigarh, it was not there.

As was the case in most public policy areas, Rajiv Gandhi did set out to do things differently. Almost immediately upon taking office, he began negotiations with the Akali Dal government. The two sides eventually reached an agreement that, among other things, would



The Golden Temple, the holiest shrine in the Sikh religion. It was the site of a bloody 1984 attack by government forces against nationalist rebels.

have returned Chandigarh to the Punjab and given the state some control over the vital water resources its farmers claimed they needed.

By 1987, however, Rajiv Gandhi had backed down. He played the Hindu trump card in the 1989 campaign in ways designed to maximize his party's support among orthodox Hindus, who were expected to be the swing vote and thus the key to victory. On television, the Congress frequently showed footage of Indira Gandhi's funeral pyre with a sobbing Rajiv standing nearby, the implication being that the Sikhs were to blame. In his own constituency, he was challenged by his brother's widow, Maneka, herself half Sikh. One of Congress's most widely used slogans during the campaign was "the daughter of a Sikh, traitor to the nation." Put simply, his Hindu constituents throughout northern India were not prepared to go along with such sweeping concessions to the Sikhs.

Since then, the violence has continued, albeit at something less than the levels of the early 1980s. The situation in Punjab was so intense following Rajiv Gandhi's assassination during the 1991 campaign that elections there had to be put off for months. On 1 March 1993, police officers killed Gurbachan Singh Manochahal, head of the significantly named Bhindranwale Tiger Party of Khalistan. Extremist Sikhs are generally held responsible for a 11 September 1993 car bomb attack on Maninder Singh Bitta, president of the ruling Congress Party's youth wing and himself a Sikh. He escaped with minor injuries,

but eight people were killed and at least thirty-five seriously wounded. On 31 August 1995 a bomb killed Punjab's chief minister, who, despite being a Sikh, had allowed the police to torture and kill militants and their families.

It is difficult to know exactly what Sikhs feel today, because the state is off-limits to academic researchers and foreign journalists. The impressionistic evidence suggests that, given the events of the 1980s and early 1990s, the Sikh community is more divided than, but as angry as, ever. Support for the more extremist wings of the movement probably has declined.

### Kashmir

Today, the most serious communal conflict is in Jammu and Kashmir, whose status has been in dispute ever since independence. It was one of the princely states that was not officially a part of British India. The leaders of those states had to choose to join either India or Pakistan. Geography made that choice easy in most cases.

It was anything but easy for what became the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which lies in northwestern India along the Pakistani border ([www.jammu-kashmir.com/index.html](http://www.jammu-kashmir.com/index.html)). Like much of India, it is quite diverse ethnically, but it has a substantial Muslim majority, which would lead us to expect that it would have gone to Pakistan. However, its prince was a Hindu who leaned toward joining India. In the months after independence,

Pakistani troops invaded part of the state and forced the maharajah to flee. He then asked for support from Indian troops, at which point the state joined India. Nehru's government agreed to hold a referendum on which country the state should definitively join, but it was never held because Pakistan continued to occupy part of it.

In addition to the fighting at the time of independence, a war broke out in 1965, and Jammu and Kashmir also figured in the 1971 war that led to the independence of Bangladesh. After the 1971 war the two sides agreed to a de facto division of the state into regions controlled by India and Pakistan on each side of the last positions their troops had occupied, now dubbed the Line of Control.

Over the next few years opposition to remaining part of India grew among Muslims. Some wanted to join Pakistan, and others wanted to create their own state. Tensions reached a peak when many Muslims concluded that the 1987 state election had been rigged against them.

At about the same time, some militant Muslims went to Pakistan where they were trained as fighters—many Indians would say terrorists. In 1989 the most recent wave of fighting broke out when those militant Muslims and allies from abroad (mercenaries to the Indians) started launching attacks on Indian targets. According to Indian sources, over 35,000 people have been killed since then. The Pakistanis put the number at 70,000. One count in 1996 found 94 armed groups operating in the Kashmir Valley alone. Some 350,000 Indian troops were based in the state and faced an equally large force of Pakistanis in the land they occupied and just across the border in Pakistan proper.

The two sides could not even agree on who did what. Pakistan claimed that it gave only “moral and diplomatic support” to the Kashmiris, and India accused Pakistan of sponsoring “cross-border terrorism.” One thing is clear: During the 1990s the opposition became more Islamic than nationalistic in tone and began attracting other *jihadis* who had fought against the Soviets in neighboring Afghanistan in the 1980s.

The outside world paid relatively little attention to the on-again/off-again fighting in the region until India and Pakistan both tested nuclear weapons in 1998. At that point, observers realized that the fighting in this disputed state could lead to a devastating regional nuclear conflagration. This was readily apparent in May 1999, when Indian artillery began shelling Pakistani positions across the Line of Control, claiming that the government of President Nawaz Sharif had infiltrated regular troops into the region, a charge that was vehemently denied. Tensions were defused when Pakistan submitted to pressure from the United States and redeployed some of its troops.

Jammu and Kashmir made the world's headlines after the attacks of September 11. Pakistan quickly agreed to become a major force in the U.S.-led coalition against terrorism. Tensions with India remained high, however. This led the Vajpayee government to accuse the government of General Pervez Musharraf, who had seized power in a 1999 coup, of hypocrisy. On the one hand, it claimed to oppose the terrorism of al-Qaeda and the Taliban; on the other, it continued to support it in Kashmir.

The worst fighting in more than a year began in October 2001 when India started shelling Pakistani positions. Tensions mounted ever further following an attack on the Indian parliament building in December, for which Vajpayee's government blamed Pakistan and Kashmiri militants. For the rest of 2001 and the first weeks of 2002, rarely a day went by without at least one violent death. More troops massed along the Line of Control, and yet another war between India and Pakistan seemed possible. Tensions eased a bit when President Musharraf said that he would not allow terrorists to operate from Pakistani soil. Nonetheless, the dispute over Kashmir is far from settled, and it remains a flash point in that troubled part of the world. Indeed, on the day these lines were written in February 2002, some British and Indian newspapers reported that one of the Kashmiri militant groups was harboring Osama bin Laden.

### *Stimulating the Economy*

The Sardar Sarovar Dam raises a lot of questions about Indian politics, including issues of caste, regionalism, and the often distant and insensitive behavior of central government policymakers. But the main reason I chose the dam for the opening vignette in this chapter is that it squarely demonstrates India's shift toward structural adjustment and the resulting controversy.

Prior to the mid-1980s Indian governments pursued import substitution and central planning of a largely state-owned and -controlled economy to spur growth and reduce poverty. Since then, a combination of outside pressures and domestic frustration with what the Indians themselves often called the “Hindu rate of growth” has led Rajiv Gandhi and his successors to reconsider the social-democratic goals and practices that their predecessors had taken for granted. Though less dramatically than Mexico (see chapter 16), India has opened its economy to the global market. So far, growth has increased, but no major dent has been put in the poverty rate and other social problems.

Indian economic policy from independence through the 1980s was not an abject disaster. There was enough growth to create a new middle class. The **green revo-**

**TABLE 13.7** Selected Economic Indicators: India and Comparable Countries Before Structural Adjustment

COUNTRY	GNP 1987 (\$)	AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH 1965–87 (PERCENTAGE)
India	300	1.8
Brazil	2,020	4.1
China	290	5.2
Indonesia	450	4.5
Mexico	1,830	2.5
Pakistan	350	2.5
South Korea	2,690	6.4
Thailand	850	3.9
Turkey	1,210	2.6

**lution** introduced high-yield crops that all but eliminated famine, if not hunger and malnutrition. In some technological areas, India is a world leader. It has tested nuclear weapons and medium-range ballistic missiles, and its computer software is among the best in the world. Further, India has been among the most successful third world countries in using modern telecommunications technology to reach the residents of its villages, who would otherwise be isolated from the outside world.

On balance, however, the Indian economy has not fared very well, especially when compared with countries like South Korea, which were almost as poor as India at the end of World War II. Table 13.7 presents some comparative data on economic growth for India and some other third world countries in the mid-1980s that had roughly equal economic conditions in the mid-1950s.

Two seemingly contradictory trends emerge from these data. India's economy grew by an average of nearly 2 percent per capita per year during those years. The growth was concentrated in the industrial sector of the economy, which the import substitution policy made the top priority. But India did not do very well in relative terms. Of the countries included in the table, none had a slower rate of growth, and only China had a lower GNP per capita. India's economic plight seems all the worse because a number of countries that were as poor as it was in the early 1950s far outperformed it. Average income in South Korea then (and now) was about ten times what it was in India, and in Hong Kong, the figure was more like twenty-five times.

### Poverty

This relative failure is not simply a statistical artifact. It has had tangible and politically significant costs, most notably the inability of the Indian government to do much to alleviate the wrenching poverty in which so much of its population lives.

Despite its slow but steady growth, the government has been able to accomplish very little if for no other reason than the size and rapid growth of India's population. Most mainstream scholars today estimate that at least 300 million Indians are poor, a number greater than the total population of every country on earth except for China. Of the 20–30 million Indians born each year, well over half are born into poverty.

One recent study defined poverty Indian-style as not having access to adequate food, clothing, and shelter. By that standard, about a sixth of the population lives in what is called "ultrapoverty," because their incomes fall more than 25 percent below the level needed to obtain those basics. Many of the poor are homeless; the best-off live in substandard housing, with dozens of families crammed into teeming tenements. Many are malnourished, and those who do get the minimum daily caloric intake needed to sustain a healthy life survive primarily on grains. A missed day or two of work can leave a family without money for food. Health care for the poor is virtually nonexistent, and life expectancy for those in poverty barely tops fifty.

Poverty, of course, is not randomly distributed. The lower castes and *dalits* are most likely to be poor. There are still about 600,000 families of outcaste origin who make a living, such as it is, emptying latrines and chamber pots. Poverty is worse in rural areas (41 percent poor, 20 percent ultrapoor) than in urban areas (34 percent and 16 percent, respectively). There are thousands of villages without potable drinking water.

Women bear the heaviest costs of poverty. In poor families, they are responsible for all household tasks, which in rural areas can include the time-consuming and physically draining search for firewood. In urban areas, women are much less likely to receive health care or an education than are men. In the states of Bihar and Rajasthan, for instance, about 38 percent of the overall population is literate. Overall, only about 20 percent of women are literate, and in the poorest, rural areas, only about 2 percent of all women can read and write, thus depriving them of one of the skills they could use to pull themselves out of poverty.

The government has enjoyed some success in reducing poverty. Between 1970 and 1990, the poverty rate was cut by about one-fourth. Still, as a result of continued population growth, the number of poor people actually increased during those same years.

The government also devised a number of successful and innovative approaches to help people improve their lives. The Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) was created to give villagers low-level technology and new skills. For instance, in a number of villages, "night soil" gatherers were taught how to harness the

methane contained in human waste to generate electricity to fuel small-scale industrial facilities. In all, the IRDP reached about 27 million rural families, spending an average of about \$500 on each. But this gave no more than 10 percent of the rural poor the ability to escape poverty—assuming the program worked perfectly, which, of course, it did not.

Finally, although the government has had some success in reducing poverty, its record pales in comparison with most of its contemporaries. India has been able to reduce the size of the population below the poverty line by about 1 percent per year, which is better than Colombia, Morocco, and Sri Lanka have done. But most other countries that started at similar rates of development have done far better, including Indonesia, which is reducing its poor population by about 2.5 percent per year. On another indicator of poverty—reducing the mortality rate for children under five—India ranks last in this same sample of countries. It has been able to reduce the number of children who die before reaching the age of five by almost 2 percent per year, but Morocco and Colombia both top 5 percent.

### The Nehruvian Model and India's Economic Woes

India's continued poverty obviously has many causes, the most important of which is the broader economic policy of import substitution pursued from 1947 until the mid-1980s. Nehru and his colleagues had been deeply influenced by the British Fabian movement and its moderate version of socialism. This led them to focus on a strong public sector to steer development and to generate a more just and egalitarian society.

The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 called for a mixed economy, with government ownership of all munitions, atomic energy, and railroad enterprises. The resolution also gave the government the sole right to start new ventures in such key sectors as iron and steel, telecommunications, aircraft, and shipbuilding. Eighteen other industries were to remain in private hands, but subject to government control and regulation.

Under the leadership of one of Nehru's closest advisers, P. C. Mahalanobis, these "commanding heights" of the economy were to be managed using five-year plans that were more controlling than the French but less so than the Soviets' before Gorbachev. At the heart of the system was what the Indians call the **permit raj**, an elaborate system of tariffs, licenses, and other regulations that kept most imports out and made the ones that did get in so expensive that next to no one could afford them. In so doing, it protected publicly and privately

owned firms alike, which continued making the same old products in the same old way and earning the same all-but-guaranteed rate of profit year after year.

Over time, most Indian business leaders came to accept the planning system because it guaranteed reasonable profits and an advanced standard of living for those working in the modern sector of the economy. Wages in the protected sector averaged about 70 percent higher than those in the rest of the country.

High tariffs and other regulations also protected domestic industry. In 1985 rates ranged from 107 percent on capital goods to 140 percent on most manufactured products. In addition, most industrial goods could be imported only by what the government called "actual users." But even that was not always possible, because, for instance, automobile, truck, and bus manufacturers were not allowed to import tires.

There is little question that these economic policies met their initial goals, as India did become reasonably self-sufficient. In 1984 the import of finished goods accounted for only 8 percent of its GDP, compared with an average of over 19 percent in other third world countries. India developed a substantial industrial base with limited interference from or obligations to other countries.

But the isolation also had its costs. Imports totaled less than 10 percent of GDP in the late 1980s, by far the lowest figure in noncommunist Asia. The absence of internal competition was one of many causes of high rates of corruption and inefficiency. More importantly, the economy did not benefit from the capital, technology, and other resources more trade could have provided—admittedly, at the cost of considerable domestic control. Most importantly of all, the Indian economy was falling ever further behind those of many other third world countries.

### Liberalization

Most economists supported India's desire to maintain its economic independence. But by the early 1980s there was a growing consensus that import substitution and related policies were retarding overall growth by depriving the economy of the stimuli a more open market could provide.

Since then, India has gradually opened its economy and adopted other promarket policies supported by international financial institutions and multinational corporations. It has not done so as quickly as Mexico (see chapter 16), nor has international pressure on it to change been as direct. Nonetheless, India's policies in the new century are a far cry from what they were when Rajiv Gandhi took office in 1984.

There are many reasons Gandhi began to tilt the balance away from state ownership, planning, and control. In part, the new policies reflected his own background, which included university study in the West and a career that began in business, working for Air India. In part, they grew out of forces in the global economy that inflicted a heavy price on countries which tried to resist the trend toward more open markets and relatively unrestricted international trade.

In contrast, countries like South Korea were growing far more rapidly because they took advantage of some niches in the emerging global marketplace. This is not to say that their economies were trouble free, but following international economic trends seemed to bring them significant economic payoffs. Rajiv Gandhi and his youthful colleagues wanted to take India in that same direction. During his five years in office, reforms were implemented incrementally. The forces behind liberalization gained even more support after 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Reform efforts peaked early in the Rao government, in which reformers like Manoharan Singh and P. Chambaram (with his Harvard MBA) were given the key economic ministries.

Recently, barriers to outside investment have been cut on the assumption that capital and competition from abroad will give a much needed boost to domestic industries that stagnated under the protection of import substitution. Overall, an average of about \$4 billion a year in direct foreign investment poured into India during the 1990s. By contrast, there was only \$13 million worth of it in 1981 and \$121 million in 1989. The government has sold parts of many state-owned industries, including the automobile manufacturer, Maruti Udyog, which is partially owned by Suzuki. And both Air India and Indian Airlines are scheduled for privatization. Much of the foreign investment comes from Indians living abroad.

The most visible change has come in information technology. Because its economic borders historically were so closed, India had not developed a competitive domestic computer industry even though it had long been a world leader in software development. With the newly open economy, it offered outside investors a pool of skilled and low-paid labor, and it held out the promise of a massive new market at some point in the future. "Silicon valleys" have developed around Bangalore in the south and Hyderabad in the north. From 1994 to 1999, the information technology sector grew at the rate of 25 percent per year, and the government created its own web site to help promote it ([itformasses.nic.in](http://itformasses.nic.in)).

The government has also encouraged more exports so that India can earn hard currency to buy the goods it

has to import. Throughout the 1990s exports grew at the rate of 20 percent per year.

India has not gone as far in terms of economic reform as some of the other third world countries because of domestic political pressures. Recall that the Gandhi and Narasimha Rao governments were not terribly popular and were beholden to traditional politicians and conservative social groups within Congress. As a result, as the costs of economic reform mounted for everyone from the poor to the economically powerful, their governments backed down. Further, the two coalition governments that succeeded them were far weaker and were all but paralyzed as far as economic reform is concerned. Finally, the BJP has continued the process of reform, but it has not been willing to speed it up, especially when it comes to eliminating the permit raj.

According to the most optimistic predictions, India is in the first stages of the kind of economic turnaround we saw with China in chapter 11. Growth rates are at an all-time high. The middle classes, which had done relatively well before structural adjustment, are doing even better now, creating an internal market for some of the consumer goods being manufactured in India.

Overall, economic reform has become widely accepted in Indian politics. It was initially inspired by global challenges that left India in a weakened position economically. In the decade or so since they began, the reform efforts have also created a powerful domestic constituency in the westernized middle class, which held the balance of political power early in the Rajiv Gandhi and Narasimha Rao governments. The reforms have also built another constituency of poor people, such as those who opposed the Sandar Sarovar Dam, that had a lot to do with Congress's downfall. Although India is not likely to return to the permit raj system or to a Hindu rate of growth, the way the balance between these two constituencies evolves will go a long way toward determining the fate of economic reform and all that goes with it.

## Feedback

**A**s befits its tumultuous and divided political system, India has a lively mass media.

Even though barely half of the population is literate, India has over two thousand daily newspapers, which are also the cheapest in the world. The papers, of course, are published in dozens of languages, and 12 million out of each day's circulation of 68 million are in English. The papers cover the entire political spectrum, and many of



the best papers have well respected reputations for their investigative journalism. Although political news dominates the printed press, the fastest growing newspapers are the ones that concentrate on financial news; their circulations have tripled since the introduction of economic liberalization.

Until recently, television and radio were completely state owned. Since the mid-1990s, however, cable and satellite television have been introduced, and one journalist estimates that more than 300 million people have access to one or the other. These people can now watch both the BBC World News and Rupert Murdoch's Star service, and thus get differing perspectives on political events.

### Conclusion: Democracy in India and the Third World

However serious its difficulties, India is not likely to suffer the fate of the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia, or even see its democracy succumb. It is risky to predict anything during these times of such rapid and unanticipated political change. Nonetheless, this conclusion seems warranted if we place India in a broader comparative and theoretical perspective.

Over the past decade, political scientists have spent a lot of time investigating why some democracies succeed and others collapse. Although these studies are controversial, two themes appear time and time again in the research. First, the more legitimate the regime is, the less likely it is to collapse. Second, the more effective the government is, the more likely it is to retain that legitimacy and, more generally, to survive. These may not seem like particularly profound conclusions, but if we shift from abstract theory to two comparisons, the reasons we can be reasonably optimistic about India's political future become clearer.

In examining the Soviet Union and the broader collapse of communism in Europe, we saw the dramatic interplay between policy failure and the loss of legitimacy. We may lack systematic evidence that would allow us to directly compare their experiences with India's, but the impressionistic evidence available to us reveals a very different situation in the latter. The Indian government has been more successful in at least some policy areas (for example, liberalization) than any European communist regime was. And, although its population is increasingly angry and polarized, most Indians still view the regime as legitimate. Perhaps most importantly, there is not the kind of repressed rage ready to erupt when politi-

cal straitjackets are removed, as happened when glasnost was instituted in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe.

The other comparison is between India and the rest of the third world. No matter how dire India's situation might have seemed in this chapter, it is in relatively good shape on two levels. First, India's economic performance and, more importantly, its economic potential are both superior to most of what we will see in Mexico, Iraq, and South Africa. Second, its regime has been more effective and retains more legitimacy than most others, some of which are wracked with basic divisions over whether the country itself should even exist.

Whether India is a relative success or a failure in comparative terms should not obscure the most important points for American or European students to learn about this or most other third world countries. First, these are incredibly poor countries that lack some of the basic resources and amenities we take for granted, such as primary education, rudimentary health care, safe drinking water, and shelter. Second, poverty is but one of many factors that make these countries much harder to govern, whatever the strengths or weaknesses of the people who end up trying to lead them.

### Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of India presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the "right direction" or is on the "wrong track." If you were asked such



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## Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Caste	Bhindranwale, Jarnail Singh	BJP	Akali Dal
<i>Dalit</i>	Desai, Morarji	IAS	Ayodhya
Emergency Rule	Gandhi, Indira	RSS	Bharatiya Janata Party
First past the post	Gandhi, Mohandas		British East India Company
<i>Jati</i>	Gandhi, Rajiv		Government of India Act
Patron-client relations	Narasimha Rao, P. V.		Green revolution
Permit raj	Nehru, Jawaharlal		Indian Administrative Service
Presidential Rule	Vajpayee, Atal Bihari		Indian Civil Service
Swaraj			Indian National Congress
Untouchable			Janata
			Janata Dal
			Lok Sabha
			Mughal
			Rajya Sabha
			Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
			Syndicate

a question about India, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?

3. India is one of the very few third world countries to have sustained a democracy for an extended period of time. Why do you think this is the case? Do you think India is likely to survive well into the twenty-first century?

4. The independence movement in India was one of the largest and most unified in what became the third world. How did that help the new Indian government to get off to a successful start?

5. India is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse countries in the world. How has that affected its political life since independence?

6. The Indian political system has long revolved around the Congress Party. The party has slipped badly at the polls in recent years. How has that changed Indian politics?

7. India used to follow import substitution as strictly as any country in the third world. Over the past ten to fifteen years, however, it has moved toward structural adjustment and the open market. Why did this change occur? How has it altered Indian political and economic life?

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# IRAQ

by *Guilain Denoeux*

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The Axis of Evil?
- Thinking About Iraq
- The Evolution of the Iraqi State
- Iraqi Political Culture and Participation
- The Iraqi State
- Public Policy
- Feedback
- Conclusion: Saddam Hussein and the Future of Iraq

0 100 200 300 Miles  
0 100 200 300 400 Kilometers



*One taxi driver explains the attitude of many Iraqis toward their President this way. "This is car," he says, patting his hand on the dashboard. "But if Saddam says this is bicycle, it is bicycle." He looks around anxiously and adds: "He could kill me for this."*

ELAINE SCIOLINO

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## The Axis of Evil?

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In his 29 January 2002 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush did not mince words when discussing North Korea, Iran, and Iraq, which he labeled an "axis of evil." Regarding Iraq, he stated:

**Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison to murder thousands of its own citizens—leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections—then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.**

**States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.**

American and other Western politicians have been making statements like this about Iraq and its leader, Saddam Hussein, since August 1990, when Iraqi troops stormed into neighboring Kuwait, launching the crisis that culminated in the Gulf War of 1991. Although Iraq suffered a crushing defeat and had to accept humiliating terms in order to end the fighting, the regime in Baghdad remains a thorn in the West's political side.

Saddam Hussein's regime survived a decade of sanctions that devastated Iraq's economy and entered the new millennium as firmly entrenched as it was in 1990. Strict economic sanctions and the authoritarian policies

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## IRAQ: THE BASICS

Size	437,072 sq. km (roughly twice the size of Idaho); only 58 km of coastline on the Persian Gulf
Population	23,231,985 (estimate, July 2001)
GNP per capita	\$1,200 (a rough estimate; no real figures have been available since the Gulf War)
Currency	3.2 dinar = \$1
Ethnic composition	75–80% Arabs, 15–20% Kurds, 5% other
Religion	60–65% Shiite Muslim, 32–37% Sunni Muslim, 3% Christian and other
Capital	Baghdad
President and prime minister	Saddam Hussein (1979)

of the inner circle in Baghdad have contributed to as many as 500,000 civilian deaths due to easily preventable or treatable diseases. Nonetheless, in early 2002, there were no signs that the Iraqi people were preparing to overthrow this ruthless regime.

Bush's words garnered little support from other political leaders around the world. The term *axis* itself conveyed images of Nazi Germany and its allies in the 1930s and 1940s. There were no close links tying these three countries together—indeed, Iran and Iraq had fought a bloody war that spanned almost the entire decade of the 1980s. Most importantly, there was little evidence linking any of these countries to either the Taliban or al-Qaeda.

Still, few observers rejected Bush's underlying point. The dictatorial regime still in place in Baghdad is one of the most repressive in the world and is by far the most despotic one we cover in this book.

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## Thinking About Iraq

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### *Why Study Iraq?*

If we went back in time and conducted a poll in the early summer of 1990, we undoubtedly would learn that most westerners did not know who **Saddam Hussein** was, let alone where Iraq was located on a world map.

Ever since, Saddam Hussein and his country have been all over the news. This sudden upsurge of interest in a hitherto little-known country occurred because of Iraq's invasion and subsequent annexation of its small, oil-rich neighbor Kuwait on 2 August 1990. In an unprecedented display of cooperation, most of the world community, including both superpowers and several Arab states, denounced Iraq's actions and called for an immediate and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal. Some 800,000 soldiers were sent to Iraq's neighbor, Saudi Arabia, both to help the Saudi kingdom defend itself in the event of an Iraqi attack and to create a credible military threat to the Iraqi troops in Kuwait. On 29 November 1990 the UN Security Council adopted a resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq should Saddam fail to pull his troops out of Kuwait by 15 January 1991.

Despite the overwhelming military power confronting him and the mediation efforts by several world leaders, the Iraqi president refused to concede. On 16 January, less than twenty-four hours after the expiration of the UN deadline, President George H. W. Bush ordered an all-out air attack against military and political targets inside Iraq. For five weeks Iraq's military capacity was systematically degraded by relentless and remarkably accurate bombings. The most extensive bombing attacks in military history, however, failed to persuade Saddam to withdraw.

Thus, on 24 February, after consulting with his coalition partners, Bush launched a ground offensive to retake Kuwait. Iraqi morale and fighting capacity had already been greatly undermined by the bombing campaign, and this new phase of the **Gulf War** all but destroyed it. Within hours Kuwait City was liberated. Thousands of Iraqi troops tried to escape Kuwait but were trapped and slaughtered by American forces. Soon, Saddam resigned himself to the inevitable and formally accepted all UN resolutions related to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. By 28 February 1991 the war had come to an end, but one of the most challenging periods in Iraqi history was just beginning. Since then, the United States has placed Iraq under an embargo, and the two nations have been engaged in a continuous cycle of threats and recriminations.

## *The Basics*

### **The Politics of Fear**

Any discussion of Iraqi politics must begin with the legacy of more than thirty years of brutal rule by the **Baath Party** and the man who has been its undisputed leader since 1979, Saddam Hussein. During that time, Baathist rule has turned Iraq into a large prison, headed

by a cruel warden who has been able to dehumanize Iraqi society and break the spirit of its people.<sup>1</sup>

As such, we cannot but be struck by the parallels between Iraq today and the Soviet Union under Stalin, as well as other totalitarian governments. In both the Iraqi and the Soviet cases, a new regime was established by a narrowly based party that claimed to speak for the masses but that, in fact, represented little more than a tiny group of political activists and intellectuals who were never able to develop much genuine popular support. And, in both instances, the party's seizure of power was followed by the routinization of violence.

This was no accident, given that the very ideology on which these two parties relied legitimated violence as a means of achieving, in its own words, the party's "historical mission" and "higher purpose." The rights of individuals and minorities were subordinated to "the interest of the masses," which the party claimed it represented. Dissenters were systematically denounced as "traitors" and "enemies of the state," and the most prominent of them were ruthlessly executed after a series of well-publicized mock trials intended to instill terror into the population.

Insofar as Iraq is concerned, this historical legacy is particularly painful to observe. Iraqis are trapped in a nightmarish life, the roots of which go far beyond the human tragedy of the war with Iran in the 1980s, or that with the UN-sponsored coalition in 1991. The overwhelming majority of them do not have the option of leaving the country. They are powerless to affect government decisions, and they remain at the mercy of a capricious, unpredictable, and repressive regime.

Even in exile, Iraqis are vulnerable to the long arm of the secret police. It is, in fact, essential to Saddam's image as an all-powerful ruler that he can, as he put it, show that "the hand of the revolution can reach out to its enemies wherever they are found."<sup>2</sup> Thus, over the past two decades, scores of dissidents in exile have been murdered by Iraqi agents.

Because there is really no escaping Saddam Hussein's reign of terror, most Iraqis have resigned themselves simply to keeping quiet and going on with their lives. Their attitude has become a mixture of cynicism, resignation, and political apathy. Exposed for so long to the regime's rhetoric and forced to repeat its slogans, they sometimes find it difficult to distinguish between truth and propaganda. As a Western diplomat told an American journalist

<sup>1</sup>Fouad Adjami, "The Summer of Arab Discontent," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1991, 1-20.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Elaine Sciolino, *The Outlaw State: Saddam Hussein's Quest for Power and the Gulf Crisis* (New York: Wiley, 1991), 91.

in Baghdad: "Tell a lie long enough and often enough, and inevitably you start believing it."<sup>3</sup> Writing in the early 1990s, Iraqi exile Kanan Makiya (using the pseudonym Samir al-Khalil) put it even more eloquently:

**The obsession with putting a mask on oneself in the marketplace, in dealings with officials, in relations to neighbors and even within the family is so pervasive today in Iraq that inevitably the distinction implicit in the original act of deception gets blurred; the mask fits so completely, so tightly, that it can no longer be readily discarded.**<sup>4</sup>

In Iraq, everyone is a potential informer, so Iraqis can neither trust nor confide in anyone. Parents even refrain from criticizing the regime at home, because the government has encouraged children to report on their parents. The secret police are everywhere, no one can be trusted, nothing is ever private, and anything people say can be used against them, so Iraqis must conceal their true beliefs. Saddam has divided his people and turned Iraqi citizens into frightened victims of state terror in the most suffocating country in the Arab world.

Thinking about democracy is a luxury that most Iraqis cannot afford. Their entire life revolves around the attempt to put food on the table. Such a situation helps perpetuate Saddam's tyranny by increasing people's dependence on the government and by depriving them of the energy, time, and inclination to pursue political goals. Meanwhile, the international embargo allows the ruling elite to blame the outside world for the people's misfortunes, even as ethnic and religious divisions create fears that the entire country might be thrown into chaos should the regime fall.

Iraq's growing international isolation since 1991 has not altered Saddam's priorities. The Iraqi leader continues to devote considerable resources to instruments of control and repression and to his own comfort while ignoring his people's needs. According to several reports, the regime built fifty new palaces between 1991 and 1995, at a cost of more than \$1.5 billion. One of them was five times the size of the White House and half again larger than the palace at Versailles.

### Economic Potential

One of the tragedies of Iraqi politics is that the current isolation, deprivation, and repression were far from inevitable. Different policy choices would have led to very

different outcomes, including something approaching prosperity for most of the Iraqi population.

By third world standards, Iraq has tremendous resources. There are over 100 billion barrels of oil (one barrel holds forty-two gallons) under its soil, which represents 15 percent of all known Middle Eastern reserves; only Saudi Arabia has more. Further, many geologists believe that Iraq probably has more undiscovered oil than any other Middle Eastern country. Thus, in 1987 it was estimated that Iraq would not run out of oil for another 140 years at production levels prevailing at the time.

Iraq also has significant agricultural potential, despite a southwestern region that is mostly desert and the high salt content of the soil elsewhere. The rain-fed and fertile Kurdish areas in the north, and the plain extending from Baghdad to Basra in the southeast, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers provide ample water for irrigation and the generation of electricity, are particularly fertile regions.

Iraq's other major resource is its population. With 23 million people in 2001, it is relatively large, especially when compared with Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf states, and can therefore support a diversified and integrated economy. Moreover, Iraq's labor force is relatively skilled and well educated by regional standards. The adult literacy rate in 1990 was 55 percent, and the country traditionally has had a small intellectual elite that has excelled in the arts and sciences.

Overall, therefore, Iraq could easily be an economically successful country. In fact, in the mid-1970s, following the quadrupling of oil prices on world markets, many observers predicted that, as one of the leading oil exporters, Iraq would soon emerge as the economic powerhouse of the Arab world. In Iraq itself, expectations of an economic miracle ran high, fueled by the regime's promise of impending prosperity for all Iraqis.

Although some of this new-found wealth was used to modernize the country's infrastructure and provide Iraqis with an enhanced standard of living, the staggering increase in oil revenues mostly enabled the regime to gain access to sophisticated devices of political control and to build up the military. The combination of the government's propensity for violence and the new resources available to it proved deadly, and contributed to the emergence of a regime that has been able to mesh modern methods of totalitarian rule with the older tradition of Middle Eastern authoritarianism. As the state developed its repressive organs, it also turned ordinary Iraqis into accomplices to its violence. By one account, when the Iran-Iraq War broke out in 1980, approximately 20 percent of the active labor force worked for one of the agencies responsible for coercion—the army, the police, the party, or the intelligence apparatus.

<sup>3</sup>Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear: The Inside Story of Saddam's Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), 14.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in Rod Norland, "Inside Iraq," *Newsweek*, 8 Oct. 1990, 20.

## Diversity

Iraq's population is more than 95 percent Muslim. Behind this apparent unity, however, lies a fundamental division into **Sunnis** and **Shiites**. Iraqi population figures are notoriously inaccurate. Nonetheless, the best guess is that approximately 60 percent of the population is Shiite and approximately 35 percent is Sunni, with the majority of the Sunni being **Kurds**.

The origins of the Sunni-Shiite rivalry date back to the dawn of Islamic history. Islam's founder, the prophet Muhammad, died in 632 without having designated a successor to head the rapidly expanding Islamic empire he had created. Almost immediately, the Prophet's followers split into two groups. The group that became the Sunnis believed that the most prominent members of the community should select the new leader, or caliph, on the basis of personal attributes such as piety, wisdom, morality, leadership ability, and general competence. Others, however, contended that the leadership of the Islamic community should stay in the Prophet's family. They believed, in particular, that Muhammad had designated his cousin, son-in-law, and close companion, Ali, to be his successor. They were called Shiites, a word derived from the expression *Shi'at Ali*, which means "the partisans of Ali" ([www.arches.uga.edu/~godlas/islamwest.html](http://www.arches.uga.edu/~godlas/islamwest.html)).

Although the Sunnis won the argument, Ali himself was eventually elected to the caliphate in 656 after the death of Uthman, the third caliph. However, Muawiyah, Uthman's nephew and governor of Syria, refused to accept this choice. Eventually, Muawiyah prevailed and established the Damascus-based Umayyad dynasty (661–750), the first in the long chain of dynasties that would rule over the Islamic empire.

The Shiites never recognized Umayyad rule, continuing to claim that only the descendants of Ali had a right to govern the Islamic community. In 680 Ali's second son, Hussein, led a group of his followers in an armed uprising against the forces of the Umayyad dynasty. Despite his bravery and courage, Hussein was defeated and killed in a battle that took place in Kerbala, in what is now southern Iraq.

The story of Hussein's defeat lies at the heart of Shiite culture, especially its emphasis on martyrdom. To the Shiites, who rapidly became the most important minority sect within Islam, the battle of Kerbala symbolizes worldly injustice and the triumph of the forces of evil over the forces of good. More significantly, the defeat widened the gulf between Sunnis and Shiites. In the following centuries, what initially had been limited to a disagreement over who should succeed the Prophet be-



**FIGURE 14.1** Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Iraq

came a full-fledged religious and political schism that continues to be felt throughout the Muslim world.

In addition to the Sunni-Shiite split, Iraqis are also divided into two main ethnic groups—Arabs and Kurds. (See figure 14.1.) About 75 percent of Iraq's population is Arab—that is, speaks Arabic and identifies with the Arab heritage. The Kurds, who represent 20 percent of the population, speak Kurdish, which has nothing in common with Arabic. Kurds also have their own history and modes of social and political organization. Indeed, they have less in common with Iraq's Arab majority than with other Kurdish communities in Turkey, Iran, Syria, and the former Soviet Union.

## Key Questions

As noted in chapter 12, most third world countries are struggling with three related problems—economic development, ethnic tensions, and limited prospects for democratization. These are key issues in Iraqi politics as well.

However, given the discussion so far, it should be clear that we need to focus more on other questions here. In particular:

- How have Saddam Hussein and the men around him been able to create such a powerful regime?
- How have they been able to keep it afloat despite all the setbacks of the past two decades?

## The Evolution of the Iraqi State

In the liberal democracies of Europe, the development of a national consciousness was mostly an indigenous process that spanned hundreds of years. Consequently, when the twentieth century began, most Europeans already thought of themselves as belonging to a “nation”—a group of people bound together by a common history, a shared culture, a sense of collective identity, and a willingness to live together ([www.al-bab.com/arab/countries/iraq/history.html](http://www.al-bab.com/arab/countries/iraq/history.html)).

By contrast, few third world countries are more than a half-century old in their current form, and their boundaries were often arbitrarily drawn and imposed by outside powers. As a result, many of them are still struggling to develop a sense of national identity. In chapter 13 we saw that India has been spared some of those problems because the new government it inherited after gaining independence already had fairly well-developed state institutions and a population that more or less thought of itself as Indian. Iraq provides a more typical case of the ways in which the simultaneous tasks of state and **nation building** put extreme pressures on third world leaders and regimes.

### *Iraq's Origins*

Urban civilization first developed some six thousand years ago in the city-states of Sumer in what is now southern Iraq. The Sumerians were the first to devise a way of writing, by drawing pictures on clay tablets, and they made important contributions to irrigation methods, literature, mathematics, architecture, metal working, transportation (they built the first wheeled chariot), and astronomy (they produced the first accurate calendars). Their successors added to those accomplishments—most notably, the Babylonians, who produced the Code of Hammurabi, the first complete legal framework. After Mesopotamia was incorporated into the Muslim empire during the seventh century, the region's fame and prosperity reached new heights. Baghdad was the seat of the Abbassid dynasty (750–1258), during which time Islamic civilization reached its peak at a time when Europe still lived in the Dark Ages.

Even this brief overview should illuminate the distinguished history of the area that is now Iraq. Yet Iraq as a distinct political entity is not even eighty years old. Until World War I broke out, “Iraq” was merely a region of the then four-hundred-year-old **Ottoman Empire**, the last of the many empires that ruled over most of the Middle East.

**TABLE 14.1** Key Events in Iraqi History

YEAR	EVENT
1919	Treaty of Versailles, giving Britain mandate over Iraq
1932	Nominal independence
1958	Overthrow of monarchy
1963	First, short-lived seizure of power by Baath Party
1968	Definitive seizure of power by Baath Party
1979	Saddam Hussein takes control

In 1914, however, the already weakened Ottoman authorities made what turned out to be a disastrous choice when they entered World War I, siding with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire against France, Britain, and Russia. During the war, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, which in 1918–19 gave Britain and France an opportunity to divide between themselves the former Arab provinces of the empire. Out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, the British and French created entirely new countries, the borders of which were drawn to fit Britain's and France's colonial ambitions, and not to reflect the distribution of religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups or the wishes of the populations involved. Iraq was one of those new countries.

Iraq was born in treachery. (See table 14.1.) In 1915–16, when most of the Arab world was still under Ottoman control, British officials struck a deal with a group of Arab leaders. In an attempt to facilitate the Allied war effort, Britain promised that it would support the creation of one large, independent Arab state after the war in exchange for an Arab rebellion against the Ottomans. The Arabs lived up to their side of the bargain, but the British did not. By 1920 Arabs found themselves living in separate countries under regimes installed and controlled by either France or Britain. Understandably, the Arabs felt bitter and betrayed, especially in Iraq, where the Arab nationalist movement was particularly strong.

Furthermore, the British created a constitutional monarchy in Iraq, a political system entirely alien to the area's customs and traditions. They then added insult to injury by selecting a foreigner to be Iraq's first king. **Faisal I** was a member of the prestigious and pro-British Hashemite family, whose roots lay not in Iraq but in the western part of what is now Saudi Arabia.

From the beginning, therefore, the Iraqi government lacked legitimacy. It also had to contend with the heterogeneity of Iraq's population. When the British created Iraq, they brought together disparate ethnic, religious, and tribal groups, which neither considered themselves “Iraqi” nor wanted to become part of the

new country. In fact, some of the communities artificially stitched together by the British had a long history of mutual distrust and hostility. Thus, it was not easy to forge a cohesive political community out of a patchwork of rival groups that shared neither a common heritage nor a willingness to live together.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the task of the new regime was made even more difficult by the presence of rebellious Kurdish and Shiite tribes and by traditional feelings of distrust toward any kind of central authority. The resulting sense of desperation that often overwhelmed Iraq's first leaders is well conveyed in a memorandum written by King Faisal I in March 1933.

**In Iraq, there is still—and I say this with a heart full of sorrow—no Iraqi people but unimaginable masses of human beings, devoid of any patriotic idea, imbued with religious traditions and absurdities, connected by no common tie, giving ear to evil, prone to anarchy, and perpetually ready to rise against any government whatever. Out of these masses we want to fashion a people which we would train, educate, and refine. The circumstances being what they are, the immenseness of the efforts needed for this can be imagined.<sup>5</sup>**

### *Independent Iraq*

In 1932 Iraq formally became independent, although British advisers continued to exert tremendous influence over policy making. A mere twenty-six years later, a group of military officers overthrew the monarchy. In retrospect, the monarchy's demise appears almost inevitable, considering its consistently narrow base of support, the poor quality of the men at the helm, their perceived subservience to British interests (manifested most dramatically by their decision in 1955 to join a British- and U.S.-sponsored defense agreement known as the Baghdad Pact), and their unwillingness or inability to reduce glaring social inequalities and to reach out to a rapidly growing and politicized middle class.

The decisive element in the downfall of the monarchy was the spread of pan-Arab, socialist ideologies in the army's ranks. Riding a wave of popular discontent, Arab nationalist officers, led by General Qasim, organized a successful coup and in 1958 established the first republican regime in the country's short history. It proved to be a republic in name only. The country was ruled by heavy-handed army officers for most of the first

<sup>5</sup>Quoted in Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movement of Iraq* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 25–26.

**TABLE 14.2** Key Events in Iraq Since the Baath Took Power

YEAR	EVENTS
1968	Baath Party seizes power
1970	Government signs autonomy agreement with Kurds
1972	Kurdish autonomy agreement collapses; war breaks out in north between Baghdad and Kurdish separatists
1975	Iran and Iraq agree on Kurds and Shatt al-Arab waterway Kurdish uprising collapses Deportation and resettlement of Kurds
1979	Saddam Hussein becomes president
1980–88	Iran-Iraq War, including use of chemical weapons against Kurdish civilians
1990	Invasion of Kuwait, Operation Desert Shield
1991	Gulf War Uprisings among Shiites and Kurds
1995	Saddam's son-in-law and former minister of industry, Hussein Kamel al-Majid, defects to Jordan Referendum gives Saddam Hussein another term
1996	Hussein Kamel al-Majid is pardoned, returns to Iraq, is killed Saddam launches attack on Kurdish enclave in north
1998	Assassination attempt on Saddam's son, Uday Most recent crisis between Iraq and the West over UN weapons inspections Four-day bombing campaign of Iraq by American and British forces
1999	Continued U.S. and U.K. bombing in response to Iraqi violations of 1991 cease-fire terms.

decade after the overthrow of the monarchy. In 1963 the Baath Party overthrew the officers then in power but was itself forced out in a matter of months.

In July 1968 the Baath came back to power. This time, the Baathists were determined to remain in control, and they rapidly moved to eliminate everyone else from positions of influence. (See table 14.2.)

Eleven years later, in 1979, Saddam Hussein forced his predecessor, **Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr**, into retirement. Since then, he has consolidated his own power along with that of the party to the point that it is all but impossible to separate the two, as we will see throughout the rest of this chapter. In other words, by the early 1980s the dictatorship of the Baath Party had given way to personal rule, and the state has become little more than the personal property of Saddam Hussein, his family, and the rest of his entourage.

### **Iraqi Political Culture and Participation**

Iraq's history has created the kind of culture that some political scientists believe hinders the development of a stable, effective, and popular regime—let alone a

democracy. Especially important in this respect today are the following elements of Iraqi political culture:

- A strong distrust of outsiders
- Deeply held family, regional, clan, and tribal loyalties
- A long tradition of political violence

However, because sharp ethnic and religious divisions have had the greatest impact on the course of Iraqi politics, it is only logical to begin by examining this aspect of the country's culture.

### *The Kurdish Question*

The inability of Arabs and Kurds to coexist peacefully has always been a major problem for Iraq's leaders. Given the development of a Kurdish nationalist movement at the turn of the twentieth century and the lip service paid by the Great Powers to the principle of self-determination after World War I, the Kurds had hoped that the postwar settlement would see the establishment of a Kurdish state. Instead, against their will, the Kurds found themselves spread across the borders of five states. Most were in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran, with smaller Kurdish communities in Syria and the former Soviet Union.

The Kurds have never accepted the crushing of their nationalist aspirations. Consequently, their relationship with successive Iraqi governments has been stormy, and Kurdish uprisings have punctuated Iraqi political life since the mid-1920s. Consistently denied the right to self-determination, the Kurds have looked upon the Arab-dominated governments in Baghdad as oppressors who have inflicted untold hardship, bloodshed, and suffering on their people. In turn, the Iraqi central authorities have always seen Kurdish aspirations for autonomy as a threat to the country's unity, territorial integrity, security, and welfare.

To further complicate matters, Kurdish opposition leaders have regularly accepted aid and advice from countries that have themselves been engaged in bitter struggles with Iraq. In the 1960s Kurdish rebels accepted military and financial support from both Iran and Israel. From 1972 to 1974, President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger helped the shah of Iran fuel a Kurdish uprising in an attempt to weaken the Baghdad government, which was seen in Washington as a Soviet client and in Tehran as a rival for control of the Persian Gulf. American and Iranian weapons and intelligence proved crucial to the Kurds' ability to tie down much of the Iraqi army for three consecutive years (until the Kurds were abandoned by both Washington and Tehran).

More recently, at the height of the Iran-Iraq War, one of the two main Iraqi Kurdish organizations, the **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)**, cooperated with the Iranian army and even helped it seize a number of villages in Iraqi Kurdistan. Such actions, understandably, have done little to promote trust between Kurds and Arabs and, especially, between Kurdish organizations and the authorities in Baghdad.

Much of the blame for Arab-Kurdish hostility, however, lies with Iraqi governments, few of which have ever made a sincere effort to meet even limited Kurdish demands. In 1970, for instance, after a decade-long Kurdish insurrection, the late Kurdish leader, Mustafa Barzani, and Saddam Hussein, then Iraq's vice president, reached an agreement granting administrative autonomy to Iraqi Kurdistan. The agreement also provided for the teaching of Kurdish in schools, the use of Kurdish as the official language in Kurdish areas, and increased representation of the Kurds in state institutions. Within a year of signing the agreement, however, it had become clear that the Baath leadership had no intention of living up to its provisions. In 1971–72 the government expelled tens of thousands of Iraqi Kurds to Iran. Meanwhile, both Mustafa Barzani and his son narrowly escaped assassination attempts masterminded by Saddam's security chief. Finally, in 1974, Saddam unilaterally abrogated the 1970 autonomy agreement.

Since then, the Kurds have been betrayed several times. In 1974–75, for example, the Iraqi army napalmed and bombed scores of Kurdish villages and towns. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds were forced from their homes and took refuge in the mountains. Entire Kurdish districts were razed. Thousands of activists were arrested, tortured, and/or executed. The authorities then engaged in a mass relocation of Kurds from the mountains and hills in the north to the desert of the southwest. In March 1988 the Iraqi military used chemical weapons against Kurdish civilians in the village of Halabja. Some 60,000 Kurds fled to southern Turkey, while tens of thousands of others were removed from their villages, which were demolished. They were forcibly relocated to prefabricated settlements near towns and cities, where they could more easily be controlled.

A more recent episode in the drawn-out conflict between the Kurds and Baghdad took place in March 1991, when the government crushed the Kurdish uprising that followed Iraq's military defeat in the Gulf War. In the final weeks of that month, Kurdish rebels were forced to abandon the cities they had seized only a few weeks earlier. The corpses of Kurdish fighters were left in the streets of the major Kurdish cities and towns, where they served as a vivid reminder of the costs of rebelling

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## A DIFFERENT TYPE OF PARTICIPATION

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More than in any of the other countries covered in this book, average Iraqis do not have “inside-the-system” channels through which they can influence the policies of the state. People do participate—they turned out by the tens of thousands to demonstrate their support of the regime during and after the Gulf War. However, most of that participation is orchestrated by the Baath Party and the various organizations that are attached to it. The Iraqi political system has no mechanisms through which individuals can voice their displeasure with even relatively minor aspects of government policies. Participation along those lines must take the form of illegal and often revolutionary protest, which involves tremendous risks to oneself and one’s family.

against Saddam Hussein’s regime. The repression was so indiscriminate, and Kurdish fears of new atrocities so intense, that at least a million people tried to make their way through freezing mountains to hastily constructed refugee camps in Turkey and Iran. Despite a major international relief effort, hundreds died, mostly children and older people.

In April 1991, however, the international community mobilized to try to guarantee the safe return of Kurdish refugees to their homes. In an attempt to shelter them from potential retribution by Saddam Hussein’s regime, U.S.-led forces established a security zone along the Turkish border. The Iraqi army and police were forced to withdraw from this area, which came under the protection of the Western allies. Saddam Hussein was left with no choice but to at least temporarily relinquish sovereignty over part of his country.

By the end of 1992, the 3 million Kurds in northern Iraq were running their own affairs for the first time in modern history. In May 1992 they elected a parliament, and shortly thereafter they formed a fourteen-member government. That October they even declared Iraqi Kurdistan to be a separate entity, albeit within the framework of a unified Iraq. Since then, however, the Kurdish movement has floundered. In 1993 long-standing rivalries between the two main Kurdish organizations—the **Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP)** of Massoud Barzani and the **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)** of Jalal Talabani—flared up once again. Cut off from the rest of the country, and the target of two embargoes (the international one on Iraq as a whole, and the one that Sad-

dam Hussein had imposed on northern Iraq), the region was in economic shambles and verged on anarchy.

In 1994 sporadic clashes between the KDP and the PUK degenerated into open warfare. As the KDP gained the upper hand, the PUK began to receive logistical and financial support from Iran. In July 1996, Iranian troops stormed into northern Iraq to strike at KDP bases in the area otherwise controlled by Talabani. In August 1996, Barzani openly requested aid from the government in Baghdad. The Iraqi president was quick to seize this opportunity to reassert his influence in northern Iraq. After dispatching an estimated 35,000 troops into the Kurdish **safe haven**, he captured the unofficial Kurdish capital city of Irbil, which Talabani had held since December 1994. In the process, Saddam Hussein had hundreds of opponents to his regime executed and effectively neutralized not only the Kurdish-based opposition but also U.S. efforts to overthrow him. These efforts had relied primarily on bases the CIA had established earlier in northern Iraq, as well as on CIA support for the **Iraqi National Congress (INC)**, an opposition group dominated by Kurdish factions.

### *Shiite Versus Sunni*

The Sunni-Shiite conflict has stemmed more from political, social, and economic differences than from theological disagreement. Religion has become a symbol of communal identity and solidarity, and a vehicle for the expression of grievances related to inequities in wealth and power. This is especially true for the Shiites, who have historically been discriminated against and excluded from the inner circles of power in Baghdad.

The minority Sunni Arabs have controlled every regime since Iraq gained its independence. Their domination is in some reflects a legacy of the Sunni-ruled Ottoman Empire, which systematically discriminated against Shiites. It continued under the monarchy, when Shiites and Kurds were forced into the new state against their will.

During the 1980s significant progress was made toward increasing the Shiites’ presence in state institutions. In the late 1960s there was not a single Shiite in the **Revolutionary Command Council (RCC)**, which is the top level of the Baath Party leadership. By the late 1980s, however, more than 25 percent of those in the RCC and close to 30 percent of all party leaders were Shiites, and Shiites were represented in numbers roughly proportional to their share of the population at lower levels of the bureaucracy. Yet, despite these advances, the most powerful positions in the state, army, and security agencies have remained in Sunni Arab hands.



A group of Kurdish rebels showing off a captured Iraqi airplane after the Gulf War.

Woodfin Camp & Associates (Barry Weason)

The Shiites' sense of deprivation also has been fueled by the perception that their community traditionally has occupied an underprivileged socioeconomic position. Although there have always been poor Sunnis and rich Shiites, most of the country's underclass historically has been Shiite. Living conditions in the predominantly Shiite areas of southern Iraq were so miserable in the 1940s and 1950s that tens of thousands of Shiite peasants migrated to Baghdad every year, where they formed the nucleus of a rapidly developing urban proletariat.

Still, the economic situation and social status of the Shiite community improved significantly following World War II. After Israel was created in 1948, many Shiites replaced departing Jews in the trades, and a substantial and growing number of them became successful merchants and entrepreneurs. During the 1960s and 1970s, an increase in educational opportunities also led to a sharp increase in the number of Shiite professionals. Meanwhile, public investments aimed at moderniz-

ing the southern half of the country improved living conditions for rural Shiites.

Popular beliefs, however, tend to change more slowly than realities. Thus, the perception remains that Shiites tend to be less well off than Sunnis and that their socioeconomic position still is hardly commensurate with their numerical strength.

The potential for Shiite unrest has always been of particular concern to the Sunni elites. When the Baath Party seized power in 1968, age-old tensions between Sunnis and Shiites were exacerbated by the party's militantly secular orientation, which antagonized religious-minded Shiites, and by its long-standing rivalry with the Communist Party, which traditionally had recruited heavily in the Shiite community, particularly among intellectuals. It became clear that the new regime and large sections of the Shiite population were on a collision course following the creation of a distinctly Shiite underground movement, al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Call), which called for the establishment of an Islamic regime in the country.

The Baath government responded to this challenge in a particularly brutal manner, which reflected its determination to break the hold that religious leaders maintained in the Shiite holy cities of Kerbala and Najaf. Clerics and theology students suspected of being affiliated with al-Da'wa were arrested. The lucky ones were deported, but many others, including senior religious leaders, were tortured and/or executed. As tensions with Iran built up in 1971–72, Iraqi Shiites were once again targeted for reprisals by the government, which deported 40,000 of them to Iran. Until about 1977 government intimidation and coercion kept Shiite opposition muted and underground. In 1977, however, Shiite discontent with the regime led to several major uprisings in the south, many of which were organized by al-Da'wa and Shiite clerics. By 1978 the Baathist regime had become apprehensive that the ongoing Shiite revolution in neighboring Iran might spill over into Iraq. In an attempt to preempt any move by the Shiite clerics, the government tightened control over Shiite religious institutions and confiscated many of their properties.

In July 1979 riots broke out once again in Najaf and Kerbala when the regime refused to allow the leading Shiite cleric in the country, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr, to lead a procession to Iran to congratulate Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini on the establishment of the world's first Islamic republic. Martial law was imposed in Baghdad and many southern cities. Shiites suspected of antiregime activities were rounded up and executed, and Ayatollah al-Sadr was arrested. Meanwhile, the regime accelerated the deportation of Shiites it accused

of having “Iranian origins” and of representing an “Iranian fifth column.” By late 1979 an estimated 200,000 of them had been expelled from the country.

Shiite-inspired disturbances, however, did not stop. Emboldened by the success of the Iranian revolution and with the help of the new regime in Tehran, al-Da’wa stepped up its attacks. In April 1980 the movement coordinated a wave of bombings of government buildings in Baghdad and other cities, and organized a nearly successful attempt on the life of Tariq Aziz, a member of Saddam Hussein’s inner circle. The regime’s reaction was swift. It made membership in al-Da’wa retroactively punishable by death, had several of the leading Shiite clergymen in Najaf and Kerbala assassinated, and exiled others to Iran. Perhaps the most symbolic and dramatic manifestation of the Baathists’ determination to eradicate the religious opposition was the execution of Aya-tollah al-Sadr and his sister after they were tortured by Saddam’s secret police. By the end of 1980, al-Da’wa had been crushed.

The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War, however, forced the regime to reconsider its strategy toward the Shiite community. The specter of an insurrection and the fear that Shiites, who formed about three-quarters of the Iraqi army’s rank and file, might defect to Iran led Saddam Hussein to combine repression with various measures designed to win them over.

The government suddenly spent millions of dinars on the renovation of the religious shrines in Kerbala and Najaf, and launched several major and widely publicized public projects in predominantly Shiite areas. Baathist propaganda started to put more emphasis on the compatibility of Islam and Baathist ideology in an effort to convince the Shiite masses that, although the regime opposed the mixing of religion and politics, it had nothing against religion per se. The leadership also endeavored to project an image of piety. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein began inserting references to Shiite symbols and heroes in his speeches. Portraits or pictures of the Iraqi leader praying also became increasingly common in newspapers or on billboards throughout the country. Saddam went so far as to have his genealogy traced back to the prophet Muhammad through Ali, the first Shiite leader. He made Ali’s birthday a national holiday, and, in 1983, contrary to available evidence, he claimed that his mother had been a Shiite.

However, repression, state handouts, and a rather crude manipulation of religion for political purposes failed to significantly increase Shiite support for the government. The Shiite community did not defect to Iran during Iraq’s eight-year-long war with its neighbor. Yet the Shiites’ behavior during the conflict reflected less

their attachment to the regime than the growth in their ranks of a sense of Iraqi nationalism, their disappointment at the dictatorial turn taken by the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the Baathists’ brutal repression of any sign of Shiite dissent. Continued Shiite disaffection from the regime was displayed most dramatically in the wake of the Gulf War, when a large-scale, spontaneous popular uprising broke out in Basra in February 1991 and rapidly spread throughout southern Iraq. For several days Basra and other areas were in the hands of Shiite rebels, who vented their hatred of the regime by ransacking party headquarters, burning portraits of the president, and torturing Baathist officials and their relatives. It took the Iraqi army weeks to reestablish control over the south.

Some of the Shiite insurgents, however, were able to find refuge in the marshes of southern Iraq. In the spring and summer of 1992, faced with continued, although sporadic and small-scale, unrest, Saddam Hussein stepped up raids on Shiite villages and towns, and was rumored to be preparing a major attack on the rebels’ positions. Invoking UN resolutions that bar Saddam’s government from repression of Iraqi citizens, in August 1992 President Bush senior declared southern Iraq a **no-fly zone**, forbidding fixed-wing Iraqi aircraft from flying south of the thirty-second parallel.

This no-fly zone, however, failed to protect the south from Saddam Hussein’s brutality. Because Shiite rebels had long sought refuge in the country’s southern marshlands, the regime in 1993–94 stepped up its effort to empty these marshes by diverting the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Eyewitnesses claimed that the government’s campaign included chemical weapons attacks, random shelling and burning of villages, summary executions, the forced displacement of civilians, and mass internments in detention centers. By 1995 the marshland population could no longer fish, grow rice, find fresh water, or protect local animal species such as water buffalo. It had become powerless to resist the government-sponsored attempt to eradicate it and, with it, its unique and ancient culture, which stretches back five thousand years.

### *Cultural Pluralism*

As in most of the third world and in the new countries that have emerged following the collapse of communism in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, religious and ethnic divisions have acted as a brake on the development of an Iraqi national identity. Indeed, it probably was not until the 1970s that most Iraqis began to think of themselves as members of the same nation. Prior



## USEFUL WEB SITES

The best source on the Middle East in general and Iraq in particular is the University of Texas's MENIC project, which is also the Virtual Library site for the region. The site maintained by Columbia University's Middle East and Jewish Studies Program is almost as good.

**[menic.utexas.edu/menic/countries/Iraq/](http://menic.utexas.edu/menic/countries/Iraq/)**  
**[www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/mideast/cuvm/Iraq.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/mideast/cuvm/Iraq.html)**

Arabic News is one of several good sites that offer news feeds for the Middle East.

**[www.arabicnews.com](http://www.arabicnews.com)**

The Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) is a nonpartisan, Washington-based think tank that focuses on Iraq and on the region as a whole. Its site includes its own reports and links to other good information.

**[www.merip.org](http://www.merip.org)**

Columbia's School for International and Public Affairs has the best site on the war and its aftermath.

**[gulf2000.Columbia.edu/country/iraq](http://gulf2000.Columbia.edu/country/iraq)**

Because of international sanctions, there is not much of an official Iraqi presence on the Internet. However, its mission to the United Nations does operate a small but interesting site.

**[www.Iraqi-Mission.org](http://www.Iraqi-Mission.org)**

There is also a site maintained by the unofficial government of Kurdistan.

**[www.krg.org](http://www.krg.org)**

Finally, the Iraq Foundation in Washington has a useful site that focuses on issues of interest to the foes of the Baath regime.

**[www.iraqfoundation.org](http://www.iraqfoundation.org)**

to then, the strength of old parochial identities had thwarted government efforts to promote any sense of Iraqi patriotism. After all, Iraq originally was little more than an artificial conglomerate of tribes, clans, and religious and ethnic groups that had lived in isolation from one another for centuries, had no tradition of political cooperation, and sometimes even shared a long history of mutual distrust and hostility. Having created Iraq in 1920, the British then told the members of these groups

that they would all be "Iraqis" from now on. Alas, as the country's history since then has shown, the task of building a shared national identity has proved more difficult than even the most pessimistic observers anticipated at the time.

The sharply differentiated religious and ethnic communities were reluctant to give up their distinctive character for the benefit of an Iraqi identity concocted by British politicians and colonial officers. Although religious and ethnic cleavages did not always preclude cooperation between Sunnis and Shiites or between Arabs and Kurds, they did make the process of nation building more difficult than in any of the other third world countries considered in this book. These tensions have been exacerbated by foreign meddling. The expansion of private property ownership during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also contributed to the long-standing rivalries between the country's various communities because it benefited some groups more than others. Thus, new class-based conflicts were frequently superimposed on old ethnic or religious enmities.

The current Baathist regime understands the need to defuse tensions between Iraq's communities. Accordingly, it has tried to convince Iraqis that a common identity rooted in the country's Mesopotamian heritage transcends religious and ethnic divisions. Its propaganda portrays modern-day Iraqis as direct descendants of the ancient Sumerians, Akkadians, and Babylonians. In addition, the government has invested huge sums of money in the rebuilding of Babylon and in archaeological excavations intended to retrieve the country's pre-Islamic past. In the 1970s and 1980s, its attempt to develop a sense of Iraqi patriotism also included the launching of major public investment projects in Shiite and Kurdish areas that traditionally had been ignored by the central authorities.

However, these efforts have been undermined by two main factors. One has been the fear that the Baathist regime has instilled in the population, which has led many Iraqis to fall back on their old communal groups for security and comfort. The other has been the sectarian behavior of the Sunni Arab minority running the country. The ruling elite has carefully cultivated its base of support among Sunnis by distributing to them benefits that have been denied to the rest of the population. It is not surprising, therefore, that both Kurds and Shiites revolted after the regime's temporary disorganization and weakening in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War.

The regime's violent repression of that insurrection, in turn, reawakened old ethnic and religious tensions. Religiously oriented Shiites will not soon forget the heavy damage the Iraqi army inflicted on their holiest

shrines in Kerbala and Najaf. There is also much Shiite and Kurdish resentment directed at the Sunni Arab masses for the latter's failure to join the uprising. Meanwhile, Sunni fears of Shiite sectarianism were revived by the often indiscriminate violence perpetrated by many Shiites during the uprising and by their use of slogans calling for the establishment of an Iranian-style Islamic theocracy. Evidence of Iranian backing of the Shiite insurgents also has increased the Sunnis' tendency to question Shiite patriotism, as well as their apprehension that an overthrow of the regime will be exploited by Iran.

The regime itself is unlikely to forgive the Shiites for the torture, rape, and summary executions not just of Baathists but of their relatives and friends as well. Neither is it going to forget the Kurds' willingness to cooperate with the United States and its allies in setting up a foreign-controlled security zone inside Iraq. Baathists viewed that act as yet more proof of the Kurds' propensity to betray their country and to collude with the West in undermining Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In short, it will be years before the wounds of the 1991 uprising and its violent suppression by the regime can be healed. In the meantime, Iraq's cultural pluralism will continue to inhibit both nation and state building, and affect every aspect of Iraqi political life, whether the Baathist regime survives or not.

### *Parochial Loyalties*

There also are sharp divisions within the various religious and ethnic communities. This is by no means uncommon in the third world, but in Iraq, the way in which parochialism has played itself out at both the mass and elite levels has put exceptional burdens on the country's government.

For centuries, the Shiites were more loyal to their clans, tribes, and families than to the Shiite community as a whole. Rural Shiites formed an impoverished group whose politics and daily life revolved more around tribal customs than religion. Because they were mostly illiterate, they could not read religious texts. Consequently, their faith was characterized by idiosyncratic beliefs and practices that horrified their more learned and orthodox urban coreligionists, whose faith shaped social relations and was an integral part of daily life.

Some of these cleavages can still be seen alongside the new socioeconomic and ideological divisions that developed as Iraq modernized. Ever since the 1940s, for instance, there has been a significant split between, on the one hand, secular Shiite intellectuals and workers, many of whom have historically been attracted to mod-

ern, left-wing ideologies and parties (especially communism), and, on the other hand, the more conservative, tradition-oriented segments of the community, who have remained close to the Shiite clergy and have formed the core of such underground groups as al-Da'wa.

Similarly, the Kurds are divided by tribal, clannish, and ideological rivalries. Their internal fragmentation has thwarted the emergence of a community-wide leadership and weakened their bargaining position with the authorities in Baghdad. Even the Sunnis are divided according to place of origin and family affiliation.

Thus, Iraqis from all three main groups still think of themselves as members of subgroups within a sect or religious community. In several respects, this parochialism is a legacy of the past. For centuries, central authority was weak, and people were at the mercy of destructive forces they could not control, including tribal raids and devastating social and religious conflicts. Membership in groups based on blood ties, physical proximity, and personal loyalties was the best way to protect the physical security of one's family. To this day, family- and residence-based groups provide economic, social, political, and psychological support. In times of duress, individuals often fall back on the security and intimacy they believe these groups offer. Unfortunately, although such primordial affiliations provide Iraqis with much-needed assistance, they also continue to hamper the process of nation and state building.

### *Secrecy, Introversion, and the Distrust of Outsiders*

Iraq has often been described as an inward-looking, secretive, and even mysterious society, suspicious of foreigners and difficult for outsiders to penetrate and understand. Such attributes, far from being aberrant psychological features, are logical—if tragic—outgrowths of Iraq's peculiar history.

The inward-oriented nature of Iraqi society stems in part from the centuries of isolation in which Iraq lived after the Mongol conquest and destruction of Baghdad in 1258. Distrust of outsiders, too, is a product of the country's troubled past. Given its strategic location on the eastern flank of the Arab world, Iraq was always coveted by foreign powers that sought to dominate the region. Because the country consists mostly of deserts and plains, it has been particularly difficult to defend and has fallen victim to successive waves of invaders, from the Greeks and the Romans, through the Persians and the Arabs, to the Ottomans and the British. These invasions and occupations have always generated much local suffering, thus exacerbating the suspicion of outsiders.

## Conflict in Iraq

**THE 1990s were a time of unprecedented turmoil in Iraq, even by the standards of its tormented history. In the spring of 1991, the regime was faced with simultaneous Kurdish and Shiite popular uprisings. Though it was able to crush the rebellions, it has had to confront several coup attempts by disgruntled military officers since then. Various plots to assassinate Saddam Hussein were also foiled, and in December 1996 the president's son, Uday Hussein, was left partially paralyzed after an attempt on his life carried out in broad daylight in an upscale district of Baghdad.**

**The numerous quarrels within the president's family have been even more threatening to the regime. Although there are several such examples, one stands out. In August 1995 Saddam Hussein's two sons-in-law, who had been number two in the regime and head of Saddam's personal security guard, respectively, defected to Jordan, where they called for the overthrow of their father-in-law. When they finally returned to Baghdad after being granted a presidential pardon, they were killed by relatives, together with all those who had shared their short exile in Beirut (except for Saddam's two daughters, who, with their mother, were placed under house arrest in 1996). Uday, for his part, has been at odds with several other members of the family. In 1995 he shot and seriously wounded his uncle following a quarrel at a family gathering.**

**Yet, for all the discontent within Iraq, an organized opposition capable of posing a credible threat to the regime has yet to emerge. If anything, it is weaker today than in 1990.**

During the mid-thirteenth century, for instance, Mongol invaders slaughtered 100,000 Iraqis. A century and a half later, in 1394, the invading Tatars reportedly built a pyramid with the skulls of their unfortunate victims in the small provincial town of Tikrit, where some 543 years later Saddam Hussein was born.

Iraq's geography, too, has fueled the country's sense of vulnerability and paranoia. Two of Iraq's neighbors, Turkey and Iran, are non-Arab countries with vastly larger populations (approximately 65 million people each). They are also former seats of empires that invaded and occupied Iraq. Several points of contention remain between Iraq and these neighbors. For example, many Turks still believe that Britain's decision to cede the Mosul region to Iraq in the early 1920s was illegal. Iraqi policymakers, meanwhile, are troubled by the fact that 80 percent of their country's water supply comes from Turkey and Syria, through which both the Tigris and Euphrates flow before reaching Iraq. They are also suspicious of Turkey's pro-Western policies, which included

allowing allied bombers to launch attacks from bases there, and of its more recent military cooperation with Israel. Iraq has similar worries about Iran, epitomized by the dispute over the Shatt al-Arab River in southeastern Iraq and the events that gave rise to the Iran-Iraq War.

Some Iraqis, however, are most concerned with what they see as the Western desire to dominate the region. They have not forgotten Britain's broken promises to Arab nationalists after World War I. They also continue to resent the way British colonial officials drew Iraq's borders, leaving the country virtually landlocked. They remember, too, that Britain was the real power behind the monarchy and that it manipulated Iraqi affairs to further its colonial interests.

The bitterness toward Britain in particular and the West in general was compounded by the decisive role that Western countries played in the creation of Israel. To this day, many Iraqis regard Israel as an artificial entity imposed by the colonial powers to divide and weaken the Arab world. They believe that the establishment of the Jewish state was an injustice done to all Arabs. They also resent the diplomatic, economic, and military support that Western countries have extended to Israel for the past half-century, especially the aid that allowed it to win the five Arab-Israeli wars.

Since 1968, the distrust of westerners has been deliberately encouraged by a leadership fearful of foreign attempts to destabilize the regime. Thus, Saddam Hussein and his colleagues have sought to limit the access of foreign visitors to Iraq, and those who are allowed in cannot travel freely. Furthermore, foreign residents have a hard time becoming acquainted with average Iraqis. Few of the westerners I knew while serving in Iraq in the mid-1980s had ever been invited to Iraqi homes. The main reason for this is not that the Iraqis are an unsociable people but that the government has actively discouraged contact between the local population and foreigners, who are often painted in the regime's propaganda as spies. Consider the following excerpts from a speech by Saddam:

**Teach the child to beware of the foreigner, for the latter is a pair of eyes for his country, and some of them are saboteurs of the revolution. Therefore, accompanying foreigners and talking with them in the absence of known controls is forbidden. Plant in the child's soul a vigilance not to give the foreigner anything of state or party secrets. Also he must warn others, young and old alike, in a respectful way, that they also should not talk in front of foreigners.<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>6</sup>Quoted in Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear: The Inside Story of Saddam's Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), 78.

In the 1980s Iraqis thought to have close contacts with foreigners were likely to be visited and questioned by the ubiquitous secret police. Such visits were particularly dangerous to the person questioned if his or her background, or that of close relatives, contained anything that might indicate a lack of loyalty to the regime. It is thus not surprising that Iraqis who did invite foreigners to their homes would suggest that their guests refrain from parking their cars in front of their hosts' homes, because these cars' license plates made it clear that the guests were foreigners.

### *The Tradition of Political Violence*

Iraq deserves its reputation as one of the most unruly and violence-prone countries in the Arab world. As early as the seventh century, the area was known for its seditious and turbulent nature, and some observers already argued that only strong, heavy-handed rule could prevent it from falling prey to chaos and anarchy. This was certainly what the rulers of the Umayyad dynasty felt in A.D. 694, when they appointed al-Hajaj to become governor of Mesopotamia. Upon assuming office, he warned:

**I see heads before me that are ripe and ready for the plucking, and I am the one to pluck them, and I see blood glistening between the turbans and the beards. By God, O people of Iraq, people of discord and dissembling and evil character! For a long time now you have been swift to sedition and have made a rule of transgression. By God, I shall strip you like bark, I shall truss you like a bundle of twigs, I shall beat you like stray camels.<sup>7</sup>**

The chilling speech from which these lines are taken is well known to Iraqi schoolchildren. Its lesson is straightforward: Given the rebellious and deeply fragmented nature of their society, Iraqis who want to protect themselves from the ravages of civil strife should expect their rulers to be tyrants. Some Iraqis even seem to believe that only authoritarian rule makes it possible for them to reach their true potential, just as al-Hajaj's rule is said to have paved the way for Iraq's subsequent rise as the center of a flourishing civilization under the Abbasid dynasty.

More recent history reflects this same troubled and often violent tradition. During the 1940s and 1950s, the extreme polarization of wealth and the politicization of a new generation of Iraqis dissatisfied with the authoritarian nature of the monarchy resulted in numerous social and political upheavals. In July 1958 widespread

popular discontent with the monarchy exploded in a particularly bloody fashion. The young king, the regent, and scores of members of the royal family and their servants were slaughtered. Prime Minister Nuri al-Sa'id was discovered trying to escape disguised as a woman and was stoned to death. After he was buried, his body was disinterred, dragged through the streets of Baghdad by an hysterical mob, hung up in public, mutilated, dismembered, and burned.

The aftermath of the revolution was hardly more peaceful. In March 1959 local army commanders rose up against the government of General Qasim in the northern city of Mosul. For three days the city was engulfed in violence and bloodshed. Old personal grudges and family feuds were settled, and actual and suspected supporters of Qasim were summarily executed. When it became clear that the coup had failed, the Qasim government allowed the local branch of the Communist party to go on a rampage and avenge the earlier killings. Houses were looted, women were raped, and scores of innocent people affiliated with prominent families and with the Communists' rivals, especially the Baathists, were shot.

When the Baath Party finally overthrew Qasim in 1963, his downfall turned into a particularly gruesome spectacle. Having killed the general and several of his aides, the new regime faced persistent rumors that Qasim was still alive and was planning to lead a counter coup. To demoralize Qasim's supporters and convince the Iraqi population that he had been executed, his bullet-ridden corpse was shown for several days on Iraqi television.

**The body was propped up on a chair in the studio. A soldier sauntered around, handling its parts. The camera would cut to scenes of devastation at the Ministry of Defense where it lingered on the mutilated corpses of Qasim's entourage. Back to the studio, close-ups [were shown] of the entry and exit points of each bullet hole. The whole macabre . . . scene [ended when a] soldier grabbed the lolling head by the hair, came right up close, and spat full face into it.<sup>8</sup>**

Fighting between the Baathist militia and elements loyal to the former regime raged through the streets of Baghdad, leaving several thousand dead. After the Baathists won, they ruthlessly took revenge on their opponents, especially the Communists. The Baathists were themselves overthrown nine months later, leading to five years of instability, crises, and coups, as military officers and civilian ideologues of various persuasions alternated at the helm of the country.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted in al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 123–24.

<sup>8</sup>Al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 59.

In July 1968, however, the Baath Party came back to power—this time to stay. Almost immediately afterward, a new sort of violence gripped the country, one perpetuated by a ruling elite determined to hang on to power at any cost.

The first victims of this state-orchestrated terror were “recruited” primarily from the defenseless community of Iraqi Jews, which by then numbered only about two thousand. The defeat of Arab armies at the hands of Israel in 1967 had produced feelings of humiliation throughout the Arab world. In this context, the new regime attempted to muster popular support and establish its “anti-imperialist” and “anti-Zionist” credentials by claiming to have unearthed an Israeli spy ring involving primarily Iraqi Jews. In January 1969 fourteen Iraqis convicted of treason, including eleven Jews, were hanged in Baghdad’s main square. The government had called upon the population to come witness the execution and “enjoy the feast.” Hundreds of thousands of people, most of whom were illiterate or semiliterate workers or peasants from the countryside around Baghdad, showed up. Shouting and dancing in celebration, they watched the fourteen “traitors” being pushed from the scaffolds. As the bodies dangled, leading figures in the new regime harangued the public, one of them in the following terms:

**Great People of Iraq! The Iraq of today shall no more tolerate any traitor, spy, agent, or fifth columnist! You foundling Israel, you imperialist Americans, and you Zionists, hear me! We will discover all your dirty tricks! We will punish your agents! We will hang your spies, even if there are thousands of them. This is only the beginning! The great and immortal squares of Iraq shall be filled up with the corpses of traitors and spies! Just wait.<sup>9</sup>**

The mutilated corpses of the victims were not removed for several days. By then a new sense of anxiety was spreading throughout the Iraqi population. Politically active people, in particular, had come to realize that the false accusations of treason that the regime had just made to justify the ruthless execution of fourteen innocent people could as easily be leveled against any individual or group the new leaders might identify as a threat. Such fears were soon confirmed as the regime stepped up arrests, mock trials, and executions of political rivals after labeling them “Zionist spies” or “enemies of the state” and accusing them of being engaged in “plots” or “conspiracies” against the government.

Ever since 1968, the Baathist regime has built on Iraq’s long tradition of violence to turn the country into what one expatriate has called “a chamber of horrors.” Thus, to maintain themselves in power, Saddam Hussein and his associates have engaged in virtually every form of coercion and violation of human rights imaginable, including the following:

- The most extreme forms of torture imaginable
- Kidnappings of suspected and actual opponents, who are never seen again
- Routine executions and assassinations (both inside the country and overseas)
- The extraction of fabricated confessions
- The use of napalm and chemical weapons against civilians
- The forced displacement and resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people
- Arbitrary arrests and detentions
- Politically motivated confiscation of private property
- Punishment (including torture) of the families and associates of political dissidents

### *The Baath Elite*

In authoritarian societies, in which power is highly concentrated in the hands of a small group of individuals, the culture of the elite has a decisive influence on political life. Such is the case in Baathist Iraq, where decision making is the preserve of a tiny circle of men, most of whom share similar religious, ethnic, regional, and tribal origins, as well as formative political experiences rooted in clandestine party activity. These men tend to look at the world from a distinctive perspective characterized by a parochial outlook, a garrison mentality, and a conception of politics revolving around the use of force.

They have a very limited understanding of the world beyond Iraq. This reflects their own provincial backgrounds, limited education, and minimal exposure to other cultures and traditions. Most of them grew up in the Iraqi countryside in the 1930s and 1940s at a time when Iraq’s villages and towns were largely self-contained and isolated. Only a handful attended university, and even fewer have ever studied or lived outside the Arab world.

Their parochial background and limited understanding of the West sheds light on some of the more puzzling aspects of Iraq’s foreign policy since 1968. The 1991 Gulf War, for instance, largely resulted from Saddam Hussein’s inability to comprehend the world outrage caused by his invasion of Kuwait, his systematic

<sup>9</sup>Quoted in al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, 52.

misreading of Western public opinion, and his failure to recognize President Bush's determination to liberate Kuwait.

Iraq's leaders also share a belief that hostile forces besiege them. At one level, this garrison mentality was shaped by the country's history of foreign invasions, the existence of powerful neighbors, and the realization that Iraq was a fragile entity that could easily be dismembered into separate Kurdish, Sunni, and Shiite units. At another level, the paranoid outlook of the Baath elite reflects its own experience as a party that was persecuted by the authorities, forced to develop underground, and overthrown shortly after it came to power for the first time.

Saddam Hussein's tendency to see traitors and plots everywhere helps explain the two most important foreign policy moves he has made: the launching of a war against Iran and the invasion of Kuwait. The first decision reflected, in part at least, his fear that Ayatollah Khomeini's regime in Tehran might spur the Iraqi Shiites into overthrowing the Baath. Significantly as well, after the Iraqi military campaign in Iran turned into a protracted and ferocious war that was very different from the blitzkrieg he had anticipated, Saddam was quick to explain his mistake away by resorting to a conspiracy theory. He essentially argued that "the forces of Zionism and imperialism" had incited Iraq to declare war on Iran, with the intention of drawing the Baathist leadership into a regional conflict that would sap the country's ability to stand up to the West, Israel, and the pro-Western monarchies in the Gulf.

Similar assumptions contributed to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. In the late 1980s Saddam Hussein seems to have believed that, with the decline in Soviet power, the United States would enjoy a free hand in the Middle East and encourage Israeli aggression against Arab states, especially Iraq. In 1988–89 his fears were increased by Western media reports that were highly critical of his regime's human rights record. In Baghdad these reports were interpreted as an American attempt to justify a forthcoming Israeli attack on Iraq. Saddam found final proof of a U.S.-Israeli "conspiracy" when Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates began to exceed the oil-production quotas they had been assigned by the **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**. The Baathist leadership immediately explained the small Gulf states' behavior as a U.S.-sponsored effort to undermine Iraq's economy by lowering oil prices and therefore reducing Iraq's main source of revenue. Resentment toward Kuwait was compounded by the fact that the tiny nation was pumping large quantities of oil from an oil field that lies mostly under Iraq and that had long been

an object of dispute between the two countries. Thus, Saddam repeatedly argued that the invasion of Kuwait, like that of Iran ten years earlier, had been carried out largely in self-defense, in an attempt to prevent it from ruining Iraq.

As the Gulf crisis unfolded, the Iraqi leadership put forward a slightly different conspiracy theory, built around the confusing signals that the Bush administration had sent during the few weeks preceding the invasion. Baathist spokesmen now claimed that the U.S. government had deliberately led the Iraqi authorities into believing that the United States might acquiesce to an Iraqi takeover of Kuwait. The U.S.'s intention, the reasoning went, had been to lure Iraq into invading its smaller neighbor to provide the Bush administration with the excuse it needed to justify the destruction of Iraqi military power. As during the Iran-Iraq War, such assertions were to a large extent attempts at rationalizing the blunders made by Saddam Hussein throughout the crisis. At a deeper level, however, the ease with which they were accepted by Baath leaders also reflects their propensity to adopt a conspiratorial view of the outside world.

In short, both genuine fears and propaganda account for the Baath's frequently belligerent rhetoric. On the one hand, the regime does have a marked paranoid streak. On the other hand, it also has consciously invented plots to justify its regional ambitions, rally the population behind it, legitimize its elimination of domestic enemies by portraying them as the pawns of hostile foreign powers, divert attention from the domestic situation, and attribute internal problems to the presumed machinations of Iraq's external enemies. Yet even justified perceptions of hostility ultimately have had a self-fulfilling nature. To face up to both real and imagined dangers, the regime has repeatedly engaged in massive military buildups and aggressive rhetoric and posturing. Unfortunately, such actions have frequently spun out of control, dragging Iraq into international crises and devastating wars. These, in turn, have prompted new forms of foreign involvement in Iraq's domestic affairs, further straining relations with the outside world and reinforcing suspicion of outsiders.

One final major characteristic of the Baathist leadership's outlook has been a conception of politics as a **zero-sum game** that can result in only a single winner. And in the Baathist worldview, winning almost always involves at least threatening the use of force. Under the circumstances, not surprisingly, Iraq's leaders believe that the end justifies the means and that, in the unforfeiting, high-stakes game of Iraqi politics, the most ruthless players will prevail.

The Baathist leaders' understanding of politics as coercion reflects their own political experiences. Unlike Western or Indian politicians, these men did not rise to power through elections, persuasion, public relations, and compromise, or even through the routine procedures of the old Communist parties in China or the former Soviet Union. Instead, on two separate occasions, they seized control of the state by overthrowing the existing government. In their eyes, therefore, political success is divorced from the ability to muster popular support.

Significantly, when the Baath Party first took power in February 1963, it probably had fewer than a thousand members. When it returned to the helm five years later, its estimated membership was still under two thousand—not exactly what we would call a broad base of popular support. Similarly, the Baath's consolidation of power after 1968 has had less to do with the party's ability to create legitimacy for its rule than with its ruthless suppression of political opponents. It is therefore logical that, having survived longer than any regime in recent Iraqi history by relying primarily on force, fear, and intimidation, the Baathists should have come to see politics itself as almost synonymous with coercion and bullying.

Such perceptions made it particularly hard for the allied leaders to deal with Iraq during the Gulf crisis. To convey the U.S. determination to see Kuwait liberated, President Bush was forced to engage in the kind of belligerent rhetoric for which he was often criticized by his domestic opponents, who claimed that the administration was unwilling to pursue diplomatic solutions to the crisis. What these commentators failed to understand was that, given Saddam Hussein's belief that politics is essentially a matter of force, the only way to convince him to pull out of Kuwait was by trying to persuade him that, if necessary, the United States would go to war. Unfortunately, not even that threat proved enough to convince Saddam, who persisted in assuming that the anti-Iraq coalition would never demonstrate the unity and the resolve necessary to push him out of Kuwait.

### *Minimal Opposition*

The Iraqi opposition is extremely weak. It lacks a power base within Iraq and is forced to operate from overseas. Indeed, many Iraqis distrust opposition groups because these groups are backed by foreign governments, including Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, as well as the United States and Great Britain—all of which recently fought wars with Iraq and are still viewed as threats to its security and territorial integrity.

What opposition there is remains highly fragmented. Some of these divisions reflect the ethnic and religious cleavages in Iraq itself. There are, for example, separate (and often antagonistic) Kurdish and Shiite opposition groups. There are also subdivisions within each major branch of the opposition. The Shiite movement, for instance, is divided into at least two major components: moderates and fundamentalists. Similarly, the Kurdish opposition is split into at least six main factions. The opposition also features Western-minded liberals, communists, non-Baathist Arab nationalists, and a variety of groups headed by disaffected former Baathists or generals who broke away from the regime years ago. In the past these groups have found it impossible to form a united front against Saddam Hussein.

Historically, the Kurds and the Sunnis have feared that the Shiites would try to establish an Iranian-style theocracy. The non-Kurdish opposition, for its part, suspects that the Kurds aspire to break away from Iraq. Meanwhile, the communists hate the liberals and the dissident Baathists because the Baathists and the Iraqi Communist Party were bitter rivals long before Saddam Hussein's rise to power. As for the Western-style liberals, they fear the religious extremist tendencies within the Shiite opposition and the authoritarian proclivities of the communists and the dissident Baathists.

Thus, the only factor that brings the various branches of the opposition together is their shared hatred of Saddam's regime. Beyond that, however, the opposition traditionally has offered neither a coherent strategy to overthrow Saddam Hussein nor a compelling vision of Iraq's future.

In 1992 Iraq's first broad opposition front—the Iraqi National Congress (INC), composed of Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish groups—was formed ([www.inc.or.uk](http://www.inc.or.uk)). Headquartered in London, it has held meetings and rallies throughout Europe. In the fall of 1992, it also organized a major conference in northern Iraq. There, some 236 delegates (all of them exiles except for the Kurds) were able to agree on a common program to overthrow Saddam Hussein, and they called for a democratic, market-oriented, federal Iraq that would recognize and protect freedoms for both minority groups and individuals. They elected a government in exile, led by a three-man team made up of a Kurdish guerrilla chief (Massoud Barzani); a moderate, London-based Shiite cleric (Muhammad Badr Ulum); and a retired Sunni Iraqi general (Hassan Naqib) who fled Baghdad in 1979 after clashing with Saddam. The INC's call for a federal structure for the country was rejected by the other main opposition group, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a Shiite organization operating from Iran. As it



turned out, in any event, the INC fell into disarray following Saddam's invasion of the "safe haven" in the north in August–September 1996.

The INC's fortunes did improve in the late 1990s. The Clinton administration gave it millions of dollars in aid and at least implicitly granted it permission to assassinate Saddam Hussein and bring down the regime. The Bush administration has gone further and indicated that it might actually provide arms for the INC. That said, it still operates wholly in exile and has limited support in Iraq itself, as far as we can tell.

### *An Election in Name Only?*

The most recent presidential election may provide us with the single best glimpse at the nature of political participation in Iraq. According to the *Economist*, in the October 1995 election in Iraq, "Some 3,300 Iraqis [were] the subject of intense scrutiny by Saddam Hussein's secret policemen this week."<sup>10</sup> A total of 99.47 percent of the population went to the polls, and, of them, 99.96 percent (all but those 3,300) voted for Saddam Hussein in his successful bid for another seven-year term.

The election was a farce because there was never any doubt about its outcome. Just as with the elections in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union before the collapse of communism, the referendum was held to demonstrate support for the person everyone knew from the beginning was going to be the overwhelming winner. Yet the referendum underscored the surprising resilience of a regime that had survived so much for so long. As one Western diplomat put it to the *New York Times*:

**If they can organize a referendum like this in less than three weeks, mobilize party cadres in every village, hamlet, town, and city, produce precise lists for 8 million voters, and march all of them to the polls to say 'yes' unanimously, it means they are not about to fall.**<sup>11</sup>

## The Iraqi State

**A**lmost all third world countries have formal institutions of government that are described in constitutions. In some cases, such as India, those

constitutional offices and provisions define political life roughly to the degree that they do in industrialized democracies. In many others, however, power rests primarily with a single leader or a small group that is not really constrained by legal and constitutional rules. In such cases, the parliament, bureaucracy, and other institutions have no independent authority and are little more than extensions of the personal will of the head of state or the ruling clique. This is especially true in a country like Iraq, which has been dominated by one man for more than two decades. It is thus important here to distinguish the formal, official structure of government from the more informal channels through which power is actually exercised.

### *A Primitive Cult of Personality*

In Iraq personal rule has been taken to extremes in the way power has been concentrated in Saddam Hussein's hands and in the **cult of personality** that has been built around him. In October 1991 Izzat Ibrahim, then vice chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, summed it up eloquently: "Saddam Hussein is Iraq, and Iraq is Saddam Hussein."

Huge billboards throughout the country portray him in different guises—Saddam in a military uniform, Saddam in a tailor-made Italian suit, Saddam praying, Saddam wearing a Bedouin headdress and robe, Saddam as a shepherd attending his flock, or Saddam wearing the green fatigues favored by Baath leaders. His portrait is everywhere—in taxicabs, in stores, in government buildings, in homes (especially those of government employees), and on bus windows. There are Saddam T-shirts, watches with his face on the dial, and notebooks and calendars adorned with his image. Throughout the country, one finds placards with quotes attributed to Saddam and others praising the president.

In the mid-1980s one of the very few jokes against the regime that made the rounds went like this:

**"What is the population of Iraq?"**

**"Twenty-eight million. Fourteen million Iraqis and fourteen million pictures of Saddam Hussein."**

Saddam Hussein's birthday is a national holiday. Schoolchildren memorize his sayings along with poems and songs praising him. News broadcasts focus on his activities, which usually include his attendance at a ceremony or party in his honor. Television anchors spend a great deal of time reading the dozens of congratulatory telegrams sent to him every day by government officials,

<sup>10</sup>"King of a Sad Castle," *Economist*, 21 Oct. 1995.

<sup>11</sup>Youssef M. Ibrahim, "99.96% for Saddam, but Iraqi Woes Grow," *New York Times*, 19 Oct. 1995.

## SADDAM HUSSEIN



© Reuters/Bettmann/COBIS

A best-selling watch during the 1991 war, with Saddam Hussein pictured on the dial. Many wrist and pocket watches, as well as a wide selection of Saddam T-shirts, were available.

Saddam Hussein was born in 1937 and grew up in Tikrit, a dirt-poor village a hundred miles north of Baghdad. His mother was a widow, and there are rumors that he was abused by several of the relatives who helped raise him.

Saddam Hussein moved to Baghdad in 1955 and quickly became active in politics. He was wounded in the Baathists' attempt to assassinate Qasim in 1959 and fled to Cairo, where he studied law. He returned to Iraq when the Baath Party first came to power in 1963.

After the Baath seized power in July 1968, he served as second-in-command to the new president, Major General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr. In practice, however, he quickly became the driving force behind the new regime, and by the mid-1970s he had emerged as the de facto leader of Iraq. In July 1979 he forced al-Bakr to resign and assumed the presidency himself. Through repeated purges of the ruling elite, he rapidly turned Iraqi politics into one-man rule. He has been aptly described by *New York Times* journalist Thomas Friedman as a thirteenth-century tyrant whose unrelenting desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction make him the archetypical twenty-first-century threat ([www.emergency.com/hussein1.htm](http://www.emergency.com/hussein1.htm)).



artists, and leaders of professional, women's, and youth associations.

The most striking example of the personality cult is probably the set of two monuments called "Victory Arches" that Saddam Hussein had built to celebrate Iraq's "victory" over Iran. These identical monuments are at opposite ends of a huge field in Baghdad. Each consists of two enormous, twenty-ton bronze forearms, which are giant replicas of Saddam's. The arms burst from the ground, each holding a giant sword. When they meet, the swords and the arms form an arch, next to which are some five thousand battle-scarred helmets of dead Iranian soldiers. The symbolism is obvious: Iraq's victory was achieved through the military genius and valiant leadership of Saddam, who will continue to usher his nation to ever greater successes.

The cult of personality reinforces two opposing images of Saddam Hussein: as benefactor and as ruthless leader. Thus, welfare programs and development projects are presented as personal gifts that Saddam shows on particular strata. In the 1970s and 1980s, for instance, he frequently handed out television sets while

visiting Kurdish or Shiite villages. But if Saddam is the man who awards benefits, he also is the one who punishes. After the village of Dujayl, known to be a hotbed of Shiite fundamentalism, was the site of an assassination attempt against the Iraqi leader, he ordered the village razed. Almost immediately afterward, the government rebuilt it.

Through such displays, the Iraqi despot tries to project the image of a leader who is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. The message sent through such dramatic and seemingly contradictory actions is simple: Saddam Hussein alone decides who will live and who will die. And although many of the stories circulating in Iraq and in the Arab world about his brutality are true, many more are fabricated, spread by Saddam himself or by his closest associates to add to his aura of invincibility.

### *The Formal Structure of Government*

Admittedly, the formal institutions of government tell us little about the way power is exercised in Iraq.

A military procession passing under the famous giant arches made up of swords held in replicas of Saddam Hussein's hands.



© Versale-Photo. News/Getty Images

Nonetheless, a number of them are important enough that they bear mentioning here.

### **The Council of Ministers and the National Assembly**

At first glance, two components of the Iraqi state—the Council of Ministers (or cabinet) and the National Assembly—might seem familiar, because they have the same names as institutions frequently found in democratic political systems. In fact, they have little in common with their Western counterparts because they have next to no influence over policy making.

The Iraqi cabinet's role is limited to implementing policies that have already been decided by the president and the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). The National Assembly's 250 members are allowed to run for election only after being approved by a special committee controlled by Saddam Hussein and thus have even less power. When the Iraqi president convened the first National Assembly in 1980, his intention was to create an institution that would be personally loyal to him, give the appearance of popular support for his policies, and serve as a counterweight to the Baath Party, whose unconditional support Saddam had reasons to doubt. Ever since, he has relied on trusted aides to ensure his personal control of the assembly, which meets for only a few weeks each year, systemati-

cally ratifies the laws passed by the RCC, and never opposes any of his policies.

### **The Revolutionary Command Council**

Much more powerful than the cabinet or the assembly are the RCC, the Baath Party, and the internal security services. Officially, the RCC and the Baath Party constitute the two most important state bodies. In practice, however, the secret police has been the most influential institution since 1968.

The RCC is the highest executive and legislative authority in the country. Its chairman is also president of the republic, commander in chief of the armed forces, and secretary general of the Baath Party. It has ultimate legal authority over the formulation of Iraq's domestic and foreign policies, and it supervises the work of the cabinet, whose role is merely to implement the RCC's decisions. Therefore, it combines powers that are divided between the executive and the legislative branches in liberal democracies.

In theory, the RCC is supposed to function as a collective decision-making body. For about a decade after the Baath Party seized power, this was indeed the case, largely because each RCC member had his own power base. The situation changed dramatically after July 1979 when then-president and RCC chairman Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr resigned and was replaced by Saddam Hussein.

By 1982 the new president had forced all independent personalities out of the RCC and replaced them with loyal aides. Since then, Saddam has also dramatically reduced the RCC's membership and turned that once-powerful institution into merely one of the many vehicles through which he exercises and legitimizes his personal power.

### The Baath Party

The Baath Party was founded in the early 1940s in Syria by two French-educated intellectuals and schoolteachers—Michel Aflaq, a Greek Orthodox Christian, and Salah al-Din al-Bitar, a Sunni Muslim. Soon afterward, the party established branches in neighboring countries, including Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon.

Baathist ideology was an ill-defined and abstract mixture of pan-Arabism and non-Marxist socialism. Starting from the premise that nation-states in the Arab world were artificial entities created by colonial powers to divide and weaken the region, the party's founders argued that only unification of the various Arab states would enable them to overcome underdevelopment and foreign domination. They also believed that, as most Arab countries finally became independent after World War II, they could restore Arab unity and, in the process, make the Arab world once again a center of world civilization. Significantly, the word *Baath* in Arabic means “resurgence” or “renaissance.”

The Baath's early organizational structure reflected this commitment to Arab unity. Because Baathist ideologues saw Arab countries as mere parts of a wider Arab nation, the party's highest decision-making body, the National Command, was a supranational institution. Subordinated to it were the party's Regional Commands, which made up the leadership of the Baath in each Arab country.

However, the notion that the Baath was a pan-Arab party that transcended existing state boundaries soon became a fiction, as country-based branches of the party asserted their independence from the National Command. In 1966 an important split took place between the Syrian and Iraqi branches. Since then Syria and Iraq have each had their own “National Command,” and have put national interests well above those of the “Arab nation.”

After the Baath Party seized control of the state in July 1968, those in the military and the bureaucracy who posed a potential threat to its goal to monopolize power were systematically retired, jailed, executed, dismissed, or reassigned to secondary positions. Meanwhile, all strategic positions in the state machinery were given to trusted or long-standing members of the party.

Saddam Hussein, then head of the party's security apparatus, orchestrated and directed this thorough “Baathization” of the state. At the same time, he revamped the Baath itself, transforming it within a few years from a small, underground party into a mass-based organization. Full membership is reserved for a dedicated elite of those who, after years of service, have finally proved themselves as highly capable people deeply committed to the regime. Membership in the party is for life, and defection is punishable by death.

Like other totalitarian parties, the Baath has always relied on political indoctrination to foster a sense of Iraqi nationalism and unconditional loyalty to the regime. In its propaganda, these two objectives are always interrelated. Saddam Hussein is credited with the “great strides” accomplished by Iraq, and he is portrayed as the man who, with the help of the party operating under his “enlightened leadership,” will enable the country to renew the glories of past Iraqi civilizations.

To inculcate such ideas into the minds of ordinary Iraqis, the party depends on its tight control of the media, the school curriculum, and the teaching profession. Almost all schoolteachers are Baathists who transmit the party's interpretation of Iraqi history and current events to Iraq's youths. Because a child's mind can more easily be shaped than an adult's, and because today's youths will be tomorrow's public opinion, the leadership believes that successful indoctrination of children holds the key to the regime's future.

Because its own official views of the world can change rapidly and dramatically, the party can even manipulate children's minds in contradictory directions. Thus, in the mid-1980s, when Iraq's leadership was courting U.S. support in its war with Iran, teachers in Baghdad's schools taught their students that Americans were friends of the Iraqi people and that American visitors deserved a particularly warm welcome. During the 1990–91 Gulf crisis, the same teachers taught children that Americans were imperialists bent on dominating the Middle East and destroying Iraq.

The Baath is also used to facilitate the regime's control of the population. It can do so because it literally is everywhere—from small “cells” in neighborhoods and villages all the way up to its national authorities. Party units are called “divisions” at the level of towns or urban neighborhoods, “sections” that combine several divisions in a large city or a region, and “branches” for the eighteen provinces plus three for Baghdad.

The party is active in factories, schools, universities, and government offices. It monitors the activities of key constituencies—such as journalists, lawyers, doctors, peasants, and workers—through unions and professional

organizations that are themselves controlled by the Baath. Party officials have paid particular attention to young people and women, who have their own party-affiliated “popular organizations”—the General Federation of Iraqi Youth and the General Federation of Iraqi Women, respectively.

Party cells are also found in all government agencies. Members report on their colleagues’ and superiors’ performance and loyalty. Sometimes, the party cell itself is assigned some of the functions of the agency to which it is attached.

Therefore, there are really two distinct chains of authority in the Iraqi state: the official, bureaucratic one, and the one associated with the Baath Party. State and party are often played against one another in an attempt to weaken both and to diminish the possibility that either may provide potential enemies of the regime with a power base. The confusion and delays that this phenomenon generates are logical consequences of a system that values political control more than bureaucratic efficiency.

### **The Baath and the Military: An Uneasy Relationship**

Ever since 1968 the Baath has been so preoccupied with controlling the military that the relationship between the party and the army deserves some elaboration. Considering the military’s long tradition of interference in Iraqi politics, the political leadership’s suspicion of it is not unjustified.

The first military coup in the modern Arab world took place in Iraq in 1936. It was only a harbinger of a cycle of military intervention in government affairs. There were six other coups from 1936 to 1941 and another five from 1958 to 1968.

The Baath’s distrust of the military is rooted in its own experience. After all, army officers overthrew the first Baath government in 1963. And the Baath was brought back to power in 1968 as a result of a coup in which senior army officers played a key role. This role was reflected in the composition of the first RCC, the five members of which were all career officers, and in the domination of the initial Baathist cabinet by individuals closely associated with prominent military figures. From the very moment the new regime assumed power, therefore, civilian party activists were fearful of the power that senior military commanders wielded in the state bureaucracy. “Turf” rivalries between the civilian and the military wings of the party were compounded by ideological differences between the two groups, with the military types tending to be more moderate and pragmatic

than the more doctrinaire and ideologically oriented civilian Baathists.

Only days after the 1968 coup, the civilian wing of the party, led by Saddam Hussein, moved to neutralize the most influential military figures. Critical to Saddam’s success was his ability to enlist the cooperation of the new president and chairman of the RCC, Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr. As a general, one of the historical leaders of the Iraqi Baath, and someone who had played a key role in the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, al-Bakr commanded tremendous respect both in the party and in the army.

With the support of al-Bakr, who was sympathetic to the party’s civilian wing, Saddam Hussein undermined the military’s power. Within a few years, most senior officers had been removed from positions of influence in the government and been replaced by civilian party functionaries. Significantly, the proportion of army officers in the RCC declined from 100 percent in the immediate aftermath of the 1968 coup to 40 percent in the second RCC established in November 1969. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, it fell to about 20 percent.

Saddam Hussein then proceeded to transform the military into an institution loyal to the political leadership. The armed forces underwent repeated purges, as scores of officers were dismissed, forced to retire, and even executed. Meanwhile, Saddam and al-Bakr appointed close relatives to the most sensitive command positions in the army. Political loyalty to the regime became a much more important consideration than professional competence in determining promotions. Only party members were allowed into the military academies, and soldiers were informed that belonging to non-Baathist organizations was a crime punishable by death. To tighten the regime’s control of the armed forces, cells of the Baath Party were set up in all key military units, and a special intelligence agency, the Istikhbarat, was created in part to spy on the army.

Still fearful that disaffected senior officers might attempt a coup, the regime decided it needed a counterweight to the regular armed forces. Accordingly, in 1970 it created the **Popular Army** (also referred to in Western sources as the People’s Militia or the People’s Army). Designed to be the military arm of the party, it provided basic military training to its members, both men and women, which is most uncommon in Muslim countries. Its functions soon grew to include guarding neighborhoods, government buildings, communication centers, and other sensitive installations. In the 1980s the Popular Army grew dramatically, from about 50,000 members in the mid-1970s to almost 500,000 in the late 1980s. During the most difficult periods of the Iran-Iraq War, it

also provided support for the regular armed forces. It was officially dissolved in 1991 in the wake of Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War.

The outbreak of the war with Iran in 1980 revived latent tensions and animosities between the political and military leaderships. After Iraqi forces suffered serious defeats in 1982, senior army commanders were reported to be highly resentful of the excessive centralization of military decision making in Saddam Hussein's hands. It soon became known that some of them had ascribed Iraq's setbacks to the president's insistence on exerting tight control over strategy despite his lack of expertise. After an aborted attempt to force Saddam to step down in 1982, the president launched a major purge of the military and executed scores of high-ranking officers whom he suspected of having been favorably inclined toward those seeking his removal.

For the remainder of the Iran-Iraq War, the officer corps was purged at any sign of dissatisfaction. In an attempt to undermine the ability of army officers to develop their own power bases, the government accelerated their rotation from one branch of the military to another. In addition, officers blamed for defeats on the battlefield were executed for treason as a lesson to their colleagues. In several instances, successful officers were summoned to Baghdad after being told that they were going to be awarded medals for their performance at the front. Upon reaching the Iraqi capital, they were arrested, and some were executed. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein never allowed army commanders to become public heroes for fear that a victorious and ambitious general might decide to bring down his regime.

Saddam Hussein also tried to buy the officer corps' loyalty. Thus, military spending was increased, and officers were given special benefits and privileges, including better housing, higher salaries, and access to government-controlled stores filled with imported goods unavailable to the majority of Iraqis.

This mixture of carrot and stick, combined with the frightening prospect of an Iranian victory, did succeed in ensuring the army's loyalty throughout the war. Yet, after the war ended in 1988, there were once again rumors of coup attempts, followed by the execution of scores of officers.

With Iraq's defeat by the allied coalition in 1991, many analysts hoped that the military might finally topple the regime. Saddam understood the threat and took steps to foil possible coup attempts during the summer and fall of 1991. He appointed a new army chief of staff, replaced the heads of the air force and the elite **Republican Guard**, and increased the rotation of senior military commanders.

Despite these and other precautionary measures, four officers in the Republican Guard attempted a coup in June 1992. Shortly afterward, two hundred officers were purged, and many of them executed. Since then, reports and rumors of attempted coups have surfaced on a regular basis. The most serious, in mid-1995, was organized by a senior general from a prominent Sunni family, al-Delami, which had been close to Saddam. When the general's mutilated body was delivered to his family—one of Saddam's favorite ways of publicizing the cost of "treason" against his regime—a rebellion took place in the family's hometown. The uprising was crushed, but it demonstrated that the most important component of Saddam's power base—prominent Sunni Arab families—may now be abandoning him. As he constantly strives to eliminate all those in the military who could conceivably launch a coup against him, the Iraqi leader may soon find himself precariously relying on an ever-narrowing clique to maintain power.

### The Intelligence Agencies

As in most authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, the intelligence agencies in Iraq are the most important institutions because their omnipresence and brutality have been instrumental in ensuring the regime's survival and Saddam Hussein's personal ascendancy. The secret police is made up of not one but four distinct organizations. The most powerful is the Jihaz al-Mukhabarat al-'Amma, or **General Intelligence Apparatus**, which developed out of the Baathist secret police created by Saddam Hussein in the mid-1960s, when it was still operating underground. The Mukhabarat handles both internal security and overseas operations but focuses on monitoring the army, the bureaucracy, the Baath Party, and the "popular organizations" affiliated to it. The Mudiriyat al-Amn al-'Amma, or **General Security Directorate**, is primarily in charge of domestic operations. Al-Istikhbarat al-'Askariya, or **Military Intelligence**, was set up to spy on the Iraqi military, gather intelligence on foreign countries, monitor the activities of Iraqis living abroad, and arrange assassinations of Iraqi dissidents in exile. Overseas, the Istikhbarat operates primarily from the offices of military attaches in Iraqi embassies. Finally, the Amn al-Khass, or **Special Security**, is directly attached to the presidential palace and provides Saddam Hussein with information on key government officials.

The existence of several distinct security services is doubly revealing. First, it points to the leadership's paranoia and obsession with political control. Second, it shows Saddam Hussein's reliance on divide-and-rule tactics as a way of preventing any single institution from

Saddam Hussein and his family during happier times. The photo includes his two brothers-in-law, who defected in 1995 and then were killed the following February.



AP/Wide World Photos

becoming a threat to his personal power. Thus, the various intelligence agencies are given overlapping responsibilities, and they are instructed to spy not only on the population, the bureaucracy, the party, the army, and foreign countries, but also on one another. They are not informed of each other's activities, and their directors report directly to Saddam, who plays these agencies and the state's other institutions off against one another.

### ***The Informal Chain of Command: Saddam Hussein and His Kin***

As pointed out in Chapter 12, power in the third world tends to be personalized, and so formal institutions and rules are often relatively unimportant. As the preceding discussion has shown, Saddam Hussein dominates all the institutions that make up the Iraqi state. His ability to maintain his privileged position rests largely on his personal control over a vast network of subordinates who manage these key state institutions. Trusted aides who report directly to him and who are kept relatively uninformed of each other's activities head all the major branches of the government.

Under these circumstances, Saddam Hussein is unlikely to face a concerted challenge to his rule, especially given that he has also shown himself to be very skillful at playing institutions and individuals against one another, and that his subordinates compete with each other for personal advancement only he can bestow. The concentration of power in Saddam's hands has had two essential implications for the exercise of political power in

Iraq. First, the influence of any member of the Iraqi political elite is primarily a function of his personal access to the country's leader. Thus, men who do not belong to any of the official government bodies but who are particularly close to Saddam often exert more power than those in formal positions of authority. Second, the real chain of authority in Iraq is exercised through a series of concentric circles emanating from Saddam. Such personalization of power, and the fluidity of institutional arrangements it implies, makes it all but impossible to present the kind of diagram or flow chart of decision making included in the other country chapters.

The inner circle made up of Saddam Hussein's close relatives largely runs Iraq behind the scenes. In 1990 this group included eight of his family members: his two sons, Uday and Qusay; three cousins on his father's side (two of whom were also his sons-in-law); and three half-brothers. However, the number of reliable family members has declined significantly since then. Indeed, the inner circle may now be limited to Saddam's sons. Uday holds dozens of political jobs and is editor of a major newspaper. Qusay plays a pivotal role as head of the many, overlapping intelligence agencies.

As Saddam Hussein gets older and rumors about his health spread, most observers speculate that he would prefer Qusay to replace him. However, these same observers also believe that his brother will not accept that decision easily.

A second circle consists of a handful of Saddam Hussein's close associates, who have been connected to him since the Baath's underground days. Although these

men do exert real influence, they do not have an independent power base, they owe everything to Saddam, and they are too widely identified with him to pose any real threat to his rule. It is not surprising, therefore, that they have proved themselves completely subservient to the Iraqi dictator. This circle includes such individuals as Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz.

A third circle is composed of Saddam Hussein's relatives who hail from his hometown, Tikrit. It used to be customary for last names to refer to a person's place of origin, as in "Saddam Hussein al-Tikriti" (that is, "from Tikrit"). In 1976 the Baath suddenly abolished this practice on the grounds that it encouraged people to think of themselves not as Iraqis but as members of the parochial groups discussed earlier. Many observers believe that the real reason behind the decision was that the leadership did not want to call attention to the fact that an embarrassingly large proportion of Iraq's political establishment had roots in Tikrit and were related to Saddam.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Iraqi state has become a family-run business and that the leadership of this state is held together first and foremost by clan and tribal loyalties. This phenomenon reached unprecedented levels in the wake of the Gulf War, when Saddam further tightened his extended family's control over the military and the security services.

Although the members of Saddam Hussein's inner circle enjoy some influence, their power can be taken away at any moment. Ever since he became the top man in Baghdad, Saddam has made it clear that his collaborators were not allowed to harbor personal ambitions. He has also refrained from grooming a successor, for he is well aware that heirs apparent can become impatient and push their patron aside. After all, this is exactly what he did in 1979 when he was the regime's second in command as deputy chairman of the RCC.

## Public Policy

**B**ecause of its oil, Iraq has has a greater economic potential than most third world countries. Consequently the process of development should have been easier than in many other countries. Unfortunately, Iraq's resources have largely been squandered by a leader who has chosen to use them instead to try to establish himself as the single most important figure in the Arab world. To fulfill this ambition, he led Iraq into two ill-advised wars, the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq War and the 1991 Gulf War, that left his country devastated. Thus, Iraqis have suffered not only defeat in war but also continued

## Democratization in Iraq

**IRAQ HAS been entirely bypassed by the "third wave" of democratization of the past two decades. Its regime remains as dictatorial and personalistic as ever.**

**Even more worrisome is the absence of any clear democratic alternatives. The opposition is extremely divided and disorganized. Forced to operate from overseas, it is unable to affect significantly developments within Iraq. And its commitment to democracy is in doubt. Kurdish leaders, who represent a critical component of that opposition, have shown no propensity for moderation, conciliation, and compromise in their dealings with each other. Engrossed in their own power struggles, they and other opposition leaders cannot pose a credible threat to Saddam Hussein.**

**Meanwhile, the virtual disappearance of the middle class as a result of economic collapse following the Gulf War does not bode well for future democratic prospects. Many observers fear that any collapse of the regime will be followed not by democracy but the disintegration of the country.**

poverty at home, both of which could have been avoided under a less power-hungry leadership.

## *The Subordination of Policy to Power*

When the Baath Party seized power in 1968, its vaguely socialist rhetoric offered no strategy for stimulating economic growth. Yet the absence of a concrete economic agenda was not really disturbing to the new elite, whose first priority was neither economic nor social, but political.

During the Baath's first decade in power, the leadership used economic policy primarily as a tool to consolidate power. It is in this light that we should examine the tremendous increase in the state's economic role. By the late 1970s about 25 percent of the economically active population worked in government-related jobs, whether as civil servants, employees in state-owned corporations, teachers in state schools and universities, or full-time paid members of the Baath Party. The number of government employees increased by close to 70 percent between 1972 and 1978, jumping from about 400,000 to over 650,000.

By having the public sector serve as an employer of last resort, the leadership hoped to eliminate unemployment and increase popular support for the regime. In addition, the nationalization of many key businesses,

the tightening of state regulations over industry and trade, and the extensive land reform measures of 1970 were all designed to increase the regime's control over the population. By subjecting large segments of the workforce to direct state supervision and increasing their dependence on it for their livelihood, the Baathists made it much more difficult for them to criticize government policies.

The expansion of the public sector, however, was an expensive policy. Financing it was made possible by the quadrupling of oil prices in world markets in 1973, which followed the nationalization of the oil industry by only one year. (Prior to 1972 the exploitation of Iraq's oil resources had been conducted by an international consortium of oil companies.) By 1974 the regime suddenly found itself the beneficiary of unprecedented oil revenues, which it used not only to increase state control over the country as a whole but also to modernize it and to extend basic social services to most of the population.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the state's modernizing policies radically changed the face of Iraq. In two short decades the country's infrastructure was drastically upgraded and expanded. Modern highways, bridges, airports, and hotels were built. Irrigation systems were developed, and electricity and running water were provided in rural areas whose residents could only have dreamed of having such services just a few years before. Suddenly, people in the countryside had television sets and refrigerators, sometimes handed out by the government.

The increased oil revenues also enabled the Baath leadership to provide the population with an impressive array of social services. Glaring poverty was considerably reduced. University graduates were guaranteed a job in the bureaucracy. The middle class grew. The state made large tracts of government-owned land available at low prices. Unemployment all but disappeared. Comprehensive social legislation was enacted to benefit employees. Rent controls were put into effect to guarantee access to housing. Basic commodities were heavily subsidized by the state.

The leadership also improved the condition of women in a country in which they traditionally have suffered fewer social constraints than in the rest of the Persian Gulf. Day-care centers were built. Legislation was passed to prevent discrimination against women in the workplace and to provide for equal pay and paid maternity leave. By the late 1970s these measures had yielded significant results, with more women employed in the professions and the civil service than ever before. Further, following the outbreak of the war with Iran, women joined the labor force to replace men sent to the front.

Since the late 1980s, however, the regime has largely abandoned its early commitment to women's rights. This may well reflect an attempt to counter popular dissatisfaction by appeasing traditional forces opposed to the emancipation of women. A particularly black day in the history of Iraqi women was 18 February 1990, when the RCC issued a decree protecting Iraqi men from prosecution should they kill their mother, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, or cousin for reason of adultery.

During the 1970s the government also sought to improve educational and health services, now provided to the public free of charge. It directed new resources toward the training of nurses and physicians, and it expanded the number of clinics and hospitals, especially in rural areas, which had been neglected by the preceding governments. These efforts produced significant improvements in public health. Iraqis born in 1984 could expect to live eight to nine years longer on average than those born two decades earlier. Meanwhile, infant mortality rates decreased from 140 to 80 per 1,000 live births between 1960 and 1981.

Similarly, schools, universities, and technical institutes were built or modernized. As a result, the number of graduates from primary schools doubled between 1973 and 1979. During the same period, the number of graduates from secondary schools tripled, and the number of graduates from universities and technical institutes jumped to 18,000. The efforts made at the level of secondary education were particularly remarkable, because the percentage of the eligible Iraqis enrolled in secondary schools rose from 38 percent in 1976 to 67 percent in 1984.

Realizing that adult illiteracy rates remained high, the government also launched a massive literacy campaign in 1978. In its characteristically heavy-handed style, the regime forced all illiterates between the ages of fifteen and forty-five to participate. Those who failed to comply risked prosecution, fines, incarceration, and ineligibility for bank loans, government licenses, and employment. From the very moment the leadership announced its intention to launch the campaign, the bureaucracy, the Baath Party, and the state-controlled media, unions, and professional organizations were all mobilized. Almost overnight the government built thousands of literacy centers throughout the country and trained hundreds of men and women to teach basic reading. Public buildings were put at the disposal of the literacy campaign, and efforts were made to reach the most remote corners of Iraq, including the population living in the marshes along the southern border with Iran. Marsh dwellers were forced to attend "floating

schools,” while nomads were assigned to “traveling schools” with special facilities that could be moved. Different constituencies were identified—workers, soldiers, peasants, housewives—and specialized textbooks were designed for each of them. To facilitate mothers’ participation, hundreds of new nurseries were built. This massive effort paid off. Out of the 2 million or so individuals targeted by the program, an estimated 1.6 million participated. Many women received their first formal education as a result of the literacy campaign, and within just a few years, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis learned to read and write.

Thus, during its first decade in power, the Baath did contribute substantially to the socioeconomic development of Iraq. Unfortunately, these results were achieved through rigid repression and systematic political indoctrination akin to that practiced by the Soviets during the Stalinist era. Moreover, Saddam Hussein could have improved the living standards of his people even more had it not been for his diversion of Iraq’s resources to the development of domestic agencies of repression and a massive arms buildup that consumed more than 40 percent of the budget in the late 1980s.

Most importantly, the prosperity of the 1970s had been due not to an increase in productivity or to a diversification or expansion of the economy, but to the massive injection of oil revenues. Oil receipts, however, could not indefinitely compensate for the structural weaknesses of the economy.

By the late 1970s the economy was already in trouble, especially the agricultural sector. During the implementation of the 1970 land reform, the state had confiscated an estimated 3.6 million acres of land, only one-third of which had been redistributed by 1975. As a result, the country’s cultivated areas and agricultural output fell sharply. The government’s decision to increase the number of state-owned farms in the second half of the 1970s did nothing to alleviate these problems. As in virtually all countries that have collectivized agriculture, productivity in the state sector turned out to be abysmally low. In addition, the regime imposed so many regulations over the production and marketing of food products that even beneficiaries of the land reform found the system cumbersome. Thus, by the end of the decade, Iraq was far more dependent on food imports than it had been some twenty years earlier, when the monarchy was overthrown.

The situation in the industrial sector was no better. State enterprises were inefficient and unprofitable, while regulations and controls burdened the private sector. Very little progress had been made toward setting up an

integrated industrial infrastructure. Foreign contractors had assembled many of the plants built in the 1970s on a “turnkey” basis, building a factory from scratch and then turning it over to the Iraqis as soon as construction was completed. Unfortunately, poor government planning and investment decisions, combined with high production costs and gross inefficiencies, often led these enterprises to produce goods that could not compete with imports. In addition, the technology and local expertise needed to operate and maintain industrial units frequently were not available. Finally, when parts or raw materials had to be imported, red tape and administrative inefficiencies often delayed the process. Overall, the industrial sector experienced virtually no growth in the 1970s.

In an effort to address these problems and improve economic performance, the authorities moved toward economic liberalization at the time that Saddam Hussein became president—earlier, therefore, than comparable policy shifts in India or Mexico. State-owned farms were sold to the private sector, their number falling from seventy-seven in 1979 to ten by 1983. Farmers who had benefited from the land redistribution program were given greater access to credit, and many of the restrictions on the production, marketing, and pricing of agricultural products were lifted. In addition, the regime took measures to encourage private investment in agriculture. By the mid-to-late-1980s, these reforms had led to an increase in agricultural productivity and a modest reduction in Iraq’s dependence on imported food.

Privatization was extended to other sectors of the Iraqi economy, and “socialism” was deemphasized in the official rhetoric. Beginning in 1986, a few state-owned firms, garages, gas stations, supermarkets, and hotels were sold to the private sector. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein encouraged domestic and foreign investment, and diminished the bureaucracy’s cumbersome controls over the economy.

The cease-fire with Iran in the summer of 1988 temporarily accelerated economic liberalization, which the regime came to see as a political necessity. After eight years of deprivation, Iraqis now expected to enjoy the fruits of peace. Yet the economy could not deliver the prosperity that the population eagerly awaited. The conflict with Iran had accentuated the inefficiencies of Iraq’s production and distribution systems, destroyed many of its oil facilities, and sharply reduced its oil revenues. In addition, the printing of money to finance the war effort had led to runaway inflation. By 1988, therefore, the leadership realized that the burden of providing Iraqis with needed goods and services could no longer be

shouldered almost exclusively by the state. The private sector had to be stimulated, the bureaucracy had to be trimmed, and the government had to generate new revenues to repay the \$60-billion foreign debt that Iraq had accumulated during the war.

The government then launched its most extensive liberalization program. It lifted price controls on most agricultural products, loosened bureaucratic controls over small industries, repealed minimum wage regulations, sold more state factories and corporations to the private sector, ended the national bank's monopoly, and provided incentives to attract foreign investors. Yet, by mid-1990, these liberalization measures had produced few positive results. Little domestic or foreign investment had been forthcoming because of a weak business climate, a lack of confidence in Saddam's regime, and the fear that profits or property might be confiscated should the president abruptly shift course.

Instead, economic liberalization mostly benefited a group of speculators and wheeler-dealers with connections to the regime. Meanwhile, industrial production stagnated, shortages of essential goods continued to plague the country, and black markets in products and currencies flourished. Inflation was running about 60 percent per year, hitting those on fixed incomes particularly hard. Trimming the bureaucracy increased unemployment. Cuts in state expenditures and in government subsidies for essential items brought about new hardships, and the conspicuous consumption of the parasitic bourgeoisie heightened popular frustration. In short, liberalization solved few problems while introducing new ones.

Suddenly, rumors of public discontent were heard, just as the regime felt the pinch of lower oil prices in world markets. From May to July 1990, Saddam Hussein became increasingly virulent in his criticism of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). By exceeding the oil production quotas assigned to them by OPEC, both Kuwait and the UAE had been instrumental in driving down oil prices from \$20 to \$14 per barrel in less than six months. Iraq's economic problems probably contributed to Saddam's refusal to demobilize more than about 25 percent of his million-man army after the war with Iran. The Iraqi dictator must have feared the destabilizing potential of hundreds of thousands of unemployed ex-soldiers. The invasion of Kuwait was therefore not unrelated to Iraq's growing economic crisis, which the Baathist regime hoped to solve—at least temporarily—by absorbing the emirate's considerable wealth.

Since the Gulf War, there has been no coherent economic policy in Iraq. Any long-term strategy for de-

## Liberalization in Iraq

**IRAQ IS an exception to yet another rule in the third world in that it has yet to make any significant shift toward economic liberalization. Its government remains the dominant force in the economy. The public sector accounts for an estimated three-fourths of domestic production, while the private sector is mostly limited to crafts and retail trade. What's more, the private sector's large firms are all controlled by people close to, if not part of, the regime.**

**More importantly, the challenge on most Iraqis' minds today is not so much economic liberalization but economic survival. In a country devastated by an economic embargo in place since the end of the Gulf War and in which absolute poverty is rising rapidly, people have been reduced to selling their personal belongings in impromptu second-hand markets in order to make ends meet. The middle class—once among the most developed and prosperous in the Arab world—has been destroyed by the country's economic collapse. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein and many of his relatives and cronies have prospered through their control of black markets and smuggling networks. A new class of "war-rich" with connections to the president or his son Uday is flaunting its wealth in a country plagued by rising infant mortality rates, chronic malnutrition among children, shortages of medicine and other vital supplies, and a general unraveling of the social fabric.**

velopment has been put on hold until the political-economic situation left over from the war is resolved. In any event, sanctions mean that the government has little cash. The resources it has mustered since 1991 have gone mostly into four areas: rebuilding the country's infrastructure, much of which was destroyed by the allied bombing; maintaining the instruments of repression and political control; lining the pockets of the elite; and paying for a rationing system that guarantees a bare minimum of essential food to most Iraqis.

### *Saddam's Wars: Iraq's Rise and Demise as a Regional Power*

The subordination of Iraq's welfare to its leader's personal agenda is not limited to domestic policy. It is just as evident in foreign policy, as shown by the two wars that Iraq has fought since Saddam Hussein came to power. (See table 14.3.)

**TABLE 14.3** Iraq's Wars Under Saddam Hussein: A Chronology

22 September 1980	Iraq invades Iran.
June 1982	Iran drives Iraqi army back into Iraq. Saddam expresses willingness to end conflict, but Iran refuses.
July 1982	The war is now being waged in Iraqi territory, and develops into increasingly bloody stalemate.
26 November 1984	Desperate for improved relations with West, Iraq restores diplomatic relations with United States.
10 February 1986	Iranian troops capture Fao Peninsula.
April 1988	Iraqi forces push Iranian army back across border. The war finally turns in Iraq's favor.
20 August 1988	Cease-fire with Iran is signed.
2 August 1990	Iraq invades Kuwait.
29 November 1990	UN Security Council authorizes anti-Iraq coalition to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait if Saddam has not pulled out by 15 January 1991.
17 January 1991	U.S.-led coalition forces launch massive air campaign against Iraq. Devastating raids continue for six weeks.
24 February 1991	Coalition forces begin ground war that lasts only one hundred hours. Iraqi army is routed.
27 February 1991	Ground offensive is halted after Kuwait is liberated.
3 March 1991	Baghdad accepts coalition's cease-fire terms.

### The Iran-Iraq War of 1980–88

Iran and Iraq have long been rivals. To some extent, this stems from religious and ethnic differences. Iraq is a primarily Arab country, ruled by a small Sunni elite, whereas Iran is mostly Persian with an overwhelming Shiite majority. (Persians and Arabs are distinct ethnic groups.) However, although ethnic and religious cleavages have sometimes contributed to tensions between the two countries, they found themselves at odds in this case primarily because of their competition for power in the Persian Gulf.

Until the late 1960s, the British military presence in the Gulf had helped prevent the hostility between the two countries from degenerating into open warfare. However, when the British announced in 1968 that they would withdraw their military forces east of Suez by 1971, the old competition between Iran and Iraq was suddenly renewed.

Although largely a geo-strategic contest, the opposition between Iran and Iraq also stemmed from political differences. The shah, Reza Pahlevi, was put off by the pan-Arab ideology and anti-Western stance of the new Iraqi regime, while the Baath felt threatened by Iran's close ties to Washington and Tel Aviv.

In this rivalry for control of the Gulf, Iran rapidly emerged as the dominant power. The larger of the two countries, with a population about three times and an

area almost four times that of Iraq, Iran was also wealthier and more developed. In addition, it benefited from the active support of the Nixon administration, which had decided to use the shah as the pillar of its policy in the Gulf.

In the late 1960s the shah reignited a long-standing border conflict with Iraq. Since 1937 the internationally recognized border between Iran and Iraq had been set on the Iranian bank of the Shatt al-Arab River, which gave Iraq exclusive control over that waterway. In 1969 the shah unilaterally abrogated the 1937 treaty and announced that Iran would now recognize the border as lying along the middle of the waterway's main channel, in effect claiming sovereignty over half the river. In response, the Iraqis began to aid Iranian dissidents and expelled a number of Iranians from Iraq.

Tensions between Iran and Iraq continued to build. In 1970 an Iranian-sponsored coup was foiled in Baghdad. Meanwhile, with direct encouragement from the United States, the shah began to project himself as the policeman of the Gulf. In November 1971 Iran occupied three islands strategically located at the entrance of the Strait of Hormuz, off the coast of the UAE. In retaliation, Iraq cut off diplomatic relations with Tehran.

Much more threatening to Baghdad, however, was Iranian support for a Kurdish uprising within Iraq. Beginning in 1972 military equipment and advice began to flow from Iran to the Iraqi Kurds. Iraqi Kurdish rebels pursued by the Iraqi army were also allowed to find sanctuary on Iranian territory. The Iranian-backed uprising proved so effective that it became a major threat to the Baghdad government, which was forced to make a major concession to Iran. At an OPEC meeting in Algiers in March 1975, Saddam Hussein negotiated an agreement with the shah that called for an end to Iranian support for the Iraqi Kurds in exchange for Baghdad's recognition of Iran's claim to half the Shatt al-Arab.

By 1979, however, Iranian-Iraqi relations had again taken a turn for the worse. The overthrow of the shah and the establishment of the Islamic Republic headed by Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran had created an entirely new situation in the Persian Gulf. Soon, Iraqi authorities were accusing the Islamic Republic of interference in Iraqi politics—claims that were not unfounded. The new Iranian leadership was calling upon Shiite communities in the Arab Gulf states to rebel against the “infidel” regimes ruling over them.

The new propaganda coming out of Tehran was all the more threatening to the Baathist regime because Iraqi Shiites were increasingly alienated from the government in Baghdad. As the Islamic Republic combined

its militant rhetoric against Saddam Hussein's regime with active support for the Iraqi Shiite underground, the propaganda war between the two countries escalated, and border clashes multiplied.

Yet, despite clear evidence of Iranian interference in Iraqi politics, it is difficult to accept Iraq's claim that it started the Iran-Iraq War in self-defense. To a large extent, the war represented a bid for regional hegemony by Saddam Hussein.

The 1979 Camp David Accords and Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat's peace treaty with Israel had left Egypt—traditionally the most influential country in Arab politics—ostracized by the rest of the Arab world. Saddam Hussein, who had led opposition to the normalization of relations between Israel and Egypt, must have realized that oil-rich Iraq now had a unique opportunity to establish itself as the leading Arab power. He also had to have noticed the effects of the ongoing revolutionary turmoil in Tehran. The Iranian officer corps had been decimated in the wave of purges and executions that followed the shah's downfall. Given reports about the declining morale in and organization of the Iranian military, Saddam must have assumed that a sudden Iraqi attack might provoke the fall of the Iranian government, propelling Iraq into a position of dominance not only in the Persian Gulf but in the entire Mideast.

In September 1980 the Iraqi army invaded Iran. Unfortunately for Iraq, the Iranian army did not disintegrate, and the Islamic Republic in Tehran survived. In fact, most Iranians rallied around the regime to beat back the Iraqi invasion. Thus, far from being the short campaign that Saddam Hussein had envisioned, the war turned into a protracted and extremely costly stalemate.

The Iran-Iraq War lasted almost eight years. It was the bloodiest conflict in the history of the modern Middle East and the most devastating military confrontation to date between two third world nations. As many as a million Iraqis and Iranians died in the war, and hundreds of thousands more were disabled for life. Virtually no Iraqi family was spared, and all-too-many parents had several children die at the front.

The Iran-Iraq War was also one of the most futile conflicts in history. It was largely caused by the personal hatred between two tyrants, each aspiring for regional leadership and imbued with a messianic conception of himself. Saddam Hussein saw Khomeini's revolutionary zeal and mixture of religion and politics as a dangerous threat that could be eliminated only through the annihilation of the man and the regime he had created. Khomeini, in turn, perceived Saddam as the archetypical modernizing, secular leader who had betrayed Islam and who had to be eradicated. Khomeini also had per-

sonal accounts to settle with Saddam, who in 1978, at the shah's request, had expelled him from the Shiite holy city of Najaf, where Khomeini had lived and taught for fourteen years. By 1981 Khomeini had made the ouster of Saddam from power one of the preconditions for a cease-fire. His refusal to compromise on that point, combined with Saddam's determination to hang on to power at whatever costs, largely explains why the war lasted so long.

To justify this senseless and increasingly bloody war, both regimes engaged in extravagant and self-serving rhetoric. Thus, Baghdad described the war as a valiant defense of the "Arab homeland" against the "fanatic Persians," the "Persian racists," or the "fire-eating Persians." For its part, Tehran depicted it as a religious crusade or jihad (holy war) against the "Baathist infidels" in Baghdad who had betrayed Islam and were oppressing Iran's Shiite brethren in Iraq. Behind the rhetoric, however, lay the reality of two despots who unhesitatingly sacrificed their people's welfare on the altar of their personal ambitions.

In the summer of 1988, after almost eight years of conflict and many hundreds of thousands of deaths, Iranian and Iraqi forces were located almost exactly where they had been when the war started. Neither country had achieved its war aims. Exhausted and lacking viable alternatives, the Islamic Republic finally agreed to sign the cease-fire for which Iraq had long been pleading.

### Relations with the West

For most of the period prior to the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq's foreign policy was characterized by fierce anti-Western and anti-Israeli rhetoric. Upon its ascent to power in 1968, the new Baathist regime immediately launched a hysterical propaganda campaign against Israel and the United States. Then, in 1972, feeling increasingly threatened by the pro-Western regime of the shah, Iraq signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. This development caused great alarm in Washington, where it was interpreted as a sign that Iraq had become a Soviet client state, giving it a foothold in the strategically important and oil-rich Gulf region. Meanwhile, Baghdad also offered support to extremist Palestinian factions and adopted a confrontational stance toward the moderate, pro-Western Arab states in the Gulf, particularly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

From the mid-1970s onward, however, Iraq's relations with the Arab Gulf states improved significantly, although the ruling families of the Gulf remained deeply suspicious of Iraq's intentions. During the second half of



A scene of devastation from the Iran-Iraq War.

AP/Wide World Photos

the 1970s, Iraq also distanced itself from the Soviet Union, which Baghdad criticized sharply for its 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. At the same time, Iraq developed closer commercial and diplomatic ties with a few western European countries—in particular France, which had become its major supplier of arms.

The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War brought about radical changes in Baghdad's relations with the outside world. Desperate for financial, political, and military support from Arab and Western states, the Iraqi regime toned down its militant rhetoric and began portraying itself as a bulwark against Iran's attempt to export its fundamentalist revolution to the Arab world. Within a few months, relations with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the smaller Gulf states improved dramatically. Weapons, spare parts, munitions, military advisers, and migrant workers began to flow from Cairo to Baghdad, and Iraq even sponsored Egypt's readmission to the Arab League. Meanwhile, Jordan provided Iraq with workers and a supply line to the outside world through the port of Aqaba. Throughout the war, the flow of food and other consumer goods from Aqaba to Baghdad contributed greatly to the ability of the regime to insulate the Iraqi population from some of the negative effects of the war.

Even more decisive was the increasingly generous financing of Iraq's war effort by Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf states, especially Kuwait. Threatened by Iran's attempts to destabilize them, these governments

provided Iraq with an estimated \$40 billion in aid. The Baathist regime, which less than a decade earlier had called for the overthrow of the Arab dynasties in the Gulf, was now relying on their petrodollars to contain Iran's revolutionary fervor. To compensate for Iraq's inability to export its oil through the Persian Gulf as a result of fighting along the Shatt al-Arab and Iranian attacks on Iraqi oil export facilities, the Saudi royal family even allowed Iraq to build a pipeline across Saudi Arabia's territory to the Red Sea. The warming of relations between Iraq and key Arab states was accompanied by enhanced ties between Baghdad and the West. It was then that Saddam Hussein began to project himself as a moderate, pragmatic leader with whom the West could deal. The Iraqi government granted lucrative contracts to West German and French firms.

Even relations with the United States improved substantially, as the Iraqis toned down their anti-American rhetoric. For its part, the Reagan administration was interested in bettering relations with Baghdad out of fear that an Iranian victory would result in the spread of Khomeini's brand of Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Arab world. In 1982 the U.S. State Department took Iraq off its list of countries supporting terrorism in response to Baghdad's decision to expel the well-known terrorist Abu Nidal.

As a result, Iraq qualified for U.S. loans to buy American food products. In November 1984 the United States

and Iraq reestablished diplomatic relations, which Iraq had severed after the 1967 war between Israel and the Arab states. Shortly afterward, the United States began to provide Iraq with intelligence on the movement of Iranian troops. Cooperation between the two countries increased as Saddam Hussein cleverly portrayed himself as the defender of order and stability in the region.

By the mid-1980s the United States had essentially aligned itself with Iraq, although it still maintained a facade of neutrality in the Iran-Iraq War. Washington did stop short of arming Iraq with weapons, but it extended Baghdad credit, shared military intelligence, and provided high-tech goods, such as advanced computers, which could be used for military purposes. More importantly, perhaps, by 1987 Baghdad had become the world's largest recipient of U.S.-government-guaranteed agricultural loans, the biggest single overseas buyer of American rice, and one of the largest importers of American wheat and corn.

When hostilities between Iran and Iraq came to an end in summer 1988, the prevailing view in the West and in the Arab world was that Iraq was now led by a reformed, moderate, and pragmatic regime. This was the image that Baghdad itself had tried very hard to project throughout the Iran-Iraq War, and it was one that Western countries were eager to accept. After all, Iraq's reconstruction held the promise of lucrative contracts for U.S. and western European firms. Further, from Washington's perspective, Iraq was seen as a necessary counterweight in the Gulf to the militantly anti-American Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus, for the next two years, Western governments were willing to ignore the continuing repression and human rights violations inside Iraq and the mounting indications that the country was still governed by a dangerous and expansionist regime.

### The Gulf War of 1991

Twenty months after the cease-fire with Iran, Saddam Hussein had demobilized only 25 percent of his army and had not appreciably cut back on military spending. The beginning of 1990 was marked in Baghdad by a return to the sort of belligerent rhetoric that the Baathist regime had not used since the early 1970s. Iraq seemed to be launching a new bid for leadership of the Arab world. As in the past, this was most evident in the upsurge in anti-Western and anti-Israeli rhetoric.

At a meeting of Arab states in early February 1990, Saddam Hussein gave his most virulent anti-American speech in more than a decade. He pointed out that the end of the cold war, the collapse of communist regimes in eastern Europe, and the weakening of the Soviet

Union had left the United States in an unprecedented position of influence in the Arab world. He then predicted that the U.S. government would use its new power to try to impose American hegemony over the Gulf and to encourage Israeli aggression against Arab states.

Barely a month later, an Iranian-born journalist working for a British weekly was arrested by Iraqi authorities while investigating an explosion at a missile plant near Baghdad. Accused of spying for Israel and forced into making a confession, he was tried, convicted, and hanged within a week, despite numerous pleas from the British government and the international community as a whole. Sadly, in several Arab countries his execution was celebrated as a great Arab triumph over Zionism and U.S. imperialism. Saddam's strategy of whipping up anti-Western and anti-Israel feelings as a way to establish himself as the new leader of the Arab world seemed to be paying off.

Throughout the spring of 1990, there was mounting evidence of Iraqi efforts to smuggle nuclear weapons technology from the West, accelerate the development of biological and chemical weapons facilities, and build a long-range artillery piece dubbed the "Supergun." On 1 April, fearful that the Israeli government was planning strikes against Iraqi nuclear or chemical facilities, as it had done ten years earlier, Saddam Hussein made a fiery speech in which he declared that, should Israel attack Iraq, Baghdad would retaliate with a chemical attack that would "burn half of Israel." Although defensive in nature, the speech was nevertheless an additional sign of the Iraqi dictator's renewed bellicosity. It received much applause throughout the Arab world, where Saddam was praised for standing up to Israel.

After April 1990 Saddam Hussein reserved his sharpest attacks for the Arab states in the Gulf. For eight years, he argued, Iraq had shed "rivers of blood" to protect the Gulf dynasties and the "Arab homeland" against Khomeini's revolutionary zeal. Yet, despite Baghdad's repeated requests, the oil-rich Arab states in the Gulf were still unwilling to cancel Iraq's war debt or provide it with additional funds to rebuild its economy. Such intransigence, Saddam contended, was an insult to Iraq and its war dead.

During the first half of 1990, the Iraqi dictator pressed his demands on the Gulf states even more forcefully than before, but without success. Instead, Kuwait and the UAE continued to exceed their oil production quotas, driving down prices and depriving Iraq of much-needed revenues. Saddam claimed that excess pumping by the Gulf states had already cost Iraq \$84 billion. To him, the violations of oil quotas were tantamount to a

declaration of war on Iraq and evidence that the small Gulf states were engaged in a plot against Iraq hatched by “imperialist and Zionist forces.” In June and July, infuriated by what he saw as the arrogance of the Gulf rulers, Saddam pressed them even further, asking for \$30 billion in additional grants. On 10 July Kuwait and the UAE finally agreed to maintain their oil production levels within the bounds set by OPEC, but it was too late. By then, Saddam Hussein was determined to raise the stakes.

Throughout July he continued to accuse the emirates of not abiding by their oil production quotas. He also charged Kuwait with stealing Iraq’s oil by pumping excessive quantities from the Rumaila oil field, which lies mostly beneath Iraqi territory but stretches just across the border into Kuwait. Finally, the Baathist regime revived its old demand to be given or leased the two Kuwaiti islands of Warbah and Bubiyan as a way of providing Iraq with a deep-water port in the Gulf. The Kuwaiti emir failed to take Iraq threats seriously enough and worded his refusal of Saddam’s demands in particularly strong language highly critical of Iraq. This, combined with Saddam’s belief that the United States would not be able to reverse an Iraqi takeover of Kuwait, sealed the tiny nation’s fate. Saddam appears to have believed that Saudi Arabia would never accept U.S. troops on Saudi soil, leaving the United States with no way of forcing Iraq out of Kuwait.

On 2 August 1990, 100,000 Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, occupying the country in a mere six hours. By seizing its neighbor, Iraq would not only automatically eliminate its debt to it but also suddenly own about 20 percent of the world’s proven oil reserves, placing itself in a much better position to influence oil prices. Control over Kuwait’s wealth also would enable Iraq, if it so chose, to repay its debt to western European countries and to launch ambitious new development programs. Given the disastrous state of the Iraqi economy, Saddam Hussein may well have believed that his long-term political future depended on his ability to gain access to Kuwait’s resources. The Iraqi leader desperately needed capital to fund his instruments of political control and repression and to counter grumblings about shortages, unemployment, inflation, and a declining standard of living. Saddam’s regional position also would be greatly enhanced by an Iraqi annexation of Kuwait, which the Iraqi leader could present as a successful “re-conquest” of lands that Iraq had long claimed were rightly its own. Finally, by providing Iraq with a major port on the Gulf, the takeover of Kuwait would reduce its economic and military vulnerability especially vis-à-vis Iran. In short, an invasion of Kuwait held the promise of

## Globalization and Iraq

**IRAQ IS one of only a handful of countries that have escaped the trend toward globalization. Instead, the 1990s will be remembered by Iraqis as a decade during which their country, rather than open up to the outside world, became almost completely insulated from world trends.**

**This process has reflected the grueling, UN-sanctioned economic embargo to which Baghdad has been subjected since 1991, as well as diplomatic efforts by the international community to isolate and contain Saddam Hussein’s regime. Iraq’s isolation has been not only economic but cultural as well. The lack of hard currency and contacts with the outside world, combined with harsh censorship, has cut Iraq off from developments in the arts and sciences. Because Iraq’s professional and intellectual classes have been ravaged by their country’s economic collapse, they can no longer afford to travel overseas to attend professional meetings. In any event, most countries refuse to grant visas to Iraqis, while the government in Baghdad worries about the brain drain that has afflicted Iraq over the past decade, and thus bars its best scholars, doctors, artists, and scientists from traveling. Schools are attended by fewer and fewer children, and their textbooks are outdated. Computers are a rarity, and satellite television is forbidden.**

**Even in the event of the downfall of the regime and its replacement by one more willing to open up the country to the outside world, it will take decades for Iraq to overcome the legacy of its status as a pariah since 1990.**

solving all of Saddam’s political problems and catapulting him into a position of leadership in the Gulf and the Arab world.

Yet, contrary to what the Iraqi dictator had anticipated, the world community demonstrated an unusual degree of unity in demanding the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The United States, far from limiting itself to a verbal condemnation, took the lead in the international campaign against Baghdad. To Saddam’s even greater surprise, the Soviet Union, Iraq’s traditional patron, joined Washington in condemning Baghdad. France, the European country closest to Iraq, also insisted on the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Even Arabs were split. Saddam, who had hoped that the Arab world would rally behind him, suddenly faced an alliance that included several key Arab states, in particular Egypt and Syria.

At this point, however, he still could have backed down. Instead, he decided to leave his forces in Kuwait, confident that the United States would not go to war with Iraq over the emirate, that Arab states would never



A typical scene of the destruction in Baghdad during the Gulf War.

dare ally with the United States against “Brotherly Iraq,” and that, if they did, the masses throughout the Arab world would rise up in Baghdad’s support. He turned out to be wrong on all three counts.

In short, repeated attempts to reach a negotiated settlement failed in large part because of Saddam Hussein’s belief in the primacy of coercion and intimidation over diplomacy and negotiation. Unlike those who see the use of force as a last resort, the Baathist top leadership is composed of individuals who see concessions as signs of weakness and who consequently believe that compromises should be resisted unless one has absolutely no other option. Looking back at his own past, Saddam had little reason not to believe in the effectiveness of force, bluff, and scare tactics, given his successful use of such measures to survive countless threats to his power and life. It was left to the United States and its allies to convince Saddam that what had been a winning strategy for over two decades inside Iraq would not succeed with the outside world.

The United States did go to war, on 17 January 1991, backed by a broad coalition of the world’s nations and by several powerful Arab states (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and

Syria), and the Arab masses did not rise up. By early March, less than a year after Iraqi tanks had rolled into Kuwait and only forty days after the beginning of the war, Iraq had been transformed from a major regional power into a devastated country, subject to the dictates of the United Nations and the U.S.-led coalition.

Since then, the Iraqi regime has complied only grudgingly and incompletely with UN resolutions that compel it to disclose the full extent of its weapons of mass destruction programs and to dismantle them. It allegedly tried to assassinate former U.S. president George Bush during his visit to Kuwait in April 1993. It has interfered repeatedly with the work of inspection teams sent to monitor Iraqi compliance with UN resolutions. And it has continued to support terror as an instrument of state policy and failed to cease its brutal repression of the Iraqi people as required by UN Security Council Resolution 688.

## Feedback

At least since the 1980s, Iraqi society has been much like the one George Orwell described in 1984. Saddam Hussein is the source of all authority and allows no checks or balances on his power. Among other things, this has led to tight control over all sources of political information average citizens have access to. Foreign newspapers and magazines are banned, and it is illegal for Iraqis to watch television or listen to radio programs beamed in from abroad. All of Iraq’s mass media outlets are controlled by either the Baath Party or Saddam’s family. As in the Soviet Union at the height of Stalin’s power, the regime both controls who the journalists are and censors what they write before it goes to print or is broadcast over the airwaves. International phone calls are monitored and often interrupted, and domestic ones are frequently listened in on as well.

## Conclusion: Saddam Hussein and the Future of Iraq

Defeat on the battlefield in 1991 and the hardships that followed neither brought the regime down nor significantly changed its character. Repression and intimidation remain the political currency of Saddam Hussein’s realm. They leave Iraqis who long for change in an impossible position, because they cannot organize opposition of any sort legally, and because the risks of “outside the system” protest are so high. The

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 UNSCOM
 

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The **United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM)** was created in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War to monitor Iraq's compliance with the cease-fire resolution that called for the elimination of Iraq's **weapons of mass destruction (WMD)** and the means of making or delivering them. According to the terms of this resolution, the embargo on Iraq would be lifted once UNSCOM certified that Iraq had been fully disarmed.

UNSCOM relied on spot inspections of sites suspected of being the location for the manufacturing or stockpiling of WMD. Once inspected, these sites would remain closely monitored through sophisticated surveillance equipment.

Between 1991 and 1998, UNSCOM proved quite effective. Tons of chemical and biological weapons were located and destroyed. And yet, in late 1998, UNSCOM's job was far from over, as Iraq was still believed to be hiding biological and chemical stocks. In December 1998 Baghdad finally

suspended cooperation with UNSCOM. It claimed that some of UNSCOM's members were acting as spies for the United States and that the commission's leader, Australian diplomat Richard Butler, was an American client. In addition, the regime argued that, even if UNSCOM certified that all Iraqi WMD had been eliminated, the United States would still refuse to lift the sanctions on Iraq as long as Saddam Hussein remained in power.

The Iraqi government's refusal to allow UNSCOM to operate prompted a four-day bombing campaign of Iraq by American and British forces. Shortly thereafter, Baghdad announced that UNSCOM would never be allowed back into the country (UNSCOM's weapons inspectors had left Iraq a few days before the U.S. and British attacks began). UNSCOM was dead, and neither the UN Security Council nor the Iraqi government have been able to agree on a new way of inspecting that either could accept ([www.un.org/Depts/unscom](http://www.un.org/Depts/unscom)).



regime unquestionably is weaker now than it was before the invasion of Kuwait. There are more signs of popular discontent with the economic situation, the political corruption, and the brutal repression. However, because of the very nature of the regime, political change cannot be achieved from the bottom up. It can take place only in one of two ways: It can be forced on Iraq by the outside world, which seems very unlikely, or it can be initiated by defectors from within the ruling elite, which still appears to be the most likely scenario.

As the new millennium unfolds, the regime displays four main weaknesses. First, the government's resources are limited, because it can export only a small amount of oil. This makes it increasingly difficult for Saddam Hussein to bribe his supporters and keep the instruments of control intact. And this situation is taking its toll, if stories of mounting rates of desertion from the army are any indication.

Second, the very core of the regime is slowly disintegrating, as suggested not only by the defections of Saddam's two sons-in-law in 1995 but also by several reports of coup attempts involving Sunni army officers, some of whom were members of Saddam's own clan.

Third, Saddam Hussein has lost de facto control over much of the country, and Iraq no longer enjoys all the attributes of sovereignty. This is evident in the existence of no-fly zones in both the north and the south. Even within Iraq's Sunni heartland, the government no longer seems in total control of the countryside, where a growing atmosphere of lawlessness is taking hold.

Fourth, Iraq is increasingly isolated internationally. Arab leaders have become more alienated from Saddam Hussein. Meanwhile, the United States has stepped up efforts to bring about a change in regime in Iraq. Although most analysts are justifiably skeptical of the effectiveness of a U.S. strategy aimed at increasing domestic pressures on Saddam Hussein's regime, President Clinton in November 1998 signed the Iraqi Liberation Act, which provided for \$97 million in U.S. assistance to Iraqi opposition groups abroad. Even before his "axis of evil" speech, President George W. Bush increased financial and military support for the opposition. However, as of early 2002, it was by no means clear that it posed much of a threat to the regime.

These weaknesses notwithstanding, the Iraqi leader still has three major assets. Most importantly, his instruments of repression and surveillance survived the 1991 war and uprising, and he remains the only person with a power base spanning the intelligence agencies, the army, and the Baath Party. Another card in his hands is the belief, shared by many Iraqis, that if he disappears the country will be plunged into chaos and anarchy and could be dismembered into rival Kurdish, Sunni, and Shiite entities. Such concerns were reinforced by the 1991 Kurdish and Shiite uprisings, by the allies' creation of a safe haven for the Kurds in northern Iraq, and by the Bush administration's decision to declare southern Iraq a no-fly zone. Fears of a progressive dismemberment of Iraq are deliberately exploited by Saddam Hussein, who continues to portray himself as the guardian of national

unity and as the leader of the only stable regime in Iraq's history. Finally, the regime continues to benefit from the opposition's weaknesses.

The future of Iraq will remain tied to that of Saddam Hussein for the foreseeable future. But one thing is clear: As long as he is in control, Iraq's prospects will be bleak. The country will remain diplomatically isolated, and its national interests will be systematically subordinated to the grandiose ambitions of a dictator. An Iraq freed of Saddam's tyranny is, of course, something the world should look forward to. Yet, even the removal of Saddam will not solve the problems facing this deeply divided nation. Indeed, it will continue to wrestle with the basic dilemmas that have haunted its entire existence—authoritarianism versus instability, repression versus anarchy, despotism versus social and political disintegration. Whether Iraq can find a way out of this miserable set of choices is indeed its greatest challenge.

### *Critical Thinking Exercises*

1. Much has changed in the world since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of Iraq presented in this chapter still make sense? In what ways? Why (not)?
2. In which respects does Iraq have very shallow roots as a nation? Explain how this feature has constituted an obstacle to the country's political and economic development.
3. What has been the impact of oil on Iraqi politics?
4. What do you see as the main accomplishments of the Baath regime that has ruled Iraq since 1968? At what cost were these accomplishments realized?

### *Key Terms*

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Cult of personality	Al-Bakr, Ahmad Hassan	INC	Baath Party
Kurds	Faisal I	KDP	General Intelligence Apparatus
Nation building	Hussein, Saddam	OPEC	General Security Directorate
No-fly zone	Hussein, Qusay	PUK	Gulf War
Safe haven	Hussein, Uday	RCC	Iraqi National Congress
Shiite		UNSCOM	Kurdish Democratic Party
Sunni		WMD	Military Intelligence
Weapons of mass destruction			Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
Zero-sum game			Ottoman Empire
			Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
			Popular Army
			Republican Guard
			Revolutionary Command Council
			Special Security
			United Nations Special Commission



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5. What are three main factors that have prevented Kurdish aspirations for autonomy from being satisfied in Iraq?
6. In what respects did the very nature of Saddam Hussein's regime make it difficult to reach a peaceful solution to the international crisis generated by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990?
7. Why has the international economic embargo against Iraq repeatedly come under attack, including by former members of the 1991 military coalition against Iraq?
8. Has the U.S. government's policy toward Iraq—tough sanctions coupled with aggressive arms inspections—run its course? Why (not)?

### Further Reading

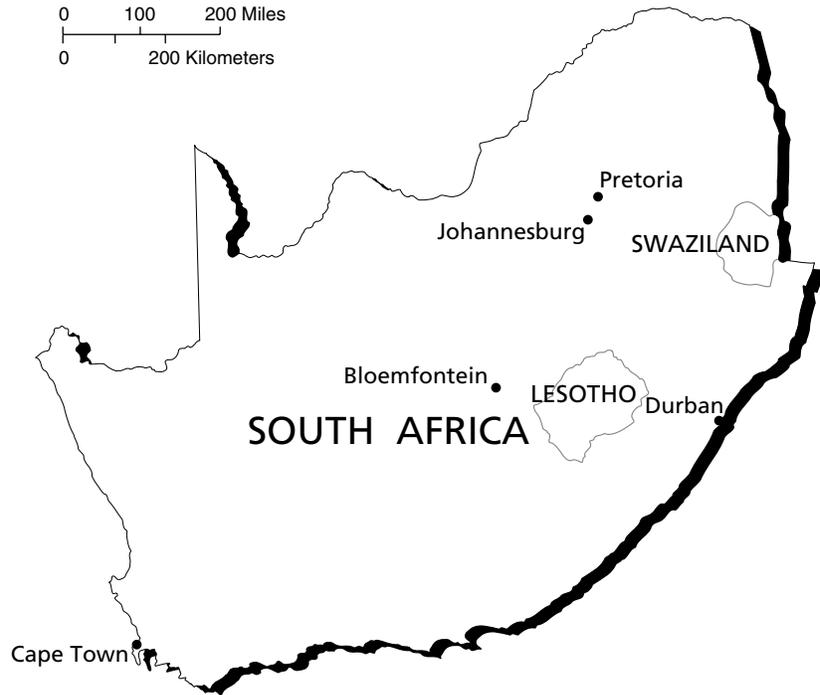
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# SOUTH AFRICA

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A Journey Toward Reconciliation
- Thinking About South Africa
- The Apartheid State
- The New South Africa
- Feedback
- Conclusion: South Africa in Peril or a Role Model?



*Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world.*

NELSON MANDELA

## A Journey Toward Reconciliation

There have been many momentous steps in South Africa's journey toward democracy and reconciliation between Blacks and Whites. One of them began on 25 August 1993 with an event that seemed likely to be only a tragic footnote in the history of the last days of apartheid.

Amy Biehl was a twenty-five-year-old Fulbright scholar who had come to South Africa to help prepare for the first multiracial elections, which eventually were held in April 1994. As an undergraduate at Stanford University, Biehl had become fascinated with South Africa and the actions of Nelson Mandela, first during his long imprisonment and then as the leader of the main group in the transition toward racial equality. Therefore, she moved to South Africa to do what she could.

Biehl had spent that fateful day with black friends helping organize a voter registration campaign. She was driving the friends back to their home in Guguletu township on the outskirts of Cape Town. A gang of black teenage boys from the Pan African Congress chanting "one settler, one bullet" forced her to stop her car. Four of them dragged Biehl from her car, beat her, and then stabbed her to death.

Despite its deserved reputation for reconciliation, South Africa was a very violent place between the time of Mandela's release from prison in 1990 and his inauguration as president in 1994. Thousands were killed in violence that ranged from the explicitly political to the explicitly criminal. Biehl's murder lay somewhere in the middle, because it was carried out by highly politicized teenagers but was completely unprovoked.

At the time, her death caused a brief stir in the media, but only because Biehl was a white American and a supporter of racial equality and a new South Africa. Her murderers were duly arrested, convicted, and sentenced to eighteen years in prison.

It was only three years later that the Biehl story became worth including here. As was their right, the four

### SOUTH AFRICA: THE BASICS

Size	1,219,912 sq. km (almost twice the size of Texas)
Population	43,586,000
Percentage of population under age 15	32%
GDP per capita	\$3,160
Currency	11.425 rands = \$1
Ethnic groups	75.2% Black, 13.6% White, 8.6% Coloured, 2.6% Indian
Religion	68% Christian, 2% Muslim, 1.5% Hindu, indigenous beliefs 28.5%
Languages	11 official, including English, Afrikaans, and 9 African languages
Capital	Pretoria (administrative), Cape Town (legislative), Bloemfontein (Judicial)
President	Thabo Mbeki (1999)

young men applied for amnesty to the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**. We will explore it in detail later on. Here, it is enough to know that the commission had the power to grant amnesty to people who committed political crimes under apartheid and then publicly acknowledged their actions and apologized genuinely for them.

There were over 22,000 applications for amnesty, and these four young men did not seem like good candidates to get it. But then Amy's parents stepped in.

Peter and Linda Biehl had done a lot of soul-searching in the three years since their daughter's murder. Along with the grief that accompanies the loss of a child came the realization that her work and her cause were all the more important because of her death.

So, in keeping with the South African commitment to reconciliation, they decided to continue their daughter's work in the only way they could. First, they appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in support of her murderers' request for amnesty. Second, they met with the mother of one of the young men.

After that emotional trip to South Africa, they devoted their lives to the newly formed Amy Biehl Foundation in the United States and the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust in South Africa ([www.amybiehl.org](http://www.amybiehl.org)). The Biehls contributed quite a bit of their own money and raised more than \$2.5 million (including \$1.9 from the U.S. Agency for International Development) to fund the



AP Photo/Sasa Kralj

Peter and Linda Biehl at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

kinds of projects Amy believed in throughout the Cape Town region. Among other things, the foundation has helped finance a group of small bakeries, training programs for troubled teenagers, and a series of after-school programs for children. In keeping with Amy's love for competitive sports, it has also opened a driving range in a poor area of Cape Town; the foundation's web site asks for donations of clubs and balls because poor Blacks won't have their own.

Most remarkably, the Biehls learned that two of the men responsible for Amy's death wanted to meet with them. The other two—who had been primarily responsible for the murder itself—had committed other crimes and disappeared. These two, however, had taken advantage of the amnesty program and had put their personal priorities in order. Then, in what can only be called the ultimate gesture of reconciliation, the Biehls decided to use foundation funds to help pay for their training and hired them afterward! Their logic was the same as that for all the foundation's work—if they can help South Africans escape poverty and the legacy of apartheid, and then help improve conditions in their country, it is worth the money.

The Biehls are well known in South Africa. Strangers come up to them in the street to hug and thank them for all they've done. And as these lines were being written, the community leaders of Guguletu were making plans to rename the street Amy died on in her honor. Peter Biehl died in April 2002.

## Thinking About South Africa

There are no other Amy Biehls in this book. This is because there could not have been a politically significant young woman like her in any of the other countries we consider.

In none of them did the horrors and the hopes of political life attract young idealists like her to make long-term commitments of their time. In none of them was there the kind of social and political chaos that made the all-but-random killings of young people—black and white—a part of everyday life.

In other words, Amy was drawn to South Africa for the same reasons I include it in this book. In her day, South Africa had just taken the first steps from having one of the most brutal, repressive, and racist regimes in history toward being a country that ranks among the world's leaders in reconciling people with its negative history.

## The Basics

### Two Nations

One of the best recent books about race and politics in the United States is Andrew Hacker's *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*. His title is even more fitting for South Africa.

Historically, no country has done more to separate the races. Although **apartheid** was the country's official policy only from the late 1940s until the early 1990s, Europeans systematically discriminated against other groups from the time they first established permanent settlements in the region during the seventeenth century. The society they created over the next 340 years was one that separated the races, created more inequality, and bred more hostility than most Americans can even dream of.

Table 15.1 presents statistical data on the four major racial groups in South Africa during the last years of apartheid. Only about one in seven South Africans is white. In 1988, however, they accounted for over half of all income of South Africans and controlled a much higher percentage of the nation's wealth.

To be counted as white under apartheid, a person had to have "blood" from no other ethnic group. This

**TABLE 15.1** Race and Income in South Africa, 1988

RACE	PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF PERSONAL INCOME
Black/African	75.2	34
Coloured	8.6	9
Indian/Asian	2.6	4
White	13.6	54

does not mean that the white community is homogeneous. In fact, it has three main subdivisions. A majority of Whites are **Afrikaners**—descendants of the original Dutch colonists plus settlers from Germany and France who were assimilated into Afrikaner culture. About two-fifths of the white population either is of English origin or was assimilated into the English culture after moving to South Africa. Finally, there is a small Jewish population, most of whom are part of the English culture. It is worth noting, however, that Jews played a major role in the antiapartheid struggle, especially as members of the South African Communist Party (SACP).

Blacks make up three-quarters of the population. They, too, are a diverse group, as can be seen in the fact that there are nine official African languages in addition to English and Afrikaans. The black share of the population will continue to grow for the foreseeable future for the simple reason that its birthrate far outstrips that of Whites. Thus, current projections suggest, for example,

that Blacks will make up about 87 percent and Whites only about 6 percent of the population in 2035.

As the photograph of **Soweto** suggests, the Blacks do not share the affluence of the Whites. In urban areas, most live in ramshackle huts or in dwellings like the decrepit trailer depicted here. In the countryside, few of them have electricity, running water, and any of the other basic amenities of life that Whites take for granted.

Almost 9 percent of South Africans are coloured. Some are descendants of the Khoikhoi who lived in the area around what is now Cape Town before the British arrived. Others trace their roots to slaves who were brought to South Africa from what is now Malaysia. Most, however, owe their relatively light skins to forced sexual relations between white men and black women.

South Africa also has a small but influential Asian or “Indian” population (“Indian” in quotes because many of their ancestors came from today’s Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as India). They are known as Indians because the subcontinent was not divided in those ways in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when most of their ancestors were brought to South Africa as indentured servants.

The country is also religiously diverse. Almost 70 percent of the population, including almost all the Whites, are Christian. About 2 percent are Muslims and Hindus. The rest—including about 60 percent of the Blacks and 40 percent of the Coloureds—practice a variety of traditional religions.



© Brooks Kraft/Corbis/Sygma

A typical street scene in Soweto.



Nelson Mandela and his predecessor, F. W. de Klerk, dancing at Mandela's inauguration as president of South Africa.

AP/Wide World Photos (John Parkin)

### Apartheid and Its Legacy

When Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as president of South Africa in 1994, the country abandoned a regime that denied basic civil and political rights to more than 80 percent of its population, and adopted one of the most open and democratic governments in the world.

Although this new multiracial South Africa is the focus of the chapter, understanding events since Mandela became president requires us to spend at least as much time examining apartheid, because its legacy is still the most important force determining how politics is played out in South Africa. To see this, consider the Truth and Reconciliation Commission again. For much of 1997–98, the commission heard testimony from both perpetrators and victims of human rights abuse under apartheid. In his introduction to its report, the commission's chair, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, proudly announced that South Africans now knew as much as they could ever know of what happened from 1960 until Mandela became president. However, as Tutu also had to acknowledge, being aware of what happened is one thing, and healing the gaping wounds of apartheid will be quite another.

The problems facing the country are daunting. Not only does South Africa have to deal with pain in the hearts and minds of so many of its people, Blacks and Whites alike, but it has to rebuild an economy in which both groups can prosper. And it has to do so in a country in which most people are both impoverished and ex-

tremely impatient, and in which, as one consequence, the crime rate is among the highest in the world. We should hardly be surprised that Blacks are lashing out at symbols of continued white power and privilege, but this does not make the challenge facing Thabo Meki, Mandela's successor, any easier.

### Key Questions

In other words, we can—and will—explore the same basic issues covered in all the other chapters on individual countries: the evolution of the state, political culture, forms of political participation, the current state, public policy, and feedback. And we will consider the legacy of imperialism, economic development, and other policy issues that are central to political life in any third world country today.

However, we also have to ask five questions that are unique to South Africa:

- How could such a small minority develop such sweeping control over such a huge majority and maintain it for so long?
- What impact did apartheid have on the people of South Africa, majority and minority alike?
- What constellation of domestic and international forces brought the regime down in the late 1980s and early 1990s?

- What are the new regime's prospects, either for producing a viable multiracial democracy or for redressing the huge inequities?
- In other words, can South Africa get beyond Hacker's two nations: black and white, separate, hostile, and unequal?

In addressing those questions, we will deviate a bit from the structure used in most of the other chapters on individual countries. As with Russia, the other country in this book that has recently undergone a regime change, we will actually cycle through the themes of comparative politics twice by exploring the apartheid and multiracial states separately.

## The Apartheid State

### *The Evolution of the Apartheid State*

#### Imperialism

South Africa's experience with imperialism was different from that of the rest of Africa for two reasons. First, it was colonized two centuries earlier. Second, and more importantly for our purposes, it had by far the largest white population on the continent, one that was well established before the European powers began their "scramble for Africa" late in the nineteenth century ([www.facts.com/cd/c01001.htm](http://www.facts.com/cd/c01001.htm)). (See table 15.2.)



## THE LANGUAGE OF RACE IN SOUTH AFRICA

During apartheid, the government codified South African law so that it had explicit definitions for what the Afrikaner elite saw as four racial groups:

- Whites—people of European origin with no trace of "other blood" in their families
- Coloureds—part of a grab bag category, including people of mixed racial origin but also descendants of Malaysians and others brought to South Africa as slaves, and of the Khoikhoi and other lighter-skinned people who lived in what is today's Western Cape before the Whites arrived
- Asians or Indians—the descendants of people who emigrated from what was colonial India
- Africans or Blacks—everyone else whose family roots are on the continent; often informally and pejoratively called *kafirs* under Afrikaner rule

**TABLE 15.2** Key Events in South African History Prior to Apartheid

YEAR	EVENT
1652	Dutch arrive
1806	British take over Cape Colony for good
1816–28	African wars
1820	British settlers arrive
1835–40	Great Trek
1867	Diamond mining begins
1886	Gold mining begins
1899–1902	Boer War
1910	Union of South Africa created
1912	ANC formed
1948	National Party elected

As was the case with most of Europe's encounters in Africa prior to the eighteenth century, the Dutch wanted to create outposts to support their growing trade with Asia. The outposts were needed to resupply ships during their trips to and from their main base in Indonesia. The area around what is now Cape Town provided an ideal harbor and climate. It was also sparsely populated. Therefore, the Dutch sent Jan van Riebeeck and a small group of settlers to take over the area in 1652.

For the next century and a half, there weren't all that many Dutch colonists. A 1793 census, for instance, listed only 13,830 burghers, or free Dutch citizens, in the entire Cape Colony. Nonetheless, they had spread out throughout today's Western Cape Province. In the process, they had established themselves as farmers (*boers*) as well as traders and so had doomed the pastoral civilization of the Khoikhoi. And by that time, the **Boers** had been there for many generations and saw themselves as every bit as African as the descendants of British and French migrants to North America identified themselves as Americans or Canadians.

The Boers (later known as Afrikaners) might have remained a relatively small group inhabiting a limited part of current South Africa had the region not been caught up in the conflicts sweeping Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1795 Britain seized the Cape Colony from the Dutch, though it would be another eleven years before they took control of it permanently. This ignited a century of on-again, off-again armed struggles between English and Dutch forces. There were a series of Dutch uprisings early in the nineteenth century, and tensions between the two communities mounted when the British started sending settlers in 1820.

Finally, in 1835, most of the Boers in the Cape Colony area set off on the **Great Trek**. These so-called *voertrekkers* loaded their families (and their slaves) into

## WHO IS AN AFRICAN?

Whites in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have no trouble seeing themselves as Americans, Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders, respectively. But they have a much harder time understanding how Whites in South Africa can think of themselves as Africans. However, many of those families have been in South Africa longer than all but a few American or Canadian families have inhabited North America, and Australia and New Zealand were colonized far later.

On a more practical level, it would be extremely difficult, and perhaps impossible, for those millions of South Africans to move “back” to “where they came from” even if they wanted to.

This point is well understood by all but a handful of militant pan-Africanists in South Africa today.

wagons and headed northeastward toward what are now the two Transvaal provinces—Gauteng and the Orange Free State—so they could reestablish their communities on their own terms.

The regions the Afrikaners trekked into were more densely populated by Africans who did not want to see their lands taken over and who set at them in ways reminiscent of Indian attacks on American wagon trains heading west a few decades later. The most important of these occurred in 1838 at Blood River (Bloemfontein), where a vastly outnumbered group of *voertrekkers* circled their wagons, prayed to their God, and somehow managed to defeat their Zulu foe. The **Battle of Blood River** remains the most important symbol of Afrikaner resistance and solidarity.

By 1840 the *voertrekkers* were well established in their new homeland. Later in the decade, another community was established by Boers who left Natal on the east coast after it became a British colony as well.

Tensions between the British and Dutch did not go away, however. In 1867 and 1886, vast deposits of diamonds and of gold, respectively, were discovered in the area around Johannesburg and Pretoria. Thousands of English (and black) workers were transported to these boomtowns. Finally, in 1895, the British governor of the Cape Colony, Cecil Rhodes (founder of the De Beers company and of the estate that funds Rhodes scholarships), called on the English workers to rise up against the Dutch.

After four tense years, Paul Kruger, president of the Boer Republic, declared war on the British in October



The Granger Collection

The Boer War, one of the first times in history that women played an active role in military combat.

1899. Even though their forces were outnumbered by more than five to one, the Afrikaners fought ferociously. The British responded with brutality of their own, creating the world’s first concentration camps, in which at least 20,000 civilians died.

Finally, the two sides agreed to a treaty in 1902, and the Transvaal Province and the Orange Free State became British colonies in 1906 and 1907, respectively. In 1910 the Union of South Africa brought the four colonies together as a dominion, which meant that they had a single administration dominated by Whites.

### Apartheid

Apologists for the South African regime pointed out that it was both democratic and by far the most affluent economy on the continent. What’s more, they would point out, black Africans benefited because they, too, lived better than their counterparts elsewhere. (See table 15.3.)

Such claims should not obscure a more important point: If South Africa in this era was a democracy, it was

## DAY OF THE COVENANT/DAY OF RECONCILIATION

Since 1838, Afrikaners have celebrated 16 December as the Day of the Covenant. Because they were able to kill thousands of Zulus and suffer only a single casualty (a wounded hand) at the Battle of Blood River, they were convinced that their victory was a sign that they were God's chosen people—superior to the Africans and justified in establishing apartheid.

In an equally symbolic move, in 1994 the new government changed the name of the holiday to the Day of Reconciliation. Four years later, a new monument to honor the Zulus was unveiled next to the one the Afrikaners had erected to honor their heroes.

As a government spokesperson put it on 16 December 1994, it was time for South Africans to stop glorifying the ways they had killed each other in the past and to realize that they *could* settle their disputes peacefully.

a democracy for the few. Whites never made up more than 20 percent of the population, yet they controlled the state lock, stock, and barrel. They also were far better off. The data most favorable to the regime showed that Whites were at least five times wealthier than Blacks, and most indicators revealed an even wider gap.

Racial discrimination was a fact of life from the beginning. When the British granted the colonies dominion status as the Union of South Africa, the Whites retained their existing policies toward Africans, Coloureds, and Asians. Only in the region around Cape Town in the southwest could a small number of Coloureds and an even smaller number of Blacks vote. Indeed, it was during these years that Mohandas Gandhi (see chapter 13) first became involved in politics by defending the interests of the Indian community. And one of the Union's first acts was a 1913 law that prohibited Africans from buying land outside of "reserves," or land set aside for them—not terribly different from American Indian reservations.

That said, apartheid, per se, did not become official policy until after World War II. Prior to then, politics revolved around the ever deepening tensions between the English and the Afrikaners. To make a long and complicated story short, Afrikaner resentment toward English economic and cultural domination gradually grew. English remained the official and dominant language, and English-speakers were much better off economically even though there were more Afrikaners. If anything, the Afrikaners' status worsened—as, for instance, when the

**TABLE 15.3** Key Events During the Apartheid Years

YEAR	EVENT
1948	Election of National Party
1953	Adoption of Freedom Charter
1960	Sharpeville Massacre Africans' and Coloureds' representation ended
1964	Mandela and others jailed
1966	Assassination of Verwoerd
1977	UN arms embargo
1983	UDF formed
1984	New constitution goes into effect
1986	Pass law abolished
1990	De Klerk ends ban on organizations and releases Mandela and other prisoners

largely English mine owners decided to replace the largely Afrikaner workforce with Blacks.

Afrikaners channeled their anger through two main organizations. First was the **National Party**, which became their primary electoral outlet. During the inter-war years, this party normally came in second behind the more moderate South African Party and, later, the United Party, which recruited support from both the Afrikaner and the English communities. The other was the smaller, secretive, and more militant **Broederbond** ("Band of Brothers" in Afrikaans). Membership in the Broederbond was open only to Protestant men and then only by invitation. Ostensibly, it existed to promote the Afrikaans language, Afrikaner culture, and Calvinist doctrine. In practice, it became a major source of leaders for the National Party and the apartheid state after 1949.

World War II was a major watershed for Afrikaners. During the 1930s their racism had deepened to the point that many supported Nazi Germany, and some Afrikaner leaders were arrested during the war for doing so. Because of that sentiment, South Africa did not institute a draft, and its volunteer army did not serve outside of Africa. Nonetheless, the war deepened Afrikaners' bitterness and brought their community closer together.

The National Party won the 1948 election and came to power with a clear majority for the first time under Prime Minister **Daniel Malan**. It then started passing the apartheid legislation we will consider shortly. It remained in power until the shift to the multiracial democracy headed by Mandela in 1994.

It is hard to overstate how brutal and repressive the National Party's regime was. At a time when most other countries were providing more equality for their racial and ethnic minorities, South Africa went in the other direction. It worsened conditions for the majority of its people in every way imaginable—from where people could live, to what they could study, to what jobs they

could hold. Needless to say, all non-Whites were excluded from political life.

### *Political Culture and Participation: Democracy for the Few*

#### **Afrikaner and English Culture**

Under apartheid South Africa had two white subcultures. Both shared an unquestioned assumption that Whites were superior to Blacks and so should rule. However, there were important differences between the value systems of most Afrikaners and of most English South Africans.

The majority culture was, first and foremost, Dutch. However, it is not the same as the culture we find in the Netherlands today, which is among the most liberal in the world. Rather, Afrikaners tend to be provincial and, in the minds of some, intolerant, largely because they were cut off from the liberalizing trends that swept Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Their experiences in South Africa, in fact, made generations of Afrikaners ever more intolerant and conservative. For two hundred years rural Afrikaners eked out a marginal livelihood in a land without a real legal system, which turned them into what in America were lauded as “rugged individualists” who had to assert their superiority over the land and the people they encountered.

The most important of the rightward shifts in Afrikaner culture occurred following the Battle of Blood River, which strengthened their belief that they had won God’s favor and were supposed to rule over the inferior “descendants of Ham.” It also reinforced their belief that their desire to live in rural and pious communities was God’s will.

But Afrikaners also always felt threatened and frequently believed that they were oppressed. The Great Trek began because many Boers felt their culture was endangered by British rule. The British then treated them brutally during the Boer War. Finally, the British came to own and run the mines and other industries, even in the Afrikaner-dominated areas.

As implied previously, these rather diffuse values crystallized into support for apartheid between the two world wars when a group of Afrikaner intellectuals combined political and theological viewpoints into an ideology that, frankly, paralleled Nazism in important and worrisome ways. Ironically, according to James Barry Munnik Hertzog, who founded the National Party in 1914 and became its first prime minister a decade later,

Afrikaners had to purify themselves to defeat the English, and not the Africans, who did not pose any sort of threat from his perspective.

It is hard to underestimate the impact of the Dutch Reformed Church, which is still referred to as “the National Party in prayer.” Between the wars Dutch Reformed clergymen led the way in propounding the belief that the Afrikaner *volk* needed first their own church and then their own society to reach their potential. This led them to join the more extreme politicians and the Broederbond (membership in these groups, of course, overlapped tremendously) to demand power for Afrikaners.

As the years wore on, the object of their scorn began to shift from the English to the Africans. The likes of Daniel Malan argued the Afrikaners could be free to develop their own society and culture only if they enforced a strict and total separation of the races. And it was with this set of views that the National Party and Malan came to power in 1948 with a narrow majority of eight seats.

We do not know just how deeply these beliefs in separate national development and black inferiority were held at the grassroots level. But all the signs are that they were popular indeed, especially among the poorest and least well-educated segments of the Afrikaner population.

The minority English were far more liberal and tolerant. They were the commercial elite in the predominantly Afrikaner regions of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and they ran the country politically as well. The English settlers also arrived in South Africa later, when liberal and democratic values had put down deeper roots in their culture of origin. But make no mistake: With the exception of a handful of Marxists (to be discussed shortly) and some unusually progressive liberals, English speakers supported at least a modified form of apartheid for two reasons. First, most felt that the Africans were not “ready” to govern themselves, an attitude frequently found among British colonists around the world. Second, and in the long run more importantly, they stood to lose their economic power should the country move to majority rule.

The journalist Allister Sparks summed up the situation and the ties between the two white subcultures succinctly and powerfully just as apartheid was beginning to unravel:

**White South Africans are not evil, as much of the world believes. But they are blinded by the illusion they have created for themselves that they live in a white country in Africa, that it belongs to them by right and to no others. It is this which makes South Africa’s race problem so much more intractable. Prejudice is there, to be sure. But that is only part of**

it. The other part is a power struggle for control of a country, between a racial minority long imbued with the belief that its divinely ordained national existence depends on retaining control of the nation-state and a disinherited majority demanding restitution of its rights, which would make that impossible.<sup>1</sup>

### Parties and Elections

In a book written during the mid-1960s, Leonard Thompson described the South African party system as having a right and a center but not a left.<sup>2</sup> From 1909 on, electoral life had pitted an ethnocentric Afrikaner party against one or more competitors that tried to find a middle ground and that appealed to English voters as well.

The election of 1948 brought the right wing to power. It then won every election until 1994, when Africans, Asians, and Coloureds voted for the first time.

The National Party held onto power despite often not winning a majority of the overall vote. Thus, in 1961, it won 105 of 156 seats despite earning only 46 percent of the vote. It could do this because South Africa used the same first-past-the-post electoral system as Britain does, which can turn a small plurality in the vote into an overwhelming parliamentary majority. The effects of the system were magnified by the unusual demographics of the South African electorate. First, it was small. Fewer than 800,000 people voted in those 156 districts, or an average of barely over 5,000 in each (by contrast, a typical U.S. House of Representatives district has about 500,000 voters). Second, because the English population was concentrated in a few areas, there were few truly competitive districts. Overall, seventy candidates for the 156 seats won without any opposition at all.

There were opposition parties. The United Party earned almost 300,000 votes and won forty-nine seats that same year. It appealed primarily to moderate Afrikaners and to the bulk of the English-speaking electorate. It was also in a difficult position. Although it opposed the harshness of apartheid, it did not favor getting rid of it altogether. Indeed, like all the centrist parties over the years, it simply did not offer a credible alternative to the right on either apartheid or the other policies that mattered to the electorate.

<sup>1</sup>Allister Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990), xvii, 31.

<sup>2</sup>Leonard Thompson, *The Republic of South Africa* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966).

The real, but powerless, opposition came from the Liberal and Progressive parties, which, together, won almost 15 percent of the vote. However, because of the electoral system, they elected only two MPs. And most of the time, they could count on getting only one—the Progressives' **Helen Suzman**, who was a lonely voice arguing against apartheid from "within the system" for many years.

### The Rest of the Country

It is difficult to talk about public opinion and political participation for the vast majority of the South African population. They were legally denied the right to participate, which meant that their opinions effectively did not count.

Most Africans acted accordingly and did not even try to take part in political life. There was, however, a small, mostly middle-class opposition that tried to find a niche between participation in an electoral process that was shut off to them and outright revolution.

Two such groups bear at least a brief mention here, though we will return to them both in discussing why apartheid collapsed.

One was the **South African Communist Party (SACP)** which had first organized among Whites in the mines and factories during the interwar period. And, because white manual laborers' jobs were being taken over by Africans, the party was initially not all that supportive of racial equality. By the 1940s, however, a combination of shifts in the world communist movement and its own new, mostly Jewish leadership led it to oppose apartheid. Not surprisingly, it was banned by the new government in 1950 and had a limited impact while operating underground after that.

The **African National Congress (ANC)** was the most important of the largely African-based organizations. Formed in 1912, it initially endorsed the nonviolent resistance of the Indian Congress on which it was patterned. But with the emergence of its Youth League (whose members included Nelson Mandela) in the 1950s, it adopted the more militant **Freedom Charter** (1955) and opened its Defiance Campaign against apartheid. Although the ANC was officially a legal organization, the regime constantly harassed it, among other things trying to stop the meeting at which the Freedom Charter was adopted. The government proved willing to do whatever was necessary to put down later efforts like the Defiance Campaign.

In short, as the 1950s drew to an end, many of its younger leaders were coming to doubt the efficacy of

nonviolence. The last straw came with the **Sharpeville Massacre** on 21 March 1960, when government troops fired on marchers in a peaceful rally called by another organization, killing at least sixty-seven. In its aftermath, all the leading ANC and other groups' leaders were arrested.

Over the next year, the ANC reluctantly decided to add violence to its tactics and formed **Umkhonto we Sizwe** (Spear of the Nation) to wage a guerrilla struggle. It, too, was quickly thwarted, and the regime used the pretext of violence to ban the ANC and arrest most of its leaders. Some, like Mandela, would spend the next quarter-century in prison.

The events that occurred between Sharpeville in 1960 and the imprisonment of Mandela and his colleagues in 1964 mark the end of the period in which there were at least *some* ways for Africans and their allies to participate politically. By 1964 these had been completely shut off, so we can defer further discussion of their involvement until the section on the new South Africa.

## The State

Like India, South Africa "inherited" traditional parliamentary institutions from its British colonial masters. These bodies and practices were laid out in the Union of South Africa Act, which the country used as its constitution from 1910 to 1984. In 1984 it adopted a new constitution for a Second Republic that was designed to, paradoxically, solidify Afrikaner control but give the appearance of more democracy.

It was a large and powerful state. By 1980 it employed over 30 percent of the white workforce. More importantly, as we will see in this section and the next, it was responsible for everything from the state's security to its economic development.

## Parliamentary Institutions

Not only was South Africa in essence a democracy for Whites, it was also one that became less democratic over the course of the National Party's forty-six years in power in two ways. First, as discussed in this section, the executive gained power at the expense of the legislature and other bodies that provide opportunities for democratic accountability. Second, as we will see in the next one, the regime established an ever-more-powerful system of repression to keep its opponents at bay.

Prior to 1984 power was vested in a bicameral, all-white parliament. As in Britain, its majority party or parties formed a governing coalition and named the cabi-

**TABLE 15.4** Prime Ministers and Presidents of South Africa Since 1948

PRIME MINISTER/PRESIDENT	START OF TERM
Donald Malan	1948
Johannes Strijdom	1954
Hendrik Verwoerd	1958
B. J. Vorster	1966
P. W. Botha	1978
F. W. de Klerk	1989
Nelson Mandela	1994
Thabo Mbeki	1999

Note: Until 1984 South Africa's leading government official was the prime minister. Under the new constitution that went into effect that year, the prime ministry was abolished and replaced by the presidency. Thus, Malan, Strijdom, Verwoerd, and Vorster were prime ministers. De Klerk and Mandela were presidents. Botha was both.

net and prime minister, which remained in power as long as they retained the support of that majority. Some minor changes were made when South Africa quit the British Commonwealth in 1961 and adopted its own constitution. But these were mostly cosmetic, such as replacing the powerless governor-general, who supposedly represented the British Crown as head of state, with an almost equally powerless president. (See table 15.4.)

By the late 1970s, however, the pressures on the state from outside the parliament were growing, and Prime Ministers B. J. Vorster and P. W. Botha took steps to strengthen executive authority. Botha, for instance, abolished the partially elected Senate and replaced it with a State Council appointed by the prime minister.

In 1983 the parliament adopted a new constitution that radically restructured parliamentary institutions. The traditional British-style dual executive was abandoned in favor of a single state president, who was chosen by an electoral college. The president's term was the same as the parliament's, but the president no longer was responsible to it. That is, the parliament could no longer oust a prime minister through a vote of no confidence.

As a sop to international public opinion, the new parliament had three houses—one each for Whites, Coloureds, and Asians. However, all real power was lodged in the Whites-only executive and its house of parliament. In fact, most Coloureds and Asians recognized that these institutions were shams and never participated in them after boycotting the elections.

In practice, the presidency grew in importance for the same reasons it did in France after 1958 or Russia after 1991. The president was the one politician with a national mandate, which gave him more exposure and de facto power than earlier prime ministers. Further, it allowed Botha and, later, F. W. de Klerk to transfer more

and more power to the State Security Council, to which we now turn.

### Repressive Apparatus

It would be a mistake to think of the South African state as a Whites-only version of a Western democracy. Especially from the mid-1970s on, it survived in large part because it developed a massive, ruthless, and effective police state led by civil servants who came to be known as **securocrats**.

In the 1970s South Africans, who saw themselves as a regional superpower, suffered two setbacks. First, the political scandals that cost Richard Nixon the U.S. presidency in 1974 also cost South Africa support from the world leader who had become its most loyal ally. Second, revolutions in Angola and Mozambique threw out the Portuguese colonial rulers, installed radical governments near South Africa's borders, and gave the ANC bases much closer to the country from which to operate.

In response, the parliament passed the 1982 Internal Security Act, which created the National Security Management System headed by the **State Security Council**. This was a powerful body, consisting of the top cabinet ministers and the heads of the many police and military security units. It defined security in the broadest possible terms—as anything that might threaten the regime in the short or long term.

In the eyes of most observers, the council overshadowed the cabinet as the main decision-making body. And, because it was extraconstitutional, there were few ways members of parliament could hold it accountable, assuming, of course, they were interested in doing so.

Ironically, as with the KGB in the Soviet Union in the late 1970s, the securocrats were not even the most reactionary members of the South African elite. In fact, many realized that they could not continue to control Africans by force alone and urged some reforms, such as allowing Blacks to form unions, as long as they were not political. But few people realized that those reformist ideas existed at the time, because the visible policy at work was a stepped-up repression that made any lingering thoughts that this was a democratic regime seem absurd.

### Public Policy

#### Apartheid in Action

In its first years in power, the National Party passed a number of laws that formalized what had been only partially laid out in the statute books prior to then. As would be the case throughout its time in office, the party often justified its actions in other terms, most notably its anti-

communism. Nonetheless, the party's primary motivation was to complete and formalize the separation of the races that had already been common practice for generations. The most important of the laws were these ([www.facts.com/cd/094317.htm](http://www.facts.com/cd/094317.htm)):

- The Population Registration Act (1950), which defined all people as part of one of the four racial categories.
- The Group Areas Act (1950), which regulated the sale of property across racial lines. Other acts passed from 1936 through the mid-1950s gradually took away the rights of Blacks to live in “white” areas and authorized their (forcible) resettlement.
- The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages (1949) and Immorality (1950) acts, which banned sexual relations across racial lines.
- The Suppression of Communism Act (1950), which outlawed the SACP and allowed the state to ban individuals from political life. It and subsequent acts were later used as justification for repressing the ANC as well.
- The Bantu Authorities Act (1951), which removed antiregime “chiefs” and replaced them with government-appointed ones in “tribal” areas.
- The Native Laws Amendment Act (1953), which allowed only Blacks who had been born there to legally live in urban areas.
- The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953), which provided legal justification for separate, segregated facilities.
- The Extension of University Education Act (1959), which prohibited Africans from attending the three major universities that had previously enrolled some Black students (so much for extending education).
- The Bantu Homeland Constitution Act (1971), which allowed for the creation of nominally independent black homelands.

The state also rigidly enforced the **pass laws**, which required Blacks outside of the homelands to carry what amounted to internal passports indicating their legal status regarding residence in white areas. Employers used the laws to enforce labor discipline, because any worker who was fired would have his or her passbook changed and would lose the right to legally visit, let alone live in, an urban area. Each year, an average of 100,000 Africans were arrested and either jailed or sent back to the homelands for pass law violations. Sometimes, the state used the laws to ban known opponents and troublemakers. Passbook checks and arrests were



random and arbitrary, and thus instilled a sense of fear and uncertainty in the black community.

After 1958 the authorities stopped using overtly racist rhetoric, claiming they were working for the separate development of each community. Although this language often seemed more benign to outsiders, the state's policies and actions were just as brutal as they had been in the first years of apartheid.

The underlying thinking was that, if the races were to develop separately, they should live separately, or at least as separately as the economy allowed. Thus, areas of rural South Africa were set aside as **homelands** for the Africans and supposedly granted a degree of self-government. In practice, these areas, once pejoratively known as bantustans, occupied the 13 percent of the land that the Whites themselves did not want, that could not economically support their residents, and that had governments that were puppets of National Party authorities.

In urban areas, the government in 1954 introduced a policy of forced relocation when it flattened the Johannesburg suburb of Sophiatown (where, among other things, Desmond Tutu had been raised). Its 60,000 residents were forced into a new slum that would later be known as Soweto (short for South Western Townships). By the end of the 1980s, some 3 million people had been uprooted.

This shift toward a language of separate development became the key to apartheid once **Hendrik Verwoerd** (1901–66) was elected prime minister in 1958. His notion that the real purpose of apartheid was not just to separate the races but to thereby allow each to develop according to its own desires and using its own resources assuaged a good bit of Afrikaner guilt and provided better public relations for the regime abroad.

The doctrine of separate development remained the cornerstone of government racial policy until the last days of apartheid. The language became less racist, and under the last two presidents, P. W. Botha and F. W. de Klerk, a few of the least important racial laws were eliminated, though without undermining the basics of apartheid at all. More importantly, the arrogance of the Whites remained, something Verwoerd had expressed well in describing why they had to control the bantustans:

**There is nothing strange about the fact that here in South Africa the guardian in his attempts to uplift the Bantu groups who have been entrusted to his care must in various ways exercise supervision over them during the initial stage.<sup>3</sup>**

### Import Substitution from the Right

Left-wing scholars now argue that apartheid was not simply a racist policy. In addition, they claim, it reflected the distribution of wealth and power in South African (and, to some degree, international) capitalism. As we will see, once apartheid began hitting South African Whites in their proverbial pocketbooks, support for it plummeted rapidly.

Here, it is important to note that apartheid also contributed to the development of a modern economy and, with it, improved living conditions for the Afrikaners. When the National Party came to power, most Afrikaners had been left behind by the industrial development that had primarily benefited the English. Most Afrikaners were poor and poorly educated; many were actually worse off than they had been previously because of the declining role of farming and the use of cheaper African labor in the mines and factories.

For Afrikaners, political power brought economic power. And, although they were anything but left wing, first by choice and then out of necessity, they pursued policies much like the **import substitution** we saw in India and will see again in Mexico. In fact, the South African industrial revolution began when World War II cut off access to imported industrial goods its middle class wanted.

After the war, the National Party government decided to continue the practice of import substitution and to support the development of South African-based industries, especially those owned and/or operated by Afrikaners.

By the 1970s the nation had no choice but to develop its own economy. As we will see, the international community gradually distanced itself from South Africa. Although the system of sanctions and the individual corporate withdrawals were never complete, South African businesses and consumers increasingly had to provide for their own needs.

Thus, for very different reasons, but in ways very similar to those of governments using classical forms of import substitutions, the National Party relied on a highly interventionist state. First and foremost, it used its control over the Bantu Administration Boards to keep the costs of black labor down and thus encourage foreign investment. Second, it actively encouraged an Afrikaner (but not English) capitalist class by, for instance, shifting its accounts to Afrikaner-owned banks and awarding Afrikaner-owned firms the contracts to rewrite schoolbooks. The government also used taxation and other levers to encourage joint ventures between traditionally English-dominated firms and Afrikaner

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Allister Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990), 213.

ones. Overall, the state's role in investment grew to a high of 37 percent in 1992.

The government erected high tariffs and other barriers to imports, and plowed the profits from the sale of gold, diamonds, and other exports into industrial development. Thus, it set up parastals (state-owned companies) such as ISCOR (steel), ESKOM (electricity), and SASOL (other forms of energy).

The strategy worked. The growth rate was quite high into the 1970s. Foreign investment flowed into the country as major industrial firms from Europe, North America, and Japan all established subsidiaries (though the Japanese had to be declared honorary Whites in order to do business there). Perhaps most important of all politically, the Afrikaners prospered. No longer were they among the poorest and least well-educated white populations in the world. Instead, they enjoyed lifestyles not terribly different from those of most Europeans or English-speaking South Africans.

At this point, two problems emerged, both of which will be at the heart of the next section. First, black trade unions were formed, which, at least in some industries, drove the price of labor up and, hence, reduced the attractiveness of doing business in South Africa. Second, as a result of a worldwide antiapartheid movement, foreign investment declined, and some firms pulled out altogether. Neither change dealt the economy a crushing blow, but it stagnated in the early 1980s and suffered a limited, but real decline in the second half of the decade.

The economic changes led to an intriguing contradiction that left-wing analysts, again, are convinced contributed heavily to the end of apartheid. As industrialization progressed and more and more Afrikaners attained middle-class status, they had no choice but to employ African workers, even though the apartheid laws banned Africans from living in the urban areas where the factories were located. The Afrikaners thus tacitly allowed a system of temporary migration of black workers, which, as we will see, only served to indirectly heighten opposition to the regime.

## The New South Africa

### *"Tomorrow Is Another Country"*

On 2 February 1990 President **F.W. de Klerk** opened the new session of the National Assembly with a political bombshell:

**The prohibition of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress, the South African Com-**

**munist Party and a number of subsidiary organizations is being rescinded. The government has taken a firm decision to release Mr. Nelson Mandela unconditionally.<sup>4</sup>**

Apartheid always had its opponents. Some, like the predominantly English-speaking liberals, tried to reduce discrimination by working inside the system. But most others had no choice but to act as revolutionaries of one form or another. Because they had no vote and no civil rights, there were no "inside-the-system" options open to them.

Neither group of opponents had much of an impact through the mid-1980s. Indeed, most observers assumed that the apartheid state was firmly in place. It did not seem to be quite as strong as the Soviet Union, but few people expected either to disappear. Indeed, most people were surprised by de Klerk's speech, precisely because the regime did *not* seem to be in jeopardy.

In retrospect, it was probably just a matter of time before apartheid collapsed. Although repression could keep the state in place and make it look invincible, the National Party government was fighting a losing battle. If nothing else, the numbers were stacked against it. In the 1960s more Blacks were born than there were Whites of any age. Once some cracks in white and Afrikaner unity appeared, apartheid collapsed remarkably quickly, though not in the same ways that communism did in eastern Europe.

### *The Hurting Stalemate*

It is not wholly accurate to say that the opposition overthrew the old regime. Rather, the two sides reached what students of international conflict resolution call a **hurting stalemate**, in which each side comes to the twin conclusions: It cannot win, and the costs of continuing the struggle outweigh any conceivable benefits. A hurting stalemate does not necessarily lead to successful negotiations, as the struggles between the Israelis and the Palestinians illustrate.

Indeed, it is safe to say that such a stalemate had been reached in South Africa long before negotiations began in earnest in 1989. The moment was seized, however, because remarkable leaders, most notably Mandela and de Klerk, took the political risk of gradually bringing the African National Congress (ANC) and the National Party together.

<sup>4</sup>Cited in Patti Waldmeier, *Anatomy of a Miracle* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 142.

## F. W. DE KLERK



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F. W. de Klerk campaigning during the 1994 election campaign.

As Mandela himself put it,

**It was clear to me that a military victory was a distant if not impossible dream. It simply did not make sense for both sides to lose thousands if not millions of lives in a conflict that was unnecessary. It was time to talk.<sup>5</sup>**

### *The Sources of Resistance*

Resistance to apartheid came from five main sources, each of which gained strength in the 1980s.

In the long run, the liberals were the least important. Nonetheless, there were some crusading moderates, like the journalist David Wood, who broke the story about Steve Biko's execution (see below), who occasionally dented apartheid's armor. In all likelihood, they had the greatest impact internationally as people of good faith who demonstrated to opinion leaders in Britain and the United States that apartheid was unacceptable and that there was a nonrevolutionary alternative to it.

Second were the churches. As in the American South during segregation, one of the few jobs an educated Black could aspire to was the clergy. And, because

Early in his career, no one would have predicted that F. W. de Klerk would lead the National Party toward ending apartheid. His family had been involved in National Party politics from the days of Paul Kruger in the 1910s. His uncle was a leading architect of apartheid, and his father was a senator.

De Klerk earned a law degree in 1958 and was slated to begin a career as professor of law in 1972 when he was first elected to political office. In 1978 he took up his first ministerial post. In 1986 he became leader of the National Party in parliament. In that position, he was part of the group that convinced P. W. Botha to step down as president. De Klerk succeeded him and almost immediately gave his famous speech ending the ban on the ANC and announcing Nelson Mandela's release from prison.

For their efforts in the transition, de Klerk and Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. De Klerk resigned as deputy president in 1996, took the National Party into opposition, and then retired from active political life ([www.nobel.sc/peace/laureates/1993/klerk-bio.html](http://www.nobel.sc/peace/laureates/1993/klerk-bio.html)).



the Anglican (Episcopalian in the United States) and some of the Calvinist churches were parts of worldwide denominations, their African ministers gained a degree of international exposure denied other Blacks.

Two names stand out here. The Coloured, Dutch-reformed Alan Boesak was a major force attacking the immorality of apartheid until his own involvement in an affair forced him to resign from the clergy and destroyed his political credibility. More important to this day is **Desmond Tutu**, who was named Anglican archbishop for South Africa in 1989 and who won the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize. The very naming of a Black to head the Anglican Church was a political act. In addition, Tutu is a remarkably charismatic man who would have been seen as one of the world's great leaders if he were not part of the same movement as Mandela. Even more than Boesak, Tutu could appeal not only to Africans inside the country but to liberals at home and abroad.

Third was the loosely organized and largely spontaneous **Black Consciousness movement**, which probably did the most to build opposition in the African community in South Africa itself. It burst on the scene in 1978, largely the inspiration of **Steve Biko** (1952–77). Biko had dropped out of medical school in the late 1960s to form the Black Consciousness movement, which sought to inspire a sense of identity, pride, and power among young

<sup>5</sup>Cited in Waldmeier, *Anatomy of a Miracle*, 94.

## DESMOND TUTU



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Archbishop Desmond Tutu with black South Africans at the polls for the first time in 1994.

Africans. He was part of a generation of students educated at segregated universities who were unwilling to put up with apartheid and who sought to organize among younger, less well-educated people in the townships. His supporters claim that he was largely responsible for the uprising that swept Soweto in 1976. The next year, he was arrested, tortured, and killed, which gave the opposition yet another martyr and yet more first-hand evidence of the state's repression and corruption. It also marked the first time that many average Africans came both to doubt the possibility of a gradual, liberal solution and to realize that they could have an impact, albeit from outside the system.

To see the impact the likes of Biko had, consider the following passage from Mark Mathabane's autobiography. In it he describes a conversation with his mother about his first real awareness of the pass system, which came a few weeks after his father had been arrested because his book wasn't in order.

**When will Papa be back?**

**I don't know. He may be gone for a long, long time.**

**Why does he get arrested so much?**

**Because his pass is not in order.**

**Why doesn't he get it fixed?**

**He can't.**

Desmond Tutu grew up in a middle-class (by black standards) family. His father was a teacher, and that was the younger Tutu's first career as well. He came to the ministry relatively late, having been ordained an Anglican priest in 1960 at the age of twenty-nine. Much of his first fifteen years in the ministry was spent either teaching or engaging in further study.

He rose through the ranks of the church hierarchy quite quickly, having been named bishop of Lesotho in 1977 and secretary general of the South African Council of Churches in 1980. Nine years later he became Anglican archbishop for all of South Africa after winning the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize. Tutu was widely respected at home and abroad for his moral courage and for his compassion toward his adversaries.

In 1996 he retired from his position in the church in order to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Tutu spent much of his time building the case against apartheid abroad and was a scholar in residence at the Carter Center at Emory University in Atlanta in the months after presenting Mandela with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report ([www.nobel.sc/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html](http://www.nobel.sc/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html)).



**Why?**

**You're too young to know.**

**What's a pass, Mama?**

**It's an important book that we black people must have in order always, and carry with us at all times.**

**I don't have a pass.**

**You'll get one when you turn sixteen.**

**Will they take me away, too, Mama? Like they do Papa?**

**Hush. You're asking too many questions for your own good.<sup>6</sup>**

Prior to the mid-1970s, a boy like Mathabane would probably have accepted his family's predicament as an unavoidable fact of life. For the young urban Blacks of his day, however, obeying the pass laws—along with being forced to learn Afrikaans, enduring wretched living conditions, and the like—were no longer acceptable, and they lashed out whenever and however they could.

Black Consciousness lost in the short run, because the state was able to put the movement down and resist its demands. It did, however, have a dual impact that

<sup>6</sup>Mark Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Plume, 1986), 36.

would make a difference a decade or so later. First, it demonstrated that opposition was widespread, if poorly organized. Second, it left the ANC as the only organization with legitimacy and a mass base for the opposition to build on.

Third, and in retrospect, the most important groups was the ANC and the other groups affiliated with it. As we saw earlier, the ANC abandoned its total commitment to nonviolence after it was banned in the aftermath of the Sharpeville Massacre. From then on, it officially waged a guerrilla war against the apartheid state. In fact, the ANC was not much of a fighting force. However, the combination of its underground organization at home, the appeals made by its leaders in exile, and the example set by Mandela and others who were imprisoned for as long as a quarter-century went a long way toward strengthening opposition to apartheid at home and abroad.

Although it was an illegal organization, the ANC was strong enough to have a significant impact in South Africa by the 1980s, largely because it was able to operate through two other, legal organizations. In 1983 it helped form the **United Democratic Front (UDF)**, a coalition that eventually numbered nearly six hundred organizations and that tried to build a quasi-legal opposition. Although the UDF was not able to coordinate and control everything at the grassroots level, the fact that it was dominated by the ANC increased support for the banned and exiled party. Less visible but probably even more important were the legal trade unions, especially the **Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)**, which is still affiliated with the ANC and which effectively organized industrial workers after multiracial unions were legalized in 1985.

Finally, the apartheid state faced growing pressure from abroad from both governments and political activists. As soon as the National Party took office, the international antiapartheid movement was launched under the leadership of an English clergyman, Father Trevor Huddleston, who had worked in South Africa for many years. In the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa faced a barrage of criticism that led to a series of actions whose impact has never fully been measured.

For instance, many American universities divested themselves of stock in companies that did business in South Africa and that did not oppose apartheid. This led to the creation of a set of principles by the late Reverend Leon Sullivan that many companies voluntarily adopted and that gave rise to the broader investor responsibility movement that still exists today.

Similarly, most international athletic authorities imposed boycotts on this sports-crazy country. Indeed,

there are some pundits who (half-seriously) argue that the inability to see their beloved Springboks play rugby or cricket did the most to convince the Afrikaners to abandon apartheid.

Although the United Nations imposed an arms embargo in 1977, governments were slower to jump on the antiapartheid bandwagon. A number of countries did impose economic sanctions; however, both the United States under Ronald Reagan and Great Britain under Margaret Thatcher were by no means among the world's leaders.

By the same token, the end of the cold war put significant pressure on the ANC. The Soviet Union had provided it with much of its funding and some of its military training. When this source of support dried up, it put the ANC (and other organizations like the Palestinian Liberation Organization) in a financial bind. Further, the events of the late 1980s and early 1990s were a crushing emotional blow to the South African Communist Party that led many of its leaders to question their own commitment to revolution. In particular, its chair, **Joe Slovo**, made a remarkable turnaround and became one of the ANC's most avid advocates of negotiation in the early 1990s and of reconciliation with the Whites during the first years of the Mandela presidency before his untimely death in 1995.

It's important to note that the resistance was not wholly driven by the ANC's or the Black Consciousness movement's goals, and it used tactics those of us who live in more open societies would hardly find normal and acceptable. In fact, there was a lot of random violence, including "necklacings" (immobilizing people by putting large tires around them, dousing them in gasoline, and burning them alive) of young Africans thought to be traitors to the cause. ANC factions—including **Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's** (Nelson Mandela's former wife) "football club"—engaged in these and other such activities, many of which were little more than an opportunity to take vengeance on personal rivals or members of other ethnic groups. Nonetheless, on balance, there was surprisingly little violence from the regime's opponents, and it is not clear how great a role it played in forcing the regime to its knees.

### *The Way It Happened*

The crackdown following the Sharpeville Massacre took a heavy toll on the resistance. The ANC, in particular, was in tough shape. Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and most of its other key leaders were in prison on the infamous Robben Island. Oliver Tambo, Joe Slovo, and the other leaders who had managed to escape ran the armed

### Conflict in South Africa

**FROM ALL the discussion of protest and repression in this chapter so far, it is tempting to conclude that South Africa saw a lot of political conflict both during and after apartheid. This is actually not the case.**

**In fact, the state was powerful enough to keep the lid on most protest until the Soweto uprising in 1976. Even the ANC admits that its attempts to wage a guerrilla war were largely unsuccessful. There was much more protest between the mid-1970s and early 1990s than in other periods in South African history, but less than was found in many other third world countries, especially as far as violent action pitting the state against its opponents was concerned.**

**The same is true today, though for different reasons. Groups on both the far left and far right, which are opposed to the ANC and multiracial democracy, have little popular support. Instead, unlike in most other third world countries, there is a broad-based consensus that the new regime should be supported—at least for now.**

struggle from bases in exile. The armed uprising began with an act of sabotage in December 1961 during the annual commemoration of the Battle of Blood River. The ANC put sharp limits on Umkhonto we Sizwe, ruling out, for instance, attacks on white civilians. The uprising also was not very effective, because virtually every fighter sent into the country was caught or killed within forty-eight hours.

The 1970s, however, saw a marked increase in anti-system activity. In part inspired by the U.S. civil rights and black power movements, Steve Biko and his generation organized first university student unions and then the broader Black Consciousness movement. Biko argued that Blacks had to organize themselves, starting with, as he put it, “the realization that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.”

In so doing, they set off a cycle of protest and crack-down that continued until apartheid collapsed. At each stage through the 1980s, the government was able to defeat the protesters in the short run. In the longer term, however, the repression and the obvious justice of calls for multiracial democracy served only to deepen opposition at home and abroad.

Surprisingly in retrospect, the government initially allowed groups affiliated with the Black Consciousness movement to organize openly and legally. Though Biko himself was banned in 1973, there were large, public protests, such as the one in 1974 in support of neighbor-



Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for most of his twenty-seven-year term. The facility is now a museum to the horrors of apartheid.

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ing Mozambique, which had just thrown out its Portuguese colonial rulers. As usual, the leaders were arrested.

The critical turning point on this front came with the uprising in Soweto, which began on 16 June 1976. High school students were protesting a new rule that made Afrikaans the language of instruction in black schools. The police fired on the crowd, killing (by official figures) twenty-three people. More protests broke out around the country in which (again, by official figures, which are certainly underestimates) nearly six hundred more died. (See table 15.5.)

At this point, the movement grew in two directions, both of which worked to the ANC's advantage. First, many of the protesters fled the country to join the ANC and the armed struggle. Second, a decade-long “battle for the townships” began in which Africans stopped paying rent for public housing, attending school, and patronizing white businesses in what came to be known as the “ungovernability campaign.” As noted earlier, in 1983 many of the protesters formed the UDF, which came to be dominated by ANC activists. The state continued to counterattack, detaining 40,000 people and killing 4,000 more from 1979 on.

Meanwhile, pressure from abroad continued to mount. The United Nations suspended South Africa's membership in the General Assembly in 1974, imposed a global arms embargo in 1977, and declared apartheid a crime against humanity in 1984. Demands for corporate disinvestment and sanctions imposed by individual

**TABLE 15.5** Key Events During and After Apartheid

YEAR	EVENT
1948	National Party elected; begins passing apartheid legislation
1955	ANC adopts Freedom Charter
1960	Sharpeville Massacre; banning of ANC
1964	Mandela and others sent to prison
1976	Soweto uprising
1977	UN arms embargo imposed
1983	UDF formed
1984	New constitution adopted
1985	First informal contacts and negotiations
1989	De Klerk replaces Botha
1990	Mandela released; ANC ban lifted
1992	Whites-only referendum endorses negotiated settlement
1994	Transition to democracy
1996	Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Program report
1998	Truth and Reconciliation Commission report
1999	Second election; Mbeki becomes president

European and American governments continued to grow. By the early 1980s more than two hundred American corporations had pulled out of the country. Although many critics of apartheid complained that corporations and governments did not do enough soon enough, Chase Manhattan Bank led other banks in refusing to extend South Africa \$24 billion in short-term loans in 1985. The next year, the U.S. government passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, which among other things, outlawed further U.S. investment in South Africa. The EU and most individual European countries followed suit.

Meanwhile, the international reputation of Mandela and the ANC continued to grow. The regime and its apologists abroad tried to portray the ANC as communists and terrorists, but few people took those claims as seriously as the human rights violations of the government itself. Further, the ANC, Tutu, and others were able to convince more and more people that their cause was just, that violence was the only option open to them, and that they were only attacking the South African state, not the white population as a whole.

In a bind, the government responded with political carrots and sticks. The 1983–84 constitutional changes were designed (but failed) to undercut some of the ANC's support, as were later reforms that ended the pass laws and other "petty apartheid" policies.

The reforms failed to resonate. Some 77 percent of the eligible Coloureds and 80 percent of the Asians, for example, boycotted the elections in which members of "their" houses of parliament were elected. Yet more protests broke out.

However, the infamous Bureau of State Security also stepped up the repression, arresting about 25,000 Blacks and killing another 2,000 in the late 1980s alone. It also declared a series of states of emergency as the situation continued to deteriorate. If anything, the National Party government grew more intolerant and repressive as it became clear that the reform efforts were not having the intended effect.

### *Negotiations*

Though no one outside of the leadership of the ANC and the government knew it at the time, secret negotiations began in 1985. While Mandela was recuperating from minor surgery, he began meeting with the attorney general. The next year, he was allowed to meet with former (and now, again) Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, who was heading a delegation from the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Gradually, ties between Mandela and his jailers improved. One day he was taken for a drive by a warder, who went into a store to buy Mandela a soda and left the keys in the ignition. Mandela did not even try to escape. His relationship with the men assigned to guard him became so close that their chief, James Gregory, actually voted for the ANC in 1994 and was an invited guest at the inauguration.

Meanwhile, the ANC and interlocutors for the government began holding informal "track two" meetings outside the country. Little formal progress was made, but the participants on both sides got to know each other and to see that they actually had a lot in common personally, if not politically.

Things had progressed enough by 1989 to put two important items on the agenda. First, Mandela insisted on a meeting with President Botha. Second, Botha considered releasing Mandela, though he refused to do so unless the ANC renounced violence. The meeting did occur, but it accomplished nothing, and Botha and Mandela refused to budge on the conditions surrounding the release of the world's most famous prisoner.

As is so often the case in political life, a historical accident made a huge difference. In January 1989 the increasingly intransigent Botha suffered a stroke. Later in the year, his party convinced him to step down, and he was replaced by F. W. de Klerk.

De Klerk (1936–) was no liberal determined to give up Afrikaner power. His uncle had been prime minister, and his father was one of the architects of apartheid in the 1950s. De Klerk, himself, rose through the National Party ranks, usually by taking positions on its right wing.

## Globalization and South Africa

**IN ALL other chapters, this box focuses on how the spread of global markets and cultures has reinforced the parallel trend toward liberalization.**

**As we will see in the section on public policy, these forces are at work in the new South Africa as well. However, it makes more sense to stress how global opposition to apartheid helped bring down the regime in the early 1990s.**

**No one knows how to measure the impact of sanctions and embargoes. Similarly, no one in the National Party elite has been willing to say how much international pressure contributed to the party's decision to capitulate. Nonetheless, as Archbishop Tutu pointedly asked, if sanctions weren't having a major impact, why did the elite oppose them so vociferously?**

**In short, international pressure had a much more significant effect on the National Party government than it has had on the Baath regime in Iraq. This may say less about the sanctions (which are far more severe and more fully enforced in the Iraqi case) than it does about the two regimes. Here, we will see that the Afrikaners were not willing to jeopardize their economic and cultural gains to retain apartheid and minority rule. As we saw in chapter 14, however, Saddam Hussein and his colleagues have been willing to risk everything to keep ruling in their own unique and repressive style.**

He came to power ready to make reforms that would dilute apartheid. He was not, however, prepared to give up Afrikaner control of the state.

Nonetheless, as early as 1986, a number of Afrikaner clergymen began meeting with ANC leaders at their bases in Angola. The head of the Broederbond circulated a document that called for a negotiated settlement (but not, one person/one vote) as the only approach that could ensure the survival of Afrikaner culture. Officials, including some in the security services, then began secret, informal, and unusually unauthorized discussions with the ANC, often brokered by leaders of the biggest South African business (the Anglo-American Corporation) and nongovernmental organizations such as the Ford Foundation. Some of the most important meetings took place under the supervision of the Consolidated Goldfields Company at its Mells Park country home in England, where, ironically, The ANC's Thabo Mbeki and his white interlocutor ended their work by watching Mandela's release from prison on television.

Although the details are still not completely known, this wing of the securocrats apparently convinced de Klerk that a negotiated settlement with some sort of power sharing was the only way out. Indeed, one of the most important of them, Niel Barnard, conducted many of the secret talks with Mandela and played the leading role in convincing de Klerk.

Meanwhile, Mandela and the ANC had reached similar conclusions. In particular, they realized that there could not be a resolution unless they found a way for the Afrikaners to retain their culture and, even more importantly, their dignity.

Thus, in a series of forty-seven meetings in which he normally spoke in Afrikaans, not English, Mandela kept stressing the need to share power and the fact that Blacks and Whites had one thing in common—they were all Africans. Meanwhile, in 1986 the government had moved Mandela off of Robben Island and installed him in a small, comfortable home both to make negotiations easier and to send Mandela a signal that he was being taken seriously. Mandela so appreciated his time there that he had a replica of the house built in his hometown, which is now his retirement home!

Finally, an agreement was reached that led to de Klerk's shocking speech to the National Assembly in 1990. Mandela was released on 11 February. Later that day, he spoke to a crowd estimated at over 100,000, many of whom had never even seen a picture of a man who had not been mentioned in the South African media since his imprisonment twenty-seven years earlier.

Formal negotiations soon began but did not go well. The ANC and the government were poles apart on the issues, and, at first, Mandela and de Klerk did not get along well personally.

Gradually, things began to improve. The Afrikaners even discovered that they liked the communist Joe Slovo, who seemed more like a grandfather than a guerrilla. Sometimes they found common ground on important political issues, and other times on seemingly more mundane matters, such as everyone's desire to see South African sports teams again competing on the international level.

In the end, it took three years for the **Conference on a Democratic South Africa (CODESA)** to reach an agreement. In between, there were walkouts, continued repression, and an upsurge of violence, including Amy Biehl's murder. As popular as Mandela and the ANC were, they faced opposition from Mangasuthu Buthelezi and his **Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)** (discussed shortly).

At long last, the parties agreed to an interim constitution in 1993. It called for elections in which, for the



## USEFUL WEB SITES

South Africa Online is the best general portal for information about the country and has an extensive set of political links. Woyaa (voted one of the top fifty web sites in Africa by UNESCO) has the most extensive set of links to official South African organizations. The Stanford University Library also has a good general site with links to South Africa. Political Africa is one of the best Internet gateways for the continent as a whole and also covers South Africa well.

[www.southafrica.co.za](http://www.southafrica.co.za)

[www.woyaa.com/Tree/Regional/Countries/South\\_Africa/Government/](http://www.woyaa.com/Tree/Regional/Countries/South_Africa/Government/)

[www.africapolitical.com](http://www.africapolitical.com)

The World History Archives has an excellent compilation of documents on South Africa under apartheid.

[www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/37a/index-a.html](http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/37a/index-a.html)

Finally, Aardvark is a search engine that includes only South African sites.

[www.aardvark.co.za](http://www.aardvark.co.za)

first time, all South African adults could vote. While thereby assuring an ANC victory, it also contained provisions that guaranteed cabinet posts to all parties that won at least 20 percent of the vote.

As we will see in more detail shortly, the ANC won those elections in a landslide. To no one's surprise, Mandela was chosen president, and de Klerk served as his first deputy president.

In 1996 a permanent constitution was adopted that did not retain the minority representation clauses. At that point, the National Party left the coalition, and de Klerk retired.

Critics are quick to point to South Africa's difficulties since Mandela came to power. Crime and violence are both at an all-time high, and economic growth has been slow. There is evidence as well that the ANC would like to enhance its power, perhaps at the cost of the popularity and rights of its opponents.

South Africa also faces tremendous burdens growing out of three and a half centuries of white rule. As any American who has seriously thought about the legacy of slavery has to acknowledge, the kind of discrimination and abuse suffered by Africans in their own country left

emotional scars that cannot be healed with "mere" majority rule. And the scars aren't just psychological. Whites earn, on average, twelve times more than Blacks. Overall unemployment has averaged about 30 percent, but it tops 40 percent among Blacks. The richest 10 percent of the population earns over half of the country's income and controls a much higher percentage of its wealth.

This should not keep us from seeing one of the most remarkable aspects of the transition. Knowing that it could not risk alienating the white population, the new government decided to take the country in an unusual direction. Rather than seeking vengeance and the spoils of majority rule, it sought reconciliation, nation building, and consensus.

The ANC did benefit from the fact that apartheid and its associated policies had left the country well off by African standards. It had the twenty-seventh largest population in the world and, by conventional accounting methods, was also the twenty-seventh richest country. It was far more industrialized than any other African country; manufacturing accounted for a quarter of its GNP. South Africa also sat atop tremendous mineral resources, including 40 percent of the world's known gold and more than half of its diamonds, manganese, and chromium.

In short, on balance, South Africa's track record since 1994 has been almost as remarkable as the negotiations that liberated Mandela from prison and brought him to power. The new regime has broad-based support and has even integrated many Whites from the old regime (including the security service) into the new bureaucracy. The principle of one person/one vote is more securely established than anywhere else in Africa or, for that matter, most of the rest of the third world.

South Africa also had no trouble making the transition from Mandela to his successor as president, **Thabo Mbeki**. Even though Mbeki lacks Mandela's charisma and has made a number of controversial statements—most notably, claiming that HIV does not cause AIDS—his government continues to function smoothly and enjoy massive popular support.

In short, as Alister Sparks put it in the title of his book on the transition, tomorrow is, indeed, another country. What he calls its "negotiated revolution" had worked.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Allister Sparks, *Tomorrow Is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Revolution* (London: Arrow Books, 1997).



© Cable News Network, Inc.

Nelson Mandela and team captain François Pienaar celebrating South Africa's victory in the rugby World Cup. Note that Mandela is wearing a copy of the Afrikaner Pienaar's shirt.

### *Political Culture*

Two key—and perhaps contradictory—lessons stand out from the previous fourteen chapters. First, a tolerant culture with a strong civil society helps sustain democracy. Second, political cultures change slowly.

There have been no systematic studies of South African political culture. However, the impressionistic evidence does suggest that the new government is doing what it can to create a participant and tolerant culture as quickly as possible.

South Africa does not seem to suffer from one of the cultural problems that we saw in Iraq and that exists in many other third world countries—a lack of a national identity. Indeed, one of the reasons it was so hard to find the common ground that allowed the various communities to do away with apartheid was that each saw itself as patriotic South Africans. Unfortunately, each had a very different conception of what that meant.

The new government has gone out of its way to be as inclusive as possible. The constitution, for example, guarantees people the right to an education in their own language. More importantly, new policies allow Afrikaner civil servants and even security officers to keep their jobs until they retire or resign voluntarily. The government has also tried to promote a sense of inclusive-

ness through symbolic measures that may prove no less reassuring. Thus, in 1995, Mandela resisted efforts on the part of many ANC activists to ban rugby, a sport played almost exclusively by Afrikaners and seen as a bastion of their culture and a symbol of their racism. Instead of acceding to their demands, Mandela went to the 1995 World Cup final match wearing a copy of the uniform shirt of captain François Pienaar and warmly greeted the Afrikaner when handing him the winners' trophy. Since then, various sports authorities have made major progress in integrating national teams, bringing Blacks into the rugby squad (and firing the coach when he resisted doing so) and Whites into the previously almost all-Black soccer team. Afrikaners I know speak with delight about taking Blacks they have met to rugby games and of their own new-found love for soccer once those visits were reciprocated.

It isn't just the government. Even prior to 1990, foreign governments and private foundations had donated hundreds of millions of dollars to fund nongovernmental organizations trying to end apartheid and build bridges between the communities. Typical of these is the National Business Initiative (NBI). The NBI was founded and is still led by Theuns Eloff, a Dutch Reformed Church minister who had grown disillusioned with apartheid in the 1980s and began meeting secretly with ANC officials

outside the country. When, following Mandela's release, the negotiations bogged down and township violence escalated, Eloff and people like him realized the need for ways of finding common ground for people from all racial and ethnic groups. Eloff argued that only if people could find ways to cooperate with rather than shoot at each other would South Africa make it through the transition. No one has done research on how much of an impact organizations like NBI have had. Nonetheless, certainly, none of them are big enough to move the country toward a consensus on their own. However, it is also clear that each is creating a larger "space" in which Blacks and Whites can interact with each other peacefully and comfortably. Intriguingly, in 2001, this man who was once rejected by his own parishioners was named president of Potcheroom University for Christian Higher Education, the most prestigious Dutch Reformed seminary.

To be sure, race and ethnicity remain deeply divisive issues in South Africa and will be so for decades to come under the best of circumstances. This is easiest to see in the crime and violence that have wracked the country in the 1990s.

Violent crime has always been a serious problem in the townships. At this time, for example, the murder rate is probably ten times that in the United States.

More important for our purposes is the violence centered on the "hostels," where men separated from their homes and families live in the townships, a situation that has political overtones. Clashes between supporters of the ANC and the IFP resulted in the deaths of well over 10,000 people in the first half of the 1990s. This violence reflects the frustrations of a generation that seems destined to live its life in poverty as much as the ideological differences that have long separated the ANC from the IFP.

On balance, however, no country has made as serious an attempt to bring former adversaries together in cooperative and constructive ways. There is no better (albeit still indirect) evidence of this than the fact that South Africans are now called on to help calm ethnic tensions in such faraway places as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) and Northern Ireland.

If nothing else, South Africa has been able to avoid the civil wars—almost all of which were rooted in issues of religion, ethnicity, and/or race—that have engulfed much of the third world. If anything, South Africa had a "worse" historical track record than most of those countries. Yet, somehow, it has managed to avoid the carnage that has devastated countries like Rwanda, where the majority Hutu systematically slaughtered at least 10 percent of the country's population, including virtually all the minority Tutsi, in a three-month period in 1994.

Although Mandela and his colleagues get much of the credit, it is important not to understate the role played by the National Party in particular and the white community in general. Affluent Whites could have opposed the regime or taken their money and fled. Instead, almost all of them have chosen to stay and to give the new regime at least their grudging support. There are fringe elements in the Afrikaner population that want to restore apartheid and, failing that, to get an independent homeland for themselves. However, such groups have minimal influence, and unless the bottom falls out of the economy or the crime and violence escalate out of control, the regime seems likely to keep that support. Thus, the country will not face the kind of centrifugal forces that plague India and Iraq.

### *Political Parties and Elections*

The key to the "input" side of South African politics lies in the way people participate. During the new state's first eight years, the emphasis here has been on the electoral process even though it had held only two national elections at the time of this writing.

In most democracies, political parties contest elections in large part on the basis of their positions on the "big issues" confronting the country. This was true of South Africa as well a decade ago when the National Party faced white opposition from its left and right that criticized it for its position on apartheid. This was even more the case for the extraparliamentary opposition for which ending apartheid was the key goal.

In the early 2000s the big ideological issues are gone. With the exception of some truly minor parties, everyone accepts the fact that South Africa is a multiracial democracy with a mixed, but basically capitalist, economy.

Instead, though few admit it publicly, the real debate is over the role of the ANC. For the moment at least, the ANC is the world's most dominant party in an open political system. It won 63 percent of the vote in 1994 and 66 percent five years later. Not even India's Congress or the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party won that much of the vote in their primes. And even if the ANC falls short of winning a majority in some future election, it is hard to see which party or parties could provide a credible alternative ([www.ElectionResources.org/za](http://www.ElectionResources.org/za)). (See table 15.6.)

### **The ANC**

The ANC ([www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)) did not begin as a "normal" political party. Like its Indian namesake, its original purpose was to end an unjust system of government. Again

**TABLE 15.6** Parliamentary Elections in the New South Africa

PARTY	1994		1999	
	Percentage of Vote	Seats in National Assembly	Percentage of Vote	Seats in National Assembly
ANC	62.6	252	66.4	266
New National Party	20.4	92	6.9	28
IFP	10.5	43	8.6	34
Other	9.6	23	18.1	72

like the Indian Congress, it was denied the right to pursue that goal at the ballot box.

As we saw in chapter 13, India's Congress began contesting elections in the 1930s and gained valuable experience running local governments prior to independence. However, unlike the Indian Congress, the ANC never had that opportunity until literally days before it came to power.

The ANC, by contrast, operated underground and in exile until 1990. In less than four years, it turned itself from a party of armed resistance into one that could run the new South Africa's government. In the process, it changed itself dramatically.

Two of those changes stand out.

First, it truly became an electorally driven party. This is not as remarkable as it might seem at first glance. Though officially banned, the ANC built substantial mass support during the 1980s largely through its work in the trade unions and the United Democratic Front (UDF). And, of course, the years of struggle and the symbol of resistance provided by Mandela and his fellow prisoners were a tremendous asset to the party.

Second, the party radically altered its ideology. The ANC committed itself to socialism in the 1950s and forged a long-term alliance with the Communist Party, which remains a part of the ANC to this day. Although it took great pains to deny government charges that it was itself communist, the ANC never stepped back from its basic, and radical, commitment to a more egalitarian society—until coming to power, that is.

In 1994 the ANC put economic change at the heart of its campaign, though it should be pointed out that it won for the other reasons mentioned. Since then, however, given the limited funds available and its commitment not to overturn white privilege, the ANC has made an economic U-turn, as we will see in more detail.

The ANC also entered the democratic era with some very powerful assets. First and foremost, it was the only party with a track record as a multiracial organization. It also boasted Mandela, Slovo, and other leaders whose names, at least, had been known to South Africans for

**TABLE 15.7** Party Identification in South Africa, by Race (in percentages)

PARTY	BLACK	WHITE	COLOURED	ASIAN/INDIAN
ANC	50.8	0.2	24.5	9.8
NP	0.9	18.8	27.7	20.7
IFP	4.3	1.6	—	1.2
Other	4.9	15.9	2.6	4.9
Independent/ no answer	39.1	64.5	46.1	63.4

more than a generation. And, because of its underground organization and role in the UDF and the unions, it had a large, if not always disciplined, organization.

The ANC turned those assets into a landslide victory in 1994, winning almost 63 percent of the vote and 252 of the 400 seats under South Africa's version of proportional representation. Despite the economic difficulties the country encountered during the decade and the fact that Mandela retired, the ANC actually increased its support slightly in 1999.

The ANC has its problems. The unions, communists, and others on the left are not happy with its acceptance of capitalism, as we will see in more detail shortly. Mbeki has managed to alienate many members of the burgeoning black elite in the private sector. At the same time, however, there are no signs that dissidents are considering splitting off from the ANC, because that would consign them to the political margins. What's more, given the state jobs that have come with power, many of the leaders would be taking a personal as well as a political risk were they to consider forming a new left-wing party.

Perhaps most important is a trend affecting the entire electorate, which hit the other parties even harder than the ANC. (See table 15.7.) Polls conducted in 1994 suggested that support for the parties was quite firm. Only 3 percent of the voters could be considered "firm independents," and another 12 percent had only weak ties to one or another of the parties.

Between 1994 and 1997, the number of independents and "weak identifiers" skyrocketed to about 40 percent of the total electorate. Most of the independents returned to the ANC in 1999. Nonetheless, the large number of "floating voters" does suggest that many people are potentially "available" if a credible alternative to the ANC comes along.

### The New National Party

There is no question that the **New National Party (NNP)** has changed more than any other political organization, and not only because it added "new" to its name



A long line of people waiting to cast the first vote of their lives in the 1994 South African election.

AP/Wide World Photos (Denis Farrell)



([www.natweb.co.za](http://www.natweb.co.za)). To the surprise of many, it has not become the party of white resistance and has done fairly well in the coloured community, where it continues to do better than the ANC. Still, as table 15.7 shows, it won barely 20 percent of the vote in 1994 and did not even reach half that total in 1999.

The NNP is indeed in many ways a new party. In 1996 de Klerk resigned both from the government and from his position as head of the National Party so that the party could move smoothly into opposition. It has also had to endure the defection of its heir apparent, Roelf Meyer, who formed a new party that tried to counter the National Party's inability to attract African voters but who later left active political life.

Since then, the NNP has worked hard to redefine itself as a multiracial alternative to the ANC. It presents itself as more pragmatic and responsible than the government, and it proposes to implement change more gradually. Ironically for the party that created the strong state economically as well as politically, the NNP now claims to want less government involvement in the economy and in people's lives.

Its new leader, Marthinus von Schalkwyk, is younger and more dynamic than de Klerk. Even more surprisingly, the NNP has reached out beyond the white community to the point that, according to the polls, it has at least as much support among Coloureds, most of whom share a lot culturally with Afrikaners.

That said, the NNP has made three strategic about-faces since 1994 that have left many voters skeptical

about its future. First, it left the coalition government in 1996. Then, after its poor showing, it merged with the Democratic Party and the Freedom Alliance to form the Democratic Alliance, which allowed it to stay in power in the Western Cape Province. However, in 2001 it broke from its partners and reestablished a coalition with the ANC in the Western Cape.

### The Inkatha Freedom Party

The other serious opposition to the ANC comes from the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) ([www.ifp.org.za](http://www.ifp.org.za)). It was formed by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi (1928–) in KwaZulu, one of the tribal homelands created by the apartheid government. Although the ANC leadership wanted to boycott all those organizations, Mandela and Oliver Tambo had been close to Buthelezi during their student days and understood that he was highly popular in that part of the country. They therefore approved the creation of the party.

In retrospect, it was not a very wise decision, because the IFP and Buthelezi have been thorns in the ANC's side since the mid-1980s. At that point, Buthelezi began informally cooperating with the authorities (it is now known that the IFP was partially funded by the security services) and was seen by conservatives abroad as a moderate alternative to the ANC.

Buthelezi also has a monstrous ego and resents not having been a major player in the negotiations that led to the 1994 transition. Indeed, he frequently walked out



of the discussions and only agreed to have the IFP participate in the 1994 elections at the eleventh hour. Nonetheless, because of the power-sharing provisions for the first government, Buthelezi became minister for home affairs, a post he still held in early 2002.

Far more important than any positions the IFP takes is the fact that it is a regional and increasingly ethnically defined party. It wins next to no support outside of the new state of KwaZulu Natal other than in Zulu enclaves in Johannesburg and other metropolitan areas. And, although it originally won some white and Asian support in the state (there are very few Coloureds in the eastern half of the country), its electorate now seems almost exclusively Zulu and amounts to only about 5 percent of the total black vote.

On balance, the IFP has mostly been a disruptive force. Its supporters were largely responsible for the political violence that afflicted the country during the first half of the 1990s. Furthermore, Buthelezi's vacillation almost destroyed the negotiations at several crucial stages in 1993 and 1994.

In short, it seems unlikely that the IFP will ever get much more than the 10 percent of the vote it won in 1994 (it did slightly worse in 1999) or pose a serious threat to the ANC. And it is hard to see how the IFP could cooperate with the NNP in a coalition, because the latter is now clearly more progressive on most issues. Much depends on what happens inside the party once Buthelezi leaves the political scene.

### Minor Parties

The rest of the vote has gone to a number of minor parties. Though they virtually doubled their vote between 1994 and 1999, they are still far from posing the credible alternative to the ANC that South Africa will need to have a truly competitive democracy.

Some of the parties represent extremists on the far left and far right. They are so small that they are not worth exploring in any detail.

There have been, however, two attempts by prominent politicians to form new parties that explicitly appealed to voters of all races and classes. The Democratic Party is a traditional liberal (in the European sense of the term) organization and thus appeals primarily to middle-class Whites ([www.da.org.za](http://www.da.org.za)). It is hard to tell how its fortunes will change now that its alliance with the NNP has collapsed. Potentially more interesting was the creation of the United Democratic Movement which was led by Roelf Meyer (ex-National Party) and Bantu Holomisa (ex-ANC). Its future, too, is uncertain now that both of its founders have quit the party and politics.

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## NELSON MANDELA

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Nelson Mandela was born in 1918. His father was a chief in the Thembu tribe, but he died when Mandela was quite young, which meant Mandela was raised by even higher-status relatives.

He studied at the all-black Fort Hare University but was expelled in 1940 for participating in demonstrations. He finished his B.A. by correspondence and earned a law degree in 1942. He was one of the first Blacks to practice law in South Africa.

He also joined the ANC and in 1944 helped form its Youth League, which moved the organization leftward. In 1952 he was elected one of its four deputy presidents.

Mandela was first arrested for treason in 1956 but was acquitted five years later. In 1964 he would not be as lucky. Sentenced to life in prison for treason, he spent twenty-seven years in custody, the first eighteen on the infamous Robben Island.

During the negotiations with the apartheid government and then as president, Mandela succeeded in creating a democratic South Africa. He was able to combine what can only be described as remarkable personal charm with a powerful commitment to equality and an unbending negotiating style to become arguably the most respected world leader of his generation ([www.nobel.sc/peace/laureates/1993/mandela-bio.html](http://www.nobel.sc/peace/laureates/1993/mandela-bio.html)).



### The Stakes of 2004

Most observers worried about what would happen after the 1999 election and Mandela's retirement. However, that transition went remarkably smoothly. It is less clear that the 2004 election will be a repeat performance.

By that time, the luster of the transition will have worn off. More importantly, most voters will recognize that the ANC cannot pull off a social and economic miracle to match the political one of the early 1990s. Furthermore, Mbeki has shown no signs of grooming a successor—the deputy president is an elder statesman in the ANC who has no formal education. In short, the ANC's support may have eroded to the point that it loses its majority while other, more extreme parties do better than they have so far in reaching out to the 40 percent of the electorate that no longer identifies with any party. If this happens, it is hard to believe how a single party or even a stable coalition of parties could replace the ANC. Under these circumstances, the prospects for a democratic and more egalitarian country will recede. There is, of course, no way of predicting whether this will happen.

## The New South African State

As we saw in the section on the negotiations, the ANC won its most important demand—a democracy based on the votes of all South Africans. It did make concessions that granted minority representation in the cabinet for the first few years. Otherwise, the basic constitutional provisions are quite similar to those we saw in the western European nations and in Japan ([www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/sf\\_index.html](http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/sf_index.html)). (See figure 15.1.)



### Rights and Freedoms

In part because it is new and in part because of South Africa's troubled history, the constitution enumerates more rights and guarantees than most. For instance, people are guaranteed the right to an education in their own language, and women have the right to an abortion. Overall, people's rights (including Whites') are most securely guaranteed than at any point in South African history. The only even vaguely controversial limits are a ban on "hate speech" and the ANC's acceptance of employers' right to lock out workers.

### President and Parliament

The constitution calls for a traditional parliamentary system in which the executive is responsible to the lower house of a bicameral parliament ([www.parliament.gov.za](http://www.parliament.gov.za)).

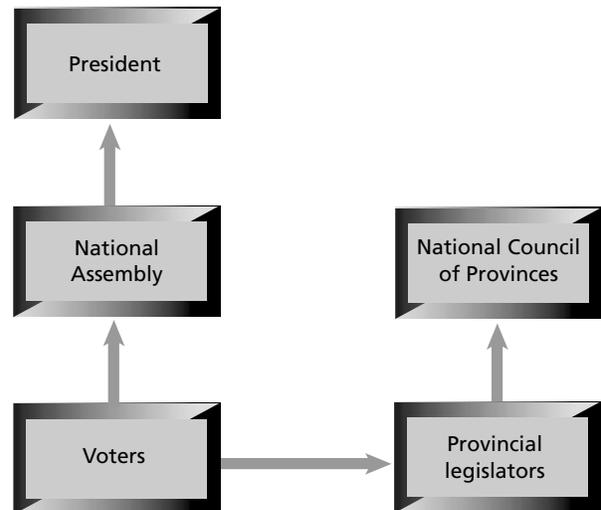


Thus, the key to South African politics is the 350- to 400-member **National Assembly**. Its members are elected under a complicated system of proportional representation in which a party must get slightly over 2 percent of the vote either nationally or in one of the nine provinces to gain seats. In 1999 four parties passed that threshold nationally. Seven others won at least 2 percent of the vote in at least one province and thus qualified, but these parties won only twenty seats total and are not a factor in the National Assembly's daily proceedings.

The National Assembly elects the president, who is really the equivalent of the prime minister in most parliamentary systems. In other words, the president appoints the rest of the cabinet and, more importantly, is subject to votes of confidence that can remove him or her from office.

The National Assembly must pass all legislation, and it initiates all bills dealing with money. It can also amend the constitution with a two-thirds vote.

So far, none of these provisions have caused any controversy, because the ANC has won well over 60 percent of the vote. There is concern, however, about what would happen if either of two scenarios unfolded:



**FIGURE 15.1** Decision Making in South Africa

- If the ANC abused its power and reformed the constitution in its own favor were it to win over two-thirds of the seats
- If the country slipped into something like the immobilism of Third and Fourth Republic France were the ANC to drop below 50 percent of the vote

The National Council of Provinces is indirectly elected by the nine provincial legislatures. It has ninety members (ten from each province) who also serve five-year terms. Like most upper houses, it has limited budgetary powers and no control over the executive. Its primary responsibilities revolve around the protection of minority cultural interests.

The president chooses up to twenty-seven members of a cabinet and a deputy president. Under the interim constitution, all parties that won at least 20 percent of the vote had to be included in the cabinet, which had two deputy presidents (initially de Klerk and Mbeki). Those provisions for minority representation disappeared when the permanent constitution went into effect in early 1997 and the National Party resigned from the government. There is also now only a single deputy president.

### The Rest of the State

The nine provinces were also granted considerable autonomy, especially over education and cultural affairs. More important in the long run, perhaps, is the fact that the ANC won control in only seven of them in the 1994 elections (losing KwaZulu Natal to the IFP and the West-

ern Cape to the National Party), which means that credible opposition to the ANC could be built on the provincial level.

For the first time, South Africa also has an independent judiciary. Judges at all levels are appointed by the nonpartisan Judicial Services Bureau. Like many countries, South Africa's judiciary has two wings. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court deals with appeals of nonconstitutional matters, which are referred to the Constitutional Court. It has ten judges. Six are appointed by the president on the basis of recommendations by the Judicial Services Bureau; the other four come from the Supreme Court and are chosen by the president and the chief justice. It is too early to tell how effective the courts will be, but they certainly are more independent than their apartheid-era predecessors. To cite but one prominent example, the courts forced the government to revise the draft 1996 constitution to, among other things, make it harder to revise when civil liberties were at stake.

The most surprising, and perhaps most encouraging, trend for the long term is the ANC's decision not to purge the bureaucracy. It would have been understandable if the new government had gotten rid of everyone who helped make and implement apartheid public policy. Instead, reflecting their desire for reconciliation, the ANC decided to retain most incumbent civil servants. Critics have accused the ANC of filling new state positions with their own members. In fact, one cannot help but be struck by the other side of the coin—the number of Afrikaners who remain in positions of responsibility. This is true even in such sensitive areas as law enforcement and education, where only people who committed the worst offenses have been fired ([www.gov.za/president/index.html](http://www.gov.za/president/index.html)).

### Toward a One-Party State?

Critics are also worried that South Africa will turn into a single-party state, much like most other nations in Africa. This is especially true of those analysts who stress the ANC's own authoritarian elements, not to mention its links with the Communist Party.

There is also widespread concern about the party's organization and its impact on the day-to-day functioning of the government. Although we cannot provide precise details, there is rampant corruption in most government agencies, including education, where standards have fallen since 1994. Also, most of Blacks who occupy middle-level and even high-level positions are seen as grossly incompetent, lacking the skills and intellectual background needed to do their jobs effectively. It could

not be otherwise in a country that denied Blacks more than the most rudimentary education until less than a decade ago.

However, there are equally compelling reasons to believe that the ANC will not abuse its power. Indeed, virtually everything in its record since the negotiations began in the late 1980s suggests that it is an unusual political movement, one that is truly committed to democracy and reconciliation. For example, it willingly agreed to proportional representation that would grant smaller parties a voice in the National Assembly even though the old first-past-the-post system would have given it a much larger number of seats. Similarly, it allowed the IFP to take power in KwaZulu Natal even though there was considerable evidence that Buthelezi's party won only through fraud and intimidation.

### Public Policy

Mandela's government came to power amid great expectations, but it also had to contend with even greater pressures. It faced a tremendous psychological challenge in bringing together a society that had been divided and riddled with hatred for so long. Materially, it had to deal with the massive economic gap between Blacks and Whites at a time when the economy had been shrinking for at least a decade, largely as a result of international sanctions and disinvestment.

Therefore, it makes sense to focus here on the two policy areas in which the new government has done the most to meet these challenges. As should be clear from the discussion so far in this chapter, we should not expect the government to have been able to meet either of them fully in eight years. Nonetheless, it has taken some important first steps.

### Truth and Reconciliation

As we have already seen in a number of areas, the new government did not set out to take revenge on the Whites. Instead, it has taken its rhetorical commitment to a multiracial South Africa seriously.

Central to these efforts has been the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Fifteen other new regimes around the world have set up truth commissions to ferret out human rights abuses in the past and, if possible, punish the guilty. These commissions are part of a broader movement for **restorative justice** that is causing quite a stir in legal circles these days ([www.restorativejustice.org](http://www.restorativejustice.org)). Traditionally, new states have sought to punish the perpetrators of crimes against the people by seeking retribution and even vengeance.

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 THABO MBEKI
 

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Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki.

**T**habo Mbeki became the second president of democratic South Africa following the 1999 election.

Mbeki was born in 1942. His father was an active communist who was arrested with and spent time in prison with Mandela. Mbeki escaped from South Africa in 1962 and moved to the United Kingdom. The ANC paid for him to study economics at the University of Sussex. As a young man, he was quite

leftist, having studied at the Lenin School in Moscow and served on the SACP politburo.

In office, he has been more authoritarian than Mandela was and has spoken less about the need for reconciliation. However, he has not wavered from the ANC's decision to sustain its democracy and move toward a more open economy.

In restorative justice, in contrast, the emphasis is on literally restoring the situation of the victims before the crime occurred, at least to the degree that this is possible. Even more importantly, there is a different overarching goal that has rarely been found in legal thinking until recently—to begin recovering from the social damage that the crimes created so that the community can achieve internal peace.

South Africa sought to go farther than most of these bodies. To be sure, the commission did all it could to document the crimes against humanity that occurred between the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, when massive human rights abuses began, and the transition to democracy thirty-four years later. However, it was a truth *and reconciliation* commission whose more important goal was to use the truth about apartheid as an impor-

tant first step in healing the wounds it created in South African society.

Created in June 1995, the commission was chaired by Archbishop Tutu, unquestionably the most powerful moral voice in the country after Mandela, and someone who had long been pleading for reconciliation across racial lines ([www.truth.org.za](http://www.truth.org.za)). Its mandate allowed it to grant amnesty to people whose crimes were political in nature, who confessed fully and publicly to the commission, and who expressed remorse for their actions. The assumption underlying its work, then, was that learning the truth and beginning to build bridges across communal lines was far more valuable than prosecuting wrongdoers.

In the three years between its formation and the publication of its report in late 1998, the commission





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A hearing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, at which testimony on violence and other human rights abuses during the apartheid year was heard.

held hearings around the country in which victims and perpetrators alike told their stories, much like the Biehls did. The results were mind-numbing, because many people were hearing systematic accounts of the atrocities of apartheid for the first time. They also witnessed the remarkable spectacle of many people who committed the crimes confessing to them in public before the world's television cameras.

When all was said and done, the country probably learned as much as it could have—and could have wanted to—about what happened. Although the security services destroyed thousands of documents in the early 1990s, the public still saw abundant evidence of a culture in which the authorities thought it was perfectly acceptable to torture and kill its opponents. After wading through the evidence of 20,000 witnesses (much of which is published in the 3,500-page report), the commission minced no words about apartheid, which it concluded was a crime against humanity.

The country learned that the cabinet and, almost certainly, F. W. de Klerk knew of a shadowy “third force” of vigilantes who terrorized Blacks on the orders of the security services. P. W. Botha, in particular, was singled out for having fostered a climate in which torture and executions were tolerated, if not encouraged. For his

part, Botha refused to appear before the commission and currently faces contempt charges, though few believe that the former president, now in his eighties, will actually go to jail.

The commission not only tried to uncover the old regime's sins, but also conducted hearings into the ANC's excesses. Among other things, it was judged to have summarily executed suspected state infiltrators and killed more civilians than security officers in the underground struggle waged by its military wing.

Most notable here was the testimony of the president's former wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, who had long been a controversial figure within the ANC. On the one hand, she had stood by her husband during his years in prison and had served as a powerful symbol and organizer for the ANC within South Africa. On the other hand, she and her entourage were implicated in much of the violence in the townships and were accused of murdering opponents.

In September 1998 she appeared before the commission to answer charges that she was involved in eighteen human rights abuses, including eight murders. Although she ducked the specifics of the charges, she did acknowledge her involvement and guilt, and like many others who appeared before the commission, expressed

remorse for her actions. The commission, however, still found that the Mandela United Football Club that she headed was a “pure vigilante unit.”

When the report was handed over to President Mandela on 28 October 1998, it was already controversial. At Mbeki’s urging, the ANC had gone to court to try to block its publication because of the judgments in it about the resistance, which also includes the IFP and the Pan-African Congress.

The report and its primary author were adamant. Although the overwhelming majority of the crimes were committed by the white authorities, and the ANC and the rest of the resistance occupied the moral high ground, the insurgents used “unjust means” toward “just ends” on numerous occasions. As Tutu himself put it, “Atrocities were committed on all sides. I have struggled against a tyranny. I did not do that in order to substitute another. That is who I am.”

By the time the report was released, the committee on amnesties had dealt with almost most of the applications before it. To the surprise of many, as of January 2001, it had granted amnesty to only 849 of the 7,112 people who applied. It rejected over 5,000 applicants because the actions were not linked to a justifiable and clear political cause. Individuals who were not granted amnesty are subject to criminal prosecution, though as of this writing, all the evidence suggests that there will not be many.

The commission’s primary task was to establish the truth and then use it as a starting point toward reconciliation. As Tutu saw it, that first step was a hard one, because it required bringing the horrors of South Africa’s past into the open, but it was also a necessary one. Again in his words from the report,

**Reconciliation is not about being cosy; it is not about pretending that things were other than they were. Reconciliation based on falsehood, on not facing up to reality, is not reconciliation at all.**

**We believe we have provided enough of the truth about our past for there to be a consensus about it. We should accept that truth has emerged even though it has initially alienated people from one another. The truth can be, and often is, divisive. However, it is only on the basis of truth that true reconciliation can take place. True reconciliation is not easy; it is not cheap.<sup>8</sup>**

Finally—and most importantly for the long run—the commission made a series of recommendations for

the far longer “healing” process of reconciliation. The president should call a national summit on reconciliation. Funds should be made available to help compensate victims. As the report also acknowledged, this will take a long time, noting that it took decades to begin closing the wounds left by the Boer War among white South Africans.

## The Economy

The end of apartheid alone would do nothing about the fact that over half the Africans—but only 2 percent of all Whites—lived in poverty, earning less than the equivalent of \$200 a month. A third did not have access to safe drinking water; only 20 percent had electricity in their homes. To make matters even worse, economic conditions deteriorated during the first few years of the 1990s before the transition to majority rule.

Given its traditional commitment to socialism, as well as these appalling conditions, no one was surprised when the new government announced its Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) in 1994. It placed “the basic needs of the people”—jobs, housing, electricity, telecommunications, health care, and a safe environment—ahead of economic growth.

With the lifting of sanctions and the goodwill generated by the transition, the economy did turn around, growing by an average of 3 percent per year in 1994 and 1995. By 1996, however, the government realized that its strategy was not going to work.

If it kept its commitment to not reduce the living conditions of Whites by, say, drastically raising taxes, the current growth rate would not come close to funding the jobs and services it had planned. In fact, the best estimate was that at this rate of growth unemployment would actually *increase* by 5 percent by 2000. And one worst-case scenario held that less than 10 percent of the young people entering the workforce each year would find a job.

In short, the government reached a reluctant decision. It had to adopt an economic strategy that would get the growth rate up to the 6–7 percent per year range. This, in turn, would require adopting the kind of **structural adjustment** policy we saw in India and will see again in Mexico.

This, of course, produced one of those odd ironies that are so common in political life. It was the right-wing National Party government that introduced import substitution, a policy normally associated with the left. And it was the radical ANC that turned its back on massive state intervention and adopted the kinds of hands-off policies advocated by the most conservative, market-oriented economists.

<sup>8</sup>From the text of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, [www.truth.org.za](http://www.truth.org.za), accessed 10 December 2001.

This new policy was laid out in a 1996 plan by Finance Minister Trevor Manuel known as the **Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Program (GEAR)**. It was put together by the government in consultation with international financial agencies and leading experts from the South African academic and business communities.

GEAR's goal was to maximize growth by increasing foreign investment, which requires giving businesses considerable freedom to chart their own course. Priorities included developing industries to manufacture goods that can be sold at competitive prices on the global market, creating an environment with low inflation and stable exchange rates to encourage investment, making public services more efficient, improving the infrastructure, and adding to labor market flexibility. To accomplish this, tariffs and other "demand side" measures were scaled back, and the state offered the private sector incentives to become more productive and profitable. Government spending was cut so that the budget deficit dropped to 3 percent by 2000. The government also called for negotiations leading to a national plan to keep wage and price increases below the rate of growth in productivity. And, much like Tony Blair's Labour government in Britain (see chapter 4), the South African government thought that much could be accomplished through cooperative "partnerships" between the public and private sectors in which the latter plowed back some of its profits in the form of both investment and community-oriented projects. Thus, in the automobile industry, the government and the major foreign automakers with operations in South Africa have been cooperating to lower production costs so that cars produced there can find a market elsewhere in Africa.

Critics properly pointed out that GEAR marked a major shift in ANC policy toward capitalism, if not the outright abandonment of socialism. However, it does not represent as marked a shift toward the all-but-exclusively profit orientation that most structural adjustment programs include.

The emphasis is on investments that provide long-term employment, empower Africans, and redress the inequities between rich and poor. Typical here is the September 1998 announcement that the Philadelphia-based Kearsarge investment firm would funnel millions of dollars to the African Harvest Asset Management group as part of a program aimed at, in its words, "empowering communities" in South Africa. Funds were made available to companies that either were black-owned or had a deep commitment to affirmative action. It is part of the larger Reinvest in South Africa appeal to "socially responsible" funds that had pulled out of the

country as part of the investor responsibility movement in the 1970s and 1980s to return.

Unfortunately, foreign investment has not reached the level the government had hoped for, which has limited its ability to reach its ambitious economic goals. Reasons range from potential investors' concerns about profitability to the high crime rate.

The government has not turned its back on its egalitarian goals. It plans to use the revenues from economic growth to fund both infrastructure projects that benefit everyone and the kinds of programs initially laid out in the RDP. It has committed itself to free basic health care for pregnant women and infants and to a program of land reform that will turn over about 5 million acres of land to the poor. It is hoped, too, that the decentralization provisions in the new constitution will lead the provinces and municipalities to launch labor-intensive projects of their own. However, it is also clear to everyone that the state will play a lesser role in determining how that growth occurs and that progress will come more slowly than most in the old antiapartheid coalition would have liked.

The government has also announced a series of Special Development Initiatives. The goal is to channel investment capital to and offer "tax holidays" for targeted industries and communities. The hope is that these funds will stimulate the development of key manufacturing sectors, such as aluminum, that could lead to export opportunities. As with most of the government's investment strategies, the funds will be mainly directed toward black-owned firms in underdeveloped regions. The best known of these involves the Maputo Development Corridor, a devastated region that straddles the border between South Africa and Mozambique. Funds have been provided to build transportation and telecommunications networks to facilitate such activities as tourism and the export of crops and manufactured goods in the short run. It is assumed, as well, that once these infrastructural projects are finished the region could also provide a trade link for Swaziland and Botswana. Along similar lines, the government is considering the creation of nine Chinese-like industrial development zones adjacent to its major ports and international airports. The best developed is Coega near the Eastern Cape city of Port Elizabeth. The joint public-private partnership is designed to turn the area into a world-class seaport and create spin-off investments in such fields as zinc refining, fertilizer manufacturing, and petrochemicals in one of the country's poorest regions.

South Africa is also the one country covered in this book to have seriously experimented with **microcredit** strategies. First developed by Muhamad Yunus and the

Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (see chapter 12), microcredit involves making small loans to help poor people form small businesses. One of its goals is to help give the ultrapoor incentives and skills to pull themselves and their families out of poverty. In the South African case, the government's hope is that microcredit can also create more black-owned businesses and, in time, reduce income and wealth differentials.

The best known is the Small Enterprise Foundation, which operates in the Northern Province, where up to two-thirds of the population is unemployed. By late 1997 this organization had made almost 19,000 loans that averaged about \$700 each. Well over 90 percent of the loans went to women for dressmaking, hawking, and "spaza," or small grocery stores operated from either a shack or someone's home. Borrowers are organized into small groups of five or six who meet every other week to make loan repayments and discuss their progress. A similar organization operating near Cape Town gives its borrowers a "township MBA," or basic business training, before a loan is issued. Borrowers from the Small Enterprise Foundation typically employ the equivalent of 2.5 full-time workers. The poorest families are able to use the money made in the business to afford three meals a day, not one. More affluent families are able to send their children to school, add electricity to their homes, and purchase other "luxuries." Studies of microcredit operations in South Africa and elsewhere have also found that they afford women an unprecedented degree of independence and can be a lifeline for those who have suffered spousal abuse. Profits from the program are, in turn, reinvested in the form of new loans that further contribute to the community's development.

There is also reason to believe that the economy as a whole could boom as a result of these and other GEAR strategies, given the industrial and financial foundation created under colonial and National Party rule. South Africa is already far more advanced than all the other countries in Africa and accounts for 40 percent of all economic activity on the continent. It has a significant industrial base and, by African standards, a relatively well-trained workforce. There is already, as well, a substantial regional trade network involving South Africa and its neighbors. Therefore, it is the logical place for foreign investors to place their money, at least for the southern third of the continent.

Overall, however, economic performance has fallen far short of the government's hopes when it adopted GEAR. The most charitable accounting method put the 2000 growth rate at about 3 percent, or about half of what it needed to reach its goal of creat-

ing 400,000 jobs a year. The effects of this slower growth are being felt throughout the society. Fewer homes are getting electricity, improvement to the educational system for Blacks has been delayed, and, perhaps most chillingly of all, the best estimate is that one South African in eight is infected with HIV. Even with the creation of the Global AIDS Trust Fund, the odds are that at least 90 percent of these people will die. And the repercussions of the epidemic will ripple through the entire economy. The beleaguered health-care system simply cannot handle as many as 5 million people. And, because HIV infection is particularly pronounced among young people, many companies assume that they have to hire two or three people in order to be reasonably certain that one of them will survive long enough to establish a career.

The government does have one trump card it can play to bring in a short-term infusion of cash. It could sell off state-owned companies that were created by the National Party government, which, some observers estimate, are worth about half of the total capital stock in the country. As of this writing, the government had not moved rapidly in this direction, but there are signs that it may do so in the years to come.

The left wing of the ANC, which includes the Communists and the unions, is not happy with this shift. Of particular concern here is the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which, of course, had been a vital cog in the struggle against apartheid. It represents about 17 percent of the employed workforce, and its members tend to be noticeably better off than the African population as a whole. Not surprisingly, COSATU leaders (who are also ANC leaders) are reluctant to endorse policies that would both slow the redistribution of the wealth and hurt their own members' standard of living. Thus, according to COSATU president (and SACP central committee member) Sam Shilowa, "GEAR is a neo-liberal plan which poses serious difficulties for the working class and the country as a whole. Something has gone terribly wrong that such a document could be . . . on the table."<sup>9</sup>

So far, COSATU has complained, but that's all. The leadership realizes that it has no alternative to the ANC and is willing, for the moment at least, to run the risk that GEAR and related policies will pay off at some point in the not-so-distant future. It is important, too, to underscore here how closely tied COSATU, the Communists, and the

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<sup>9</sup>Cited in Stanley Uys, "South Africa: Changing Currents," *African Affairs*, 96 (July 1997), 371.

## Liberalization in South Africa

**SOUTH AFRICA has not gone as far with liberalization as either Mexico or India have. However, the pressures to do so have been growing ever since the government announced its GEAR program of structural adjustment.**

**Ironically, the government is reluctant to sell off the state-owned enterprises in large part because Whites, who have benefited from subsidized prices, could see a significant erosion in their standard of living. Nonetheless, the same international pressures that led the ANC to open up the private sector to more outside investment are building, and the government may eventually decide to sell off all or some of the nationalized and parastatal industries.**

**No one knows for sure when or how that will happen, but it is already anticipated on all the web sites the government has created to help convince foreigners to invest in the country.**

ANC are. There are, for example, about fifty COSATU members who became ANC MPs. The initial Mbeki cabinet had seven full and one deputy ministers from the SACP. In 2001, SACP national chair Charles Nqakul was named deputy foreign minister. Any open split over GEAR would thus cost the two organizations dearly.

The question, however, is what will happen if they don't produce the growth. Mandela and the rest of the ANC successfully guided the country through the first stage of its transition—getting the multiracial democracy off the ground. It remains to be seen if it will be able to do the same for the second—sparking enough economic growth to meet basic human needs quickly enough to satisfy its own constituents, let alone the global financial community.

## Feedback

**T**here is no area in which change is more evident than in South Africa's mass media. Under apartheid, almost all newspapers were aimed at a white readership; those that were not were subjected to censorship and were owned by conservative white conglomerates. Similarly, the South African Broadcasting Commission (SABC) had a monopoly on television and radio broadcasts, and was little more than a propaganda mouthpiece for the regime.

Today, the SABC still has a near monopoly on radio and television broadcasting, but even its critics acknowl-

edge that it is more open to dissenting viewpoints than it was prior to 1994. The same holds for about thirty daily newspapers with a general circulation, all but three of which are published in English. Some, like the *Sowetan*, are explicitly aimed at the African population. Most are still white-owned, but, like television and radio, are far more liberal than they used to be.

## Conclusion: South Africa in Peril or a Role Model?

**S**outh Africa is a rarity for this book in particular and for comparative politics in general, because so much of the news from there has been good over the past decade. Whatever your ideological position, it is hard not to acknowledge that ending apartheid so peacefully not only removed one of the greatest human rights violations of our time but also moved the country toward a more just and egalitarian future. The joy and optimism that came with the transition to majority rule are reflected in the titles of the two most popular books on South Africa in the 1990s, *Anatomy of a Miracle* and *Tomorrow Is Another Country*.

The accomplishments of the two ANC governments so far have indeed been impressive. The transition has occurred with minimal strife and bloodshed. Plans have been laid for a new economy that can build on the legacy of the apartheid years to create a regional hub for the southern third of the continent. Some important first steps have been taken to ease the burden of centuries of racism and racial antagonism. Things have progressed so far that South Africa is now looked upon as a role model for other divided societies seeking to make the transition toward a more democratic and inclusive government.

This chapter shares that sense of optimism and reflects the remarkable, unexpected, and unprecedented changes that have taken place there since the late 1980s. Its democracy remains fragile as it enters the post-Mandela era. It could well become even more fragile when—and if—a credible alternative to the ANC emerges. And the economic future is even more uncertain. No one knows if the strategy laid out in the GEAR report will reach its stated goals, let alone provide a more just and equal society.

If nothing else, one thing is clear. South Africa demonstrates for the 1990s what the collapse of communism did for the 1980s—that nothing is permanent and nothing should be taken for granted in political life today.



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### Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of South African politics presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the "right

direction" or is on the "wrong track." If you were asked such a question about South Africa, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?

3. How did South Africa's experience with imperialism help produce apartheid in the first place?
4. What was apartheid? Why was it so important to the Afrikaners?
5. Why was the National Party able to stay in power and sustain apartheid for so long? Why did it finally collapse?
6. What is a hurting stalemate? How did it contribute to the collapse of apartheid in South Africa?
7. Why is the ANC as powerful as it is? Is that strength likely to continue?
8. How would you explain why South Africa has produced two of the most respected leaders of our time—Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu?
9. Do you think South Africa is democratic? Is its democratization likely to continue? Why do you reach this conclusion?
10. Why do you think the transition from Mandela to Mbeki went so smoothly?

### Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Afrikaner	Biehl, Amy	ANC	African National Congress
Apartheid	Biko, Steve	CODESA	Black Consciousness movement
Homelands	De Klerk, F. W.	COSATU	Blood River, Battle of
Hurting stalemate	Madikizela-Mandela, Winnie	GEAR	Boers
Import substitution	Malan, Daniel	IFP	Broederbond
Microcredit	Mandela, Nelson	NNP	Conference on a Democratic South Africa
Pass laws	Mbeki, Thabo	SACP	Congress of South African Trade Unions
Restorative justice	Slovo, Joe	UDF	Freedom Charter
Securocrat	Suzman, Helen		Great Trek
Structural adjustment	Tutu, Desmond		Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Program
	Verwoerd, Hendrik		Inkatha Freedom Party
			National Assembly
			National Party
			New National Party
			Sharpeville Massacre
			South African Communist Party
			Soweto
			State Security Council
			Truth and Reconciliation Commission
			Umkhonto we Sizwe
			United Democratic Front

### Further Reading

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# MEXICO

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Two Presidents
- Thinking About Mexico
- The Evolution of Mexican Politics
- Political Culture
- Political Participation
- The Mexican State
- Public Policy
- Feedback
- Conclusion: Mexico and the Third World



*The Fox win means that Mexico has accomplished the rare feat of ending an authoritarian regime by voting it out of office, an event that comes at the end of a process of building an electoral opposition to the former ruling party that stretches back nearly a quarter century.*

JOSEPH KLESNER

## Two Presidents

In 2000 both the United States and Mexico chose new presidents in what turned out to be momentous elections. As we saw in chapter 2, the thirty-six days between election day and the Supreme Court ruling that gave George W. Bush the presidency will never be thought of as evidence of the strength of American democracy. Four months earlier, however, Mexican democracy took a major leap forward with the first victory by a candidate who was not a member of the **Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)** since the 1920s—**Vicente Fox**.

Bush and Fox were old friends. Both had been state governors. Both had experience as corporate executives, Fox with Coca-Cola and Bush as president of the Texas Rangers baseball team. Both were social conservatives.

Bush's first foreign visit was to his old friend (dubbed the "boot summit" given both men's penchant for wearing cowboy boots), and the two men seemed as comfortable on Fox's ranch as they did at formal meetings in Mexico City. Fox, in turn, was one of the first foreign heads of state to visit the United States during the Bush administration.

By the end of Fox's visit, all the signs pointed to major changes in U.S.-Mexican relations, especially on the vexing issue of the status of Mexicans illegally living in the United States. During their summit, the two presidents came close to clinching a deal that would include some form of amnesty for many of the Mexicans already in the United States and some form of bracero program that would allow other Mexicans to work legally in the United States on a temporary basis.

But Fox's visit came just days before the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. With the sudden shift in U.S. policies that resulted, immigration reform was put on the back burner. Instead, U.S. and Mexican officials focused on strengthening security

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### MEXICO: THE BASICS

Size	1,972,550 sq. km (roughly three times the size of Texas)
Population	101,879,000
GNP per capita	\$4,400
Out-migration	2.77 people per 100,000
Religion	89% Catholic, 6% Protestant
Currency	9.87 pesos = \$1
Capital	Mexico City, Federal District
President	Vicente Fox (2000)

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along their two-thousand-mile border, which is at once one of the most heavily guarded and porous in the world.

That said, U.S.-Mexican ties remain closer and stronger than they have been in generations. There is widespread support for Fox and his policies north of the border, including not just his backing of business but his commitment to reducing poverty and improving Mexicans' standard of living. Meanwhile, Mexicans enjoy the new-found attention from the president from Texas—territory that, of course, had once been theirs.

In the past, shifts in U.S.-Mexican relations had their origins in changes in Washington, which has long been the dominant partner in the relationship. This time, the impetus came from Mexico with Fox's election. Gone was a system in which the PRI won time and time again, by hook or by crook. Gone was a style of governing in which **patron-client relations** were the linchpin to a stability based heavily on corruption and pork barrel politics.

Put simply, Bush's victory led many to question the true strength of American democracy. By contrast, Fox's election and the first alternation in power in three-quarters of a century was widely viewed as a sign that Mexico just might be turning into a full-fledged democracy.

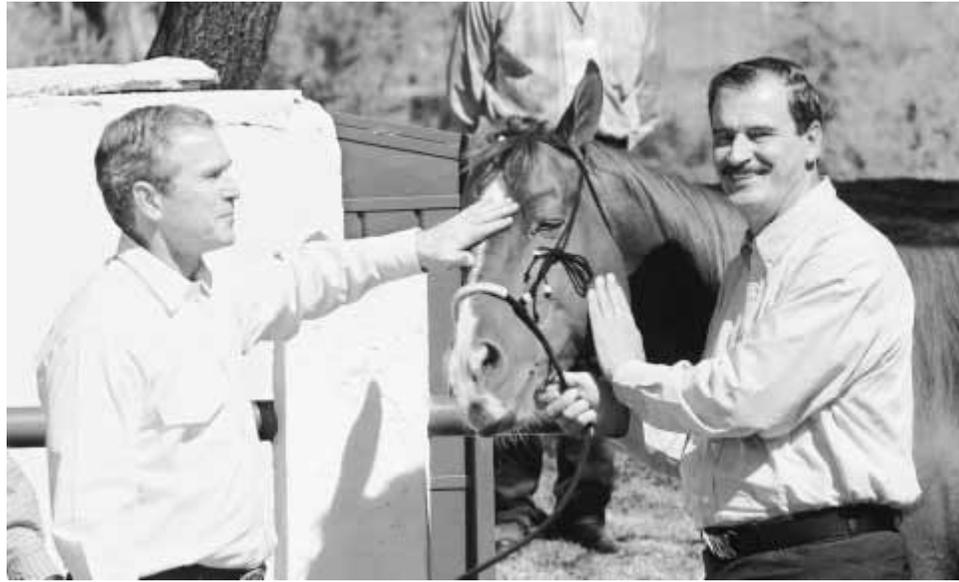
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## Thinking About Mexico

### *The Basics*

#### Poverty

Mexico is not as poor as most other third world countries. Although it is not usually considered one of the **newly industrializing countries (NICs)**, the World Bank's *World Development Report* ranks Mexico's economy



George W. Bush and Vicente Fox at their first summit, held at Fox's ranch.

ahead of Russia's. It has a middle class whose lifestyle rivals what we find in the United States or among South Africa's Whites. Similarly, some Mexican analysts point out that their country is one of the world's fifteen leading industrial powers. And, until the sharp decline in world oil prices in the early 1980s, Mexico's growth rate had been quite high, averaging 6.5 percent per year between 1965 and 1980.

In fact, such statistics miss the part of the story that leads most observers to put Mexico in the third world. For much of the past twenty years, stagnation rather than growth has been the economic norm. Thus, growth averaged only about 1 percent per year in the 1980s, though it is higher now, especially since the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)** went into effect in 1994. By contrast, inflation typically topped 50 percent per year in the 1980s and stood at nearly 30 percent before the government began to get it under control in the late 1990s.

This translates to continued poverty for most Mexicans. Housing and health care are not very good. Some 60 percent of the more than 90 million Mexicans do not have access to either safe drinking water or a toilet. Only about one in ten has a telephone or television. Officially, unemployment is quite low, but a much higher proportion of Mexicans cannot find jobs that provide themselves and their families with more than a subsistence income, which contributes to the steady flow of immigrants to the United States. In the three years since NAFTA went into effect, the number of people in extreme poverty (income 25 percent below the poverty

line) grew from 17 to 26 million. The cities are overcrowded, and Mexico City is so polluted that most experts doubt that its air can ever be made safe to breathe again.

Mexico's economic difficulties are compounded by its massive debt. Like many third world countries, Mexico borrowed heavily during the 1960s and 1970s on the assumption that it could use oil revenues to pay back the banks and governments that had made the loans. When prices fell after the oil crisis of 1979, Mexico's debt skyrocketed, reaching more than \$100 billion in the late 1980s. Although it declined somewhat in the early 1990s, total debt leaped back toward the levels of the late 1980s as a result of the peso crisis in 1995. At the end of 1999, the debt stood at \$83.9 billion, or almost 16 percent of Mexico's total GNP.

### Diversity

Mexico is also a remarkably diverse country, which may not be apparent to generations of Americans raised on westerns with their scenes of an arid, wide-open country of mountains and deserts. That image applies only to the northern part of the country. Southern coastal regions are hot and humid, but as you move inland and into the mountains, the climate turns more temperate.

The stereotypes are right in one respect: Mexico is a rugged country. Between the mountains, deserts, and jungles, only about 12 percent of its land is arable, and much of that land is marginal at best. But Mexico does have natural resources in two areas: minerals and petro-

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## MEXICAN NAMES AND PLACES

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There are two linguistic issues to keep in mind while studying Mexico. First, names again. As in most Spanish-speaking countries, Mexican names have the following structure: first or Christian name, father's family name, mother's maiden name. Some Mexicans (for example, President Fox) do not routinely include their mother's family name. It can be confusing, but it will be clear from the usage which is which here. If there are three names, it is the middle one that denotes the family, as in Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

Also, like most writers, I will regretfully use the term *American* to refer to the United States. Anyone who lives in either North or South America is, of course, an American. However, the way the English language has evolved, there is no other stylistically acceptable adjective to describe things and people from the United States.

leum. Mining has been an important industry practically since the day the Aztecs met Hernán Cortés and his fellow Spaniards with what seemed like mountains of gold artifacts. In the twentieth century, the discovery of substantial petroleum reserves turned Mexico into one of the world's leading oil and natural gas producers.

The Mexican population is extremely diverse. Relatively few Spanish women came to New Spain, as Mexico was called after the conquest in the sixteenth century. Moreover, unlike the situation in the British colonies to the north, the Spaniards did not kill off most of the people they encountered when they arrived. In short, marriages and nonmarital sexual relations between Spanish men and Indian women were common, so that now the largest group of Mexicans is the **mestizos**—part Indian and part white. A substantial number of Blacks also were brought to Mexico as slaves, especially in the state of Veracruz along the Gulf coast, which many observers think still feels more Caribbean than Mexican.

Currently, terms like *Indian* or *mestizo* are not used primarily to describe people's physical appearance. Instead, they describe the culture they were raised in. Thus, an Indian is not someone who is at least part Indian, for that describes a huge proportion of the Mexican population, but someone whose culture and identity are primarily Indian. Generally, Mexicans are less sensitive to (or perhaps less prejudiced about) race than are citizens of the United States.

Between 5 and 10 percent of Mexicans still speak only native Indian languages and are thus not very

well integrated into what is a predominantly Spanish-speaking national culture. That said, the Indian influence is far more noticeable and valued than it is in the United States. The very name *Mexico*, is derived from either Mexica, one of the Aztec tribes, or Mexitl, an Aztec epithet for God. Native influences can be seen in everything from the way many Mexicans dress, to the food they eat, to the way they practice Catholicism.

### Key Questions

The most important question about Mexican politics cannot be answered here. As these lines were written, President Fox had been in office for about a year, and it is simply too early to tell how much Mexican politics will change during his tenure. What does seem certain is that the era of PRI domination is over. The party may well win future elections, but there seems to be no chance that it could ever again become the hegemonic party it was from the late 1920s through the late 1990s.

This leads us to four main questions about domestic politics in Mexico:

- Why did the PRI win so consistently, and how could it stay in power so long?
- How and why did forces undermining PRI rule emerge, culminating in Fox's victory?
- Why did three successive administrations in the 1980s and 1990s embrace structural adjustment as fully as any leaders in the third world?
- How much have those reforms addressed Mexico's poverty and other pressing needs?

### Big Brother Is Watching

I included the word *domestic* before the list of questions for a reason. I wanted to keep a fifth issue separate so I could emphasize it—the influence of the United States.

All third world countries have had a long and not always pleasant relationship with one or more of the industrialized democracies. The one between Mexico and the United States is a bit different in two seemingly contradictory respects. On the one hand, the United States never colonized Mexico, although it did seize a third of its territory after the Mexican-American War of 1848. On the other hand, the United States exerts more influence over Mexico than any single country has on any of the others covered in this book.

The two countries really are not as "close" as the length of their borders might imply. The United States and Canada share the world's longest unguarded border. The U.S.-Mexican border, in contrast, is one of the most

closely patrolled, as the United States tries to stem the flow of illegal immigrants and drugs into its country. Indeed, some pundits refer to it as the border between the first and third worlds.

The United States and Mexico are increasingly dependent on each other economically. Mexico is the United States's third leading trading partner, trailing only Japan and Canada. The United States is even more important for Mexico, because two-thirds of all Mexican exports are sent north. Even prior to NAFTA, there was significant U.S. investment, especially in the **maquiladora** factories that dot the border and that produce goods for foreign markets using low-priced Mexican labor.

Even more important politically is the migration of Mexicans to the United States. There is nothing new to this. The American southwest has long been a “safety valve” providing jobs for unemployed Mexicans, who, had they not traveled north, might have fomented protest at home. There are perhaps 3 million Mexicans living illegally in the United States, and they send about \$9 billion a year back to family members at home, adding more money to the economy than Mexico makes from its agricultural exports.

Many people in the United States believe that Mexican immigrants are a burden, a belief that led to the passage of the **Immigration Reform and Control Act** of 1986 and California's restrictive Proposition 187 in 1994. Many Americans, too, are worried that the presence of so many Spanish-speaking immigrants (not all of whom are from Mexico, of course) is diluting and threatening American culture.

Immigration is not the only thing Americans fear regarding Mexico. Much of the cocaine and marijuana destined for the western United States comes through Mexico.

American fears notwithstanding, this is a highly unequal relationship in which the United States is by far the more powerful partner. For the nearly two centuries that Mexico has been an independent country, the United States has exerted a powerful and often unwanted influence on its politics. This began with the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett, who insisted that the new Mexican government heed Washington's wishes. Incidentally, Poinsett brought back from Mexico the Christmas plant that bears his family name in English, the poinsettia.

As recently as 1914, American troops invaded Mexico. And, although the United States no longer engages in that kind of direct intervention, its indirect leverage—ranging from the tens of billions of dollars Mexico had to borrow in recent years to the impact of its popular culture—may be no less overwhelming. Many Mexicans speak of their “dependent psychology,” or the sense that



A typical lineup of cars waiting to cross the border between Mexico and the United States just south of San Diego. Delays can last as long as four hours.

the American big brother is always watching. With its wealth and freedom, the United States is highly thought of by most average Mexicans. At the same time, many are envious of what the North Americans have and resent this often arrogant, high-handed interference in Mexican affairs—most recently, with NAFTA and the conditions imposed on loan guarantees in 1995.

## The Evolution of Mexican Politics

The evolution of Mexican politics has a lot in common with most other Central and South American countries—Spanish or Portuguese colonization, independence in the early nineteenth century, and a rather tumultuous history afterward. (See table 16.1.)

There is one way in which Mexico's political history is dramatically different. As should be clear from the preceding section, the United States has played a more important role in shaping Mexican political and economic life from its first years as an independent country than it has for most other countries of the region ([www.mexconnect.com/mex\\_/history.html](http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/history.html)).

**TABLE 16.1** Key Events in Mexican History

YEAR	EVENT
1519	Arrival of Cortés
1810	Declaration of independence
1836	Loss of Texas
1848	Mexican-American War
1864	Emperor Maximilian installed
1876	Beginning of Porfirio Díaz's reign
1910	Revolution
1929	Formation of PNR, which renames itself PRI in 1946
1934	Election of Cárdenas

### *The Colonial Era*

There is much uncertainty about the “Indians” who inhabited what is now Mexico before the Spaniards arrived. A thousand years ago the Mayans living along the Gulf coast had one of the most advanced civilizations in the world, but by the sixteenth century it had already begun to decline for reasons no one fully understands. By this time the Aztecs had come to dominate dozens of other tribes from their capital of Tenotichlán (now Mexico City). The Aztecs were able to establish a centralized empire with an elaborate system of courts, tax collectors, and political-military administrators.

Ironically, the Aztecs believed that white gods in strange ships would one day appear on their shores! Despite fierce resistance from Moctezuma (Mexicans prefer this spelling rather than the Montezuma one usually sees in English) and, later, his nephew Cuauémoc, Cortés was able to use his superior weaponry to defeat the Aztecs and gradually extend Spanish control over a territory that stretched from what is now northern California into Central America.

Spanish colonial practices differed dramatically from those of the British to the northeast. The Spaniards encountered well-established civilizations, not nomadic tribes. They thus had to incorporate the native population into the colonial system in an elaborate hierarchy that placed native Spaniards at the top, their mixed offspring below them, and the massive Indian population at the bottom. New Spain became part of an exploitative mercantilist empire that sent resources back to Spain but gave little, politically or economically, to the colonies. The Spaniards also brought the Catholic Church, which, in addition to trying to convert the natives, became an integral part of the colony's government. Perhaps most importantly, New Spain lacked the degree of self-government that was well established in British North America long before the revolutionary war.

Hints of problems to come appeared during the three centuries of Spanish rule. The church, for example, ended up owning a third of the country while

forcing Catholicism on virtually the entire population. Similarly, by the seventeenth century huge estates, or haciendas, had been created. Typically, land originally given to the Indians was seized, and the prior owners became peons or indentured servants to their Spanish overlords.

Ultimately, the Spanish were not very effective colonial administrators and were never able to secure their rule throughout the country. Nonetheless, late in the seventeenth century they tried to take firmer control of the colonies, thereby antagonizing the growing Mexican-born elite.

### *Independence*

Although Americans tend not to think about it in this way, the thirteen colonies gained their independence in large part because the British were preoccupied elsewhere and could not commit the resources needed to hold onto a distant, troublesome, and not very important part of their empire. Independence for Spain's American colonies, too, became possible when it was weakened by the Napoleonic Wars that swept Europe in the first two decades of the nineteenth century and could not or would not pay the price to hold onto them.

In Mexico, the bloody, decade-long struggle for independence began in 1810 when the Creole priest Miguel Hidalgo y Castillo, who is still revered as a revolutionary hero, first proclaimed Mexican independence and quickly raised an army of more than 100,000. Hidalgo proved to be something less than a brilliant military strategist when his forces were slaughtered at Guanajuato. Within a year he was captured and executed, a fate that befell many others who took up the cause before the decade was out. But Hidalgo's forces were never fully defeated, and those who survived took to the countryside, beginning a tradition of guerrilla warfare that continues today in Chiapas and Guerrero.

In the end, it was the lay and clerical elite that finally forged an independent Mexico, deciding that it might be able to maintain its wealth and power against Hidalgo's followers and successors if it was independent of Spain. But its victory settled very little.

For more than a hundred years, Mexico careened from crisis to crisis and from caudillo (strongman) to caudillo while its social and economic problems festered. To solve them, Mexico needed outside help, but this was not forthcoming due to the political instability the country experienced during a tumultuous century.

No historical figure exemplifies independent Mexico's difficulties any better than one of its first leaders, Augustin de Iturbide. Iturbide was a rather unscrupulous opportunist who manipulated Spanish emissaries

into granting Mexico its independence and making him the head of the first government. But pressures quickly mounted. When Spain rejected the agreement that gave Mexico its independence because the Mexican government was bankrupt, Iturbide responded by having himself declared Emperor Augustin I. In fact, Iturbide proved unable to rule other than through tyrannical means and, by the end of 1823, had been overthrown. It should be pointed out that U.S. intervention in Mexican politics began in these years, too, when its emissary, Joel Poinsett, made it abundantly clear that the Monroe administration did not approve of the Iturbide regime and left it financially ruined.

The most important political figure over the next thirty years was General **Antonio López de Santa Anna**, best known in the United States for his victory of the Alamo at San Antonio, Texas, in 1836. At home, Santa Anna has a considerably worse reputation, which Daniel Levy and Gabriel Székely describe as follows:

**Mexico's most despised, traitorous, duplicitous native son, in 1848 presided over the loss of roughly half of Mexico's territory in a war with the United States. Santa Anna's most consistent preoccupation was self interest. Among his favorite self-designations were Most Serene Highness, Father of the Country, Savior, and Perpetual Victor. It is a sad commentary on Mexico's political instability from the 1820s to the 1950s that the last title had some validity. Almost no one could establish a viable government and a viable economic base.**<sup>1</sup>

Santa Anna first appeared on the political scene in 1823 when he forced Iturbide into exile and then had him executed when he tried to return. Santa Anna dominated Mexican politics for the quarter-century that followed. Most of the time, he operated behind the scenes as a series of weak elected presidents and military officers tried to govern. Meanwhile, the country was torn by conflict between liberals and conservatives, largely over the economic and other powers of the church.

Santa Anna held on primarily because of his reputation for defending Mexico's threatened sovereignty, though it must be said that he was not very good at it! He did lead Mexican troops in overcoming Spanish forces attempting to regain their lost colony in 1830, but after that he fared less well. Although he defeated the Americans at the Alamo, he proved unable to win the war and keep Texas from gaining its independence. He also could not prevent the United States from seizing Texas and most of northern Mexico during the Mexican-American

War in 1848. After the war Santa Anna was exiled to Jamaica. Remarkably, he was asked back five years later to help restore order. This time he sold parts of what are now Arizona and New Mexico to the United States and used the money to support his repressive regime for two more years before the liberals finally overthrew him and exiled him to South America for good. For their part, the liberals were unable to secure their hold over Mexico City or much of the rest of the country. Nonetheless, they tried to promulgate a new constitution in 1857, launching the period of—and the war for—reform. In particular, they stripped the church of virtually all its wealth and civil power. In 1861 liberal forces led by the Indian general Benito Juárez finally entered Mexico City and took control of the entire country.

They were not, however, able to enact many of their other reforms. The years of war, intrigue, and chaos had taken their toll. Moreover, now that the American Civil War was under way, it was impossible for the United States to continue supporting Juárez. British, Spanish, and French forces saw this as an ideal opportunity to intervene, ostensibly to extract payment for their financial losses over the years. At first, Mexican forces defeated the invaders at Puebla on 5 May 1862. But the Europeans eventually forced President Juárez out of Mexico City and in 1864 installed the Austrian prince Maximilian and his Belgian wife, Carlotta, as emperor and empress. Quickly, the puppet emperor and the French forces that really held power realized that there were few riches to be had and that the Mexicans were not going to accept new foreign rulers. Within three years Juárez was back in Mexico City. Maximilian was executed, and Carlotta was sent into exile.

By the time of the 1871 election, political leaders were looking for someone new to replace the aging and less-than-effective Juárez. Attention shifted to one of his most successful generals, **Porfirio Díaz**, whose campaign for the presidency was based on the idea that no president should be allowed to be reelected. When no one won a majority of the votes, the nation turned to Juárez yet again. But he died the next year, touching off yet another period of violence and instability that culminated in a military coup by Díaz in 1876.

Thus began the longest period of dictatorship in Mexican history, led, ironically, by the man who had introduced the principle of **nonreelection** to political life. To his credit, Díaz did bring more than thirty years of stable government after a half-century of chaos. With the stability came considerable foreign investment and the first steps in the development of a modern economic infrastructure. Thousands of miles of railroads were built, as were oil refineries, sugar mills, and electrical generation facilities. But the growth came with a price. Order in

<sup>1</sup>Daniel Levy and Gabriel Székely, *Mexico: Paradoxes of Stability and Change*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987), 25.

the countryside was maintained by the ruthless mercenary *rurales*. Perhaps as many as 5 million peasants were forced back into servitude on the haciendas, many of which were now owned by foreigners. And, perhaps most importantly, the poor benefited little if at all from the country's economic progress.

### *The Revolution*

By the early 1900s Diaz's rule had sparked the same kind of broad-based opposition that had toppled earlier strongmen. In the countryside, loosely coordinated bands of peasants took up arms, including groups headed by the legendary Emiliano Zapata (1879–1919) and Pancho Villa (1878–1923). In the cities, liberals, too, found themselves increasingly frustrated. In 1910 the anti-Diaz forces found a rallying point in the meek Francisco Madero, who published *The Presidential Succession of 1910*, in which he pointedly used Diaz's own theme of effective suffrage and nonreelection against the aging dictator. Meanwhile, the new labor movement organized a series of crippling and often violent strikes in the mines and mills.

All the tensions came to a head with the 1910 presidential election. Madero easily won the nomination of his newly created Anti-Reelectionist Party. As the campaign neared its end, however, Madero was arrested on trumped-up sedition charges. Diaz was declared the winner even though there was considerable evidence that the election was rigged.

Right after the election, Madero's family bribed the government to secure his release on the condition that he stay out of Mexico City. He took to the countryside, gathering supporters and evidence about electoral fraud along the way. On 25 October Madero and his growing band of supporters issued the Plan de San Luis Potosi, which was a de facto call for rebellion against the Diaz dictatorship.

Madero received strong support from the United States and from popular leaders like Zapata and Villa. In early 1911 he left his base in Texas and waged a series of battles against a surprisingly weak federal army, which ended with the 21 May 1911 agreement that Diaz would abdicate and be replaced by Madero.

The revolution, however, was far from over. Madero proved to be a weak leader and he quickly lost the support of most of the other populist leaders, including Zapata, who rebelled only two and a half weeks after the new president was installed. He faced an uprising, too, from the old dictator's nephew, Felix Diaz.

Madero's rule came to an end after the so-called Ten Tragic Days and the coup staged by the manipulative General Victoriano Huerta in February 1913. Pitched fighting had broken out between forces loyal to Diaz and

to Madero. After his initial military leader was wounded, Madero appointed the untrustworthy Huerta as his new commander in chief. Before the ten bloody days were over, Huerta had defeated both Diaz and Madero. Madero was arrested on 18 February, resigned the next day, and was shot three days later. U.S. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson played a major role in these events, including the assassination of Madero.

Despite the American machinations, Huerta, too, was not to survive. A number of regional leaders, including Venustiano Carranza, refused to accept his presidency and took up arms along with Villa and others. Meanwhile, the Woodrow Wilson administration in Washington grew increasingly concerned with the European influence in Mexico—especially in the oil industry—and ended up attacking as well, occupying Veracruz for most of 1914. Between them, the U.S. invaders and Mexican rebels drove Huerta from office before the year was out, leaving yet another power vacuum in the capital. Marauding armies ravaged the countryside, ultimately resulting in the deaths of about 1.5 million people in a country that at the time had only 14 million inhabitants.

By 1916 Carranza, Zapata, and Villa were all forming massive armies of landless peasants, poor industrial workers, and others whose grievances were unmet and whose lives had been disrupted if not destroyed. Finally, by mid-1916, Carranza had defeated both Villa and Zapata and occupied Mexico City, forcing President Wilson to recognize his government. That fall, elections were held to choose a new constitutional assembly, which convened that December and brought perhaps the bloodiest six years of the country's bloodiest hundred years to an end.

### *Institutionalizing the Revolution*

On several different occasions in the course of this book, we have seen that new constitutions do not necessarily lead to sweeping political change. And, given the instability and violence of Mexican history in the century after 1810, there was no reason to believe that the new constitution of 1917 would do so, either.

Surprisingly, the constitution has lasted and has structured Mexican political life ever since. None of the problems have disappeared, but Mexico has largely been spared the widespread violence that characterized its first century of independence and that plagues many other third world countries today.

The new constitution drew heavily on the principles underlying the largely ineffective but popular 1857 document. Presidents and most other officeholders were denied the right to run for reelection. The power of the church was sharply limited. Foreigners were no longer

allowed to own Mexican land or mineral resources. Articles 27 and 123 endorsed the principle that the huge haciendas could be broken up, though not without compensation for their current owners.

At first, there did not seem to be much of a chance that this constitution would be any more successful than the earlier ones. Carranza understood the importance of the reforms but proved reluctant to put them into effect. Moreover, the new regime was quickly beset by many of the same problems as the old one, and its leaders proved only marginally less corrupt than their predecessors. The Carranza government turned on its opponents, assassinating Zapata in 1919 after luring him to a meeting supposedly to discuss peace. Zapata's forces, in turn, assassinated President Carranza the following year.

Carranza was succeeded by another general, Alvaro Obregón, who had risen to prominence by defeating Villa in 1915. Obregón undertook an ambitious program to expand public education and attempted to implement land reform, though only about 3 million acres of land, about half of which was arable, was turned over to the peasantry. After putting down a rebellion by Huerta's forces in 1923, Obregón duly turned power over to President-elect Plutarco Elias Calles when his term ended in 1924. Calles, in turn, attacked the church, provoking a right-wing and clerical counterrevolution from 1926 to 1929.

Then the succession issue reared its ugly head once again. Without Calles's support, Obregón chose to run for the presidency again in 1928, in clear violation of Article 23. He won the almost certainly rigged elections anyway, but he, like Madero, was assassinated before he could assume office for another term.

Outgoing President Calles displayed an all-too-rare sense of tact and commitment to democratic practices, and, for once, an assassination did not spark another wave of violence. More importantly, having realized that presidential succession was not going to be possible, Calles and his supporters found another way to provide continuity from one presidency to the next: create a political party that could control the nomination (and hence the election) of the next president. The first convention of their National Revolutionary Party (PNR) was held in 1929, and, after several name changes, it became the PRI in 1946. Calles and the men who succeeded him until 1934 also put the brakes on social reform. Land reform, in particular, ground to a halt even though Mexico still had the largest number of rich landowners in the world. In short, despite the revolution, most Mexicans still lived in misery, albeit less violent misery.

These were important years, nonetheless, precisely because Calles and his colleagues accomplished something that had eluded their predecessors—regularizing who governed in general and how the process of succes-

sion would occur in particular. Previously, time and time again, uncertainties about and divisions over the succession had plunged Mexico into turmoil and civil war.

Although the specific practices continued to evolve over the next decade or so, the basic principles that are still in use today were set by the end of the 1920s. The single party would control access to all political offices, but the various groups within the party would all win some of them. No president could serve more than a single six-year term. The outgoing president would consult widely within the party, but he would ultimately select the candidate to succeed himself.

### *Cárdenas and His Legacy*

The Great Depression that began with the U.S. stock market crash in October 1929 was to result in one more wave of reform. Not surprisingly, the depression hit Mexico extremely hard, provoking new demands for economic reform and new pressures from below. Disgruntled party leaders convinced Calles (who remained the behind-the-scenes political kingmaker) not to select another conservative as the next presidential candidate in 1934, but to turn instead to the populist Indian leader and minister of war **Lazaro Cárdenas** (1895–1970).

Cárdenas had developed the ability to reach out to the Mexican masses when he was governor of Michoacán in the 1920s. He drew heavily on populist and even Marxist themes in blaming Mexico's problems on capitalism and greed at home and abroad. In this, he was not terribly different from many of his contemporaries. Unlike them, however, he was able to translate the rhetoric into concrete accomplishments. The highlight of his **sexenio** (six-year term) was agrarian reform, in which his government redistributed more land than all his predecessors combined. In all, about 15,000 villages and a quarter of the population benefited from the reform. Roughly half the cropland was taken from the haciendas and given not to individual peasants but to collective or cooperative farms known as *ejidos*. Typically, an individual family farmed but did not own its own plot of land, and the *ejido* could take it back if it were inefficiently or dishonestly run.

Cárdenas is also known for nationalizing the oil industry. Mexico produced about a quarter of the world's oil in the 1920s, most of which was controlled by foreign firms despite the earlier nationalization of other natural resources. In 1938 Mexico took over the oil wells and refineries, placing them under the control of a single nationalized firm, **PEMEX**. This was not simply a nationalist act. Until the 1950s about three-quarters of the oil was sold to businesses at subsidized prices, which helped make rapid industrialization and economic growth possible.

Cárdenas was by no means the radical revolutionary the American press often portrayed him to be. However, he was not all that democratic a president, either. The radical policy initiatives came from the government, and not as a result of pressures from below. Potential opponents, including former president Calles and a top labor leader, were exiled to the United States. Moreover, it was during the Cárdenas presidency that the party established an official trade union, the **Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM)**, and two peasant organizations, which became the main cogs in the PRI's corporatist machine.

Problems mounted during the second half of his term in office. The nationalizations cost the Mexican government considerable support from Britain, the United States, and other countries. Most ominously of all, the reforms provoked enough opposition at home that there was talk of another armed uprising. Perhaps as a result, Cárdenas slowed down the pace of reform and turned his attention to building the party and planning for his own succession. Because of the problems looming at home and abroad, he chose the moderate Catholic minister of war Manuel Avila Camacho to succeed him instead of another reformer. And, unlike many of his predecessors, Cárdenas withdrew from politics after he left office, thereby strengthening the principle that all subsequent Mexican presidents have followed: The end of a president's term in office also marks his retirement from any kind of active role in political life.

Cárdenas's reforms were by no means an unqualified success. Land redistribution and the other reforms did little to eliminate poverty or inequality. The hacendados, for instance, were able to use loopholes in the law to hold onto almost all of the most productive land. Still, considerable progress was made toward some of the goals espoused during the revolution, and Cárdenas richly deserves his place as one of the most revered leaders in Mexican history.

Cárdenas's retirement is normally viewed as the end of the revolutionary period in Mexican history. Since then, Mexican politics has been dominated by conservatives, albeit acting in the name of a revolution now eighty years in the past. The key to this process is what Mexico's current foreign minister (and political scientist), Jorge Castañeda, calls the "peaceful and well-choreographed transfer of power."<sup>2</sup> In this system, the outgoing president chose the next PRI candidate for president, who, of course, was bound to win. And, as we will see in more detail, because the president determined who held every

**TABLE 16.2** Presidents of Mexico

NAME	START OF TERM
Venustiano Carranza	1917
Adolfo de la Huerta	1920
Alvaro Obregón	1920
Plutarco Elías Calles	1924
Emilio Portes Gil	1928
Pascual Ortiz Rubio	1930
Abelardo Rodríguez	1932
Lázaro Cárdenas	1934
Manuel Avila Camacho	1940
Miguel Alemán	1946
Adolfo Ruiz Cortines	1952
Adolfo López Mateos	1958
Gustavo Díaz Ordaz	1964
Luis Echeverría	1970
Jose López Portillo	1976
Miguel de la Madrid	1982
Carlos Salinas de Gortari	1988
Ernesto Zedillo	1994
Vicente Fox	2000

office in the country controlled by the PRI, he had tremendous leverage over what came next.

### *An Institutional Revolutionary Party*

It was through this process, in turn, that Mexico's revolution was institutionalized. Since 1940 Mexico has had eleven presidents. (See table 16.2.) The first two, Manuel Avila Camacho in 1940 and Miguel Alemán in 1946, were far more conservative than Cárdenas. Avila Camacho successfully cooled revolutionary enthusiasm and is known today mostly for introducing the country's first social security system. Alemán, however, shifted away from Cárdenas's policies and leadership style. Placing land reform on the back burner, he pursued rapid economic growth through industrialization, assuming that such progress would eventually provide a better standard of living to all Mexicans through what is called the trickle-down theory. The Alemánista model was not based on market forces, however. Rather, Alemán's approach stressed state ownership of a few key industries such as PEMEX and substantial state control over the private sector, which was largely controlled by the PRI. He was followed by the rather bland Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, who claimed to be trying to strike a balance between the Cárdenistas and Alemánistas but who is often called the Mexican Eisenhower because so little happened during his administration.

Then, in 1958, the pendulum swung marginally leftward with the next three presidents, Adolfo López Mateos, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, and Luis Echeverría. Although

<sup>2</sup>Jorge Castañeda, *Perpetuating Power: How Mexican Presidents Were Chosen* (New York: New Press, 2000), xi.

López Mateos called himself a leftist “within the revolution,” there was not much substance to his leftism. Echeverría tried to limit the cost of food and housing and to increase government control over some key industrial sectors. But, on balance, all three adopted the Alemánista approach to economic development. Even more importantly for our purposes, each proved willing to repress groups that raised objections to PRI rule, including the bloody crackdown on student demonstrators in 1968.

Many Western countries experienced major turmoil in 1968, as we saw in chapter 5 on France. The same was true in Mexico. Although many of the protesters involved in the demonstrations that swept the country that year returned to the PRI fold as adults, widespread disillusionment with the system set in for the first time. Since then, the PRI has had to face growing pressures for democratic and other reforms from outside the core of the system it controlled.

Under Echeverría, too, economic problems began to mount in the 1970s. Growth slowed, debt accumulated, and the peso had to be devalued. His successor, José López Portillo, stabilized the economy for most of his administration. The effects of the post-OPEC slump had begun to wear off, and economic growth picked up again. Political freedoms were expanded, making his one of the most open administrations since the revolution.

But the turnaround came in large part because López Portillo was able to impose wage controls and other austerity measures that kept labor costs down and increased the profits of middle-class and foreign investors. Moreover, there was ever more government corruption, and reports began to implicate the office of the president.

It was in López Portillo’s final year that the Alemánista model collapsed. With the steep drop in oil prices, Mexican debt skyrocketed from not quite \$49 billion in 1980 to over \$72 billion the following year. The government had to cut its budget and subsidies to industry and consumers alike. Conflict over wages and prices broke out, as government, business, and labor all found themselves strapped. The flight of capital out of the country accelerated.

The government had no choice but to turn to the International Monetary Fund and private banks for \$8 billion in loans. These agencies, of course, attached conditions to the loans, including pressuring the Mexican government to shift away from its state-dominated approach to industrial and overall economic development. The next presidential election was due in 1982, right in the midst of the debt crisis.

As it had done so many times in the past, the PRI followed the shifting political and economic winds, and in 1982 nominated a new kind of presidential candidate,



Former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

**Miguel de la Madrid.** Previously, most prominent PRI politicians had built their careers in the military, labor, or the interior ministry. De la Madrid represented a new generation of politicians, dubbed the “tecnicos,” most of whom had studied business or economics at prestigious American universities and had previously worked in one of the economics ministries. He spoke of “moral renovation,” democratic reform, and a shift toward a more market-based economy, but only in the latter did he make any significant progress. Foreign investment was encouraged. Public enterprises were sold off, especially those that were losing money. Public subsidies were cut, and thousands of bureaucrats were fired. Unfortunately, because interest rates remained high and the price of oil low, very little economic growth occurred, especially after the middle of his term.

Congressional and state elections during the second half of de la Madrid’s term showed that the PRI’s electoral grip was loosening. The conservative, business-oriented **National Action Party (PAN)** grew rapidly, won some local elections, and probably won two governorships that the PRI ultimately held onto through fraud.

Nonetheless, the de la Madrid administration continued to pay lip service to democratic and economic reform, which it claimed to have fostered with the selection of another young tecnico, **Carlos Salinas de Gortari**,

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## AN INTRIGUING PARALLEL

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This overview of Mexican presidencies since 1940 allows us to see a country whose evolution in many respects parallels that of the Soviet Union prior to Gorbachev. To be sure, the two countries had very different institutional arrangements, and Mexico never had anything approaching Stalinism. Nonetheless, the five most important themes in Mexican politics after Cárdenas mirror those we saw in the Soviet Union under Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko.

First, the Mexican system was stable. No leader has been willing to pursue policies that might undermine the regime or even provoke serious opposition. The practice of one president choosing his successor and the generally co-optive nature of the PRI were designed to maximize continuity in a country that had been in turmoil for decades.

Second, as the regime grew more stable and the PRI solidified its rule, social reform and the other goals of the revolution receded from center stage. As in Brezhnev's Soviet Union, of-

as presidential candidate for 1988—an election he won only through fraud and deceit. Salinas continued the generational change begun under de la Madrid. Eight of his twenty-two cabinet secretaries, for instance, had advanced degrees in economics or management and were in their early forties or younger, earning them the nickname “smurfs” to contrast them to the older “dinosaurs.”

The new market-oriented policies de la Madrid and Salinas so enthusiastically endorsed were as far removed as one could get from the egalitarian ideals of the revolution or of the Cárdenas years. So, too, were the corruption and the repression, which some observers believe included the regular use of torture and occasional killings by the authorities. The Salinas administration was able to keep a lid on the most serious problems. However, his retirement served to open the proverbial floodgates.

**Ernesto Zedillo** almost certainly won his 1994 presidential election fair and square. As soon as he took office, however, he was greeted by another financial crisis that required even more foreign loans. Soon, scandals reached the top ranks of the party, including the Salinas family. His government's and the PRI's popularity soon plummeted.

The most important recent event demonstrating that Mexico was nearing the end of a political era came with the 1997 congressional election. The PRI won only 38 percent of the vote and 48 percent of the seats. **Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas**, of the **Party of the Democratic**

official statements were always couched in revolutionary rhetoric, but the elite's primary goals lay elsewhere.

This concern with power brings us to the third, and perhaps the most important, theme—the elitism of Mexico's party state. The PRI was nowhere near as brutal as the old Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the PRI was the only institution that counted.

Fourth, the stranglehold on power was accompanied by quite a bit of corruption, though in the Mexican case it went far beyond the opulent living conditions of its equivalent with the *nomenklatura*. Most notably, PRI officials turned the rigging of elections into an art form, something they had to do in the 1980s and 1990s as their popularity declined.

Fifth, like the centralized planning of the command economy, the Alemánista model of state-sponsored development no longer seemed to work very well. And, like Gorbachev, the PRI may have waited too long to begin to change.

**Revolution (PRD)**, was chosen mayor of Mexico City in the first election for that post.

Then came the 2000 election. This time, the electoral reforms to be discussed in the section on political parties had progressed too far for the PRI to be able to steal another victory at the polls. Fox won the presidency handily, but his supporters fell far short of a majority in the Chamber of Deputies and actually trailed the PRI in the less powerful Senate.

What comes next is anybody's guess.

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## Political Culture

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Mexico has an important place in the history of scholarship on political culture. It was the only third world country included in Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba's pathbreaking study of the relationship between culture and democracy, whose findings were discussed in the chapters on Britain and Germany. Mexico was also one of ten countries covered in a mid-1960s anthology on the link between political culture and political development.

Since then, unfortunately, the study of Mexican political culture has gone into eclipse. This probably is the case because the liberal democratic biases in traditional studies of political culture make Mexico hard to understand in at least two respects. First, analyses based on individual attitudes about authority and the regime have

not yielded useful descriptions of Mexican culture itself. Second, to the degree that we understand it, political culture in Mexico has not been as important as those in Britain or the United States in determining what is politically acceptable.

But it would be a serious intellectual mistake to avoid the topic of Mexican political culture on two levels. First, on the one hand, when viewed in ways akin to what anthropologists mean by “culture,” it was a major force sustaining PRI rule. Second, on the other, we will also see that social and economic changes eroded some of these traditional values, and helped produce the more democratic Mexico that elected Vicente Fox.

In stark contrast to Iraq, there is a very real sense of national identification and identity among almost all Mexicans. There is a common language, mass culture, and history from which only a few non-Spanish-speaking Indians are excluded. And even they share a common religion with the rest of the country that, despite the anticlericalism of many Mexican regimes, is a powerful unifying force bridging all the subcultures.

This national identity rests, too, on what some scholars have more speculatively seen as the blending of Spanish and Aztec cultures starting in the sixteenth century. Both had strong doses of authoritarianism and corruption that became part of the Mexican political landscape from the beginning.

In many and often surprising respects, most Mexicans believe that the regime is legitimate. In particular, the revolution of 1910–17 remains a source of pride for almost all Mexicans, no matter how they react to the way its institutionalizers have ruled since then. And the more populist and revolutionary figures in Mexico’s past—Hidalgo, Juarez, Zapata, Villa, and Cárdenas—are still widely viewed as heroes. The term *revolution* is used to describe almost anything positive, and the PRI tries to associate everything it does with a revolutionary mythology. Nationally approved textbooks speak positively of revolutions in the Soviet Union and Cuba, not because the PRI is in any way Marxist but because this helps to legitimize Mexico’s revolution by linking it to “great revolutions” elsewhere.

Although anthropologists warn us not to exaggerate their importance, there have been trends toward authoritarian leadership throughout much of Mexican history. The revolutionary process, with its frequent turns to charismatic and, according to some, even messianic leaders, has at the very least reinforced those broader cultural traditions. Undoubtedly, all this made it easier for the PRI to build support for a strong presidency that, though shorn of the messianic, repressive, and even charismatic aspects, is highly reminiscent of these deeply rooted leadership styles.

Mexico (along with most of Latin America) is known for male dominance in all areas of life, not just politics. Historians debate why this side of Mexican culture exists. Some cite the Spanish conquistadors, and others stress aspects of precolonial social structures. Whatever the cause, women have historically played a relatively minor role in Mexican politics (they only got the vote for federal elections in 1953), which many observers are convinced is a sign of how strong values associated with machismo still are.

But, as is so often the case with stereotypes, the reality is much more complicated. As Mexico urbanizes, as women get more education and increasingly enter the workforce (they currently make up only 30 percent of it), and as social conditions deteriorate, more and more women are beginning to reject the macho side of Mexican culture and to demand a more equal role in social, economic, and cultural as well as political life. Also, other societies that rarely get labeled macho have similar track records as far as keeping political life a predominantly male preserve.

Mexican society is also noted for strong patron-client relations, or **camarillas**. The PRI depends heavily on patron-client networks extending down from the party elite to vote-mobilizing organizations all around the country. We will return to these in the section on how the president dominates the state. As we will see in the next section, as Mexico urbanizes and Mexicans get more education, the influence of the camarillas has eroded, taking with it much of the support for the PRI.

Along with these general trends, we can talk about at least four distinct Mexican political subcultures. To begin with, there are some people—certainly less than 10 percent of the total population—who would fit into Almond and Verba’s parochial category. Most of them are rural Indians who, as noted earlier, do not speak Spanish well, have not been integrated into the dominant national culture, and have not traditionally been active in politics. However, small groups of them have been involved in on-again/off-again uprisings in such poor states as Chiapas and Guerrero (which surrounds Acapulco).

Impressionistic evidence suggests that most Mexicans are what Almond and Verba called “subjects.” That is, they are reasonably aware of what the government is doing. But these Mexicans probably are not as disinterested in the system or as unaware of their potential to influence decisions as are archetypical subjects. Rather, they tolerate the system, assuming and/or knowing that there is little they can do to change what they take to be a powerful, corrupt, or evil government. In one observer’s words, they are “stoically fatalistic.” They are dis-



## USEFUL WEB SITES

There are surprisingly few web sites on Mexican politics, at least in English. Still, a student interested in Mexico will have no trouble finding material, because the few sites that do exist bring together a wealth of information.

As with most countries, there are commercial sites that have news, links, and other useful resources. The best is Mexico On Line.

**[www.mexonline.com](http://www.mexonline.com)**

Voices on Mexico is another service that provides a variety of material on the country.

**[www.unam.mx/voices](http://www.unam.mx/voices)**

In the academic world, the best sites are maintained by the University of Texas, the Communications for a Sustainable Future project at the University of Colorado, and Professor Alex Lopes-Ortiz.

**[lanic.utexas.edu/la/mexico](http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/mexico)**

**[csf.colorado.edu/ipe/latin.html](http://csf.colorado.edu/ipe/latin.html)**

**[www.cs.unb.ca/~alopez-o/polind.html](http://www.cs.unb.ca/~alopez-o/polind.html)**

proportionately older, poorly educated, rural, lower class, and female—precisely those groups that have benefited very little from the system and have the least well developed ideas about alternatives to it.

There are also quite a few people who clearly support the PRI and the system as a whole, just as there were in Brezhnev's Soviet Union. Some Mexicans undoubtedly still believe in the revolution and the party's commitment to carrying out its ideals. But they are probably few and far between. Rather, the regime's supporters tend to be those people who benefit from it. However large or small this subculture is, it is the one from which the leadership is selected.

Finally, there is an emerging anti-PRI subculture. The regime has always had its critics. Although very few people are willing to take up arms, anti-PRI opposition is growing, as is evident in the growing support for other political parties and the few interest groups not controlled by the PRI.

Most scholars also are convinced that broad-based support for the regime is eroding. This is not to suggest that cultural change is putting it in jeopardy. Indeed, there are no signs from the Fox administration's first year in power that it intends any sort of drastic constitutional reform. What's more, the PRI still has considerable support from the first three subcultures, even if this support

is gained more for the careers and benefits it used to offer than as a result of the values and beliefs of the citizenry.

## Political Participation

A generation ago, the focus here would have been on how the PRI was able to manipulate the way people participated in political life for its own ends. Then, as now, there were few legal restrictions on what people could do. The Mexican constitution grants the basic freedoms of a liberal democracy and universal suffrage for everyone over age eighteen. There is little or no interference with an individual's ability to exercise a religion, travel, own property, or choose a school for his or her children. There also is open and often heated debate in the press and on the floor of the legislature on almost every significant issue that comes along.

The regime did violate human rights more than we would expect in a true democracy. Strikes by railroad engineers in the 1950s and by telephone workers in the 1970s were forcibly suppressed. The government expelled peasants from land they had occupied in the 1970s. Most notoriously, government forces killed at least three hundred students in the so-called Tlatelalco massacre of 1968. During the infamous "battle of the streets" in 1980, Mexico City police officials "convinced" dissidents that their demonstrations clogged traffic and posed a danger to public safety, and so had to be stopped. Everyone understood that traffic was not the real problem and that if the protesters did not accept this ruse the police would be willing to use more drastic means. Some even claim that elements of the PRI were responsible for the assassination of its own candidate in the early stages of the 1994 presidential election. Because the government has been willing to resort to violence often enough, even veiled threats to use coercion usually work.

In comparative terms, however, the Mexican regime was not all that repressive after the revolution was institutionalized. Insead, the PRI was able to maintain its power by turning the clientelistic social structure into an umbrella organization that shaped what most people did politically most of the time. It usually did not have to rely on force to keep the opposition at bay and out of office. If it needed to, it could simply stuff the ballot box or resort to other forms of fraud to ensure that it "won" every election that mattered.

It is because of this distinction between the relative freedom of individual expression and the sharply limited opportunities to turn dissent into political power that political scientists were reluctant to call Mexico a democracy prior to 2000. The link between the free

**TABLE 16.3** Mexican Chamber of Deputies Election Results, 1976–2000 (percentage of valid votes)

YEAR	PRI	PAN	PRD AND ITS PREDECESSORS	OTHERS
1976	85.2	8.9	—	5.9
1979	74.2	11.4	5.3	9.0
1982	69.3	17.5	4.4	8.6
1985	68.2	16.3	3.4	12.2
1988	50.4	18.0	4.5	27.3
1991	61.4	17.7	8.3	12.6
1994	50.3	26.8	16.7	6.2
1997	38.0	25.8	25.0	11.2
2000	36.9	36.9	18.7	6.1

expression of political views and democracy is crucial because it is through elections and participation in interest groups that individual citizens have some control over who governs and what they do. It is this link between an autonomous civil society and the individuals in power that has largely been missing in Mexico.

To be sure, this civil society has grown considerably over the past generation. The PRI was also forced to accept reforms designed to make elections fairer and vote counts more honest and transparent. Together, these changes have produced a political landslide. In 1976 the PRI won fully 85 percent of the vote in the Chamber of Deputies election; in 2000 it only won 36.9 percent. (See table 16.3.)

It is because of the changes to be discussed next that political scientists are now more willing to think of Mexico as on its way to democracy.

### *The PRI and Its Hold on Power*

Mexico was sometimes called “semidemocratic” because the PRI violated democratic principles in order to keep itself in power. Elections were always officially competitive. However, everything from its willingness to all but buy votes to its stuffing of ballot boxes made it impossible to think of Mexico as anything like the kind of democracy we saw in South Africa, let alone in the countries discussed in part 2 ([www.pri.org.mx](http://www.pri.org.mx)).

The PRI was also a different kind of political party from any of those covered in the chapters on functioning democracies. Although the PRI has a formal institutional structure and holds regular meetings at which national issues are debated, it is not really a classical democratic party whose main goal is to build support for a particular viewpoint at the polls.

Instead, the PRI is an elaborate network of *camarillas* enrolling some 15 million members. These patrons and their clients are drawn to politics less by their ideologi-

## Conflict in Mexico

**OBSERVERS WHO call Mexico democratic often cite the relative lack of violent, antisystem conflict to support their claim. It is true that by third world standards Mexico has relatively little “outside-the-system” protest and little of the racial, linguistic, and ethnic strife that is now so common in the third world.**

**However, there are two countertrends. First, there has not been very much of it in part because the state has made it hard for potential opponents to organize, let alone express their discontent. Second, the amount of dissatisfaction with the PRI regime has been mounting for years, whether measured in the number of attacks by guerrillas in Chiapas or Guerrero or in the number of votes won by opposition parties.**

cal views and more by their desire for power and, sometimes, wealth.

At the grassroots level, the PRI’s organizers rarely talk about the “high politics” of government or national issues. Votes are won—or manufactured—in ways reminiscent of an American urban political machine of the early twentieth century. Votes are often bought either directly or through the provision of benefits for a given neighborhood, village, or social group. Fully 5 percent of the people who voted in the first-ever primary election to choose the PRI’s candidate for the 2000 presidential campaign told pollsters they had received payment for their votes. Loyal and effective party workers are rewarded with jobs that are abundantly available given the rules on nonreelection.

The PRI probably won most of its elections fairly. But it was also able to win when it even stood a chance of losing. Because the party also controlled the **Federal Election Commission (CFE)**, which was responsible for counting and validating election returns, it was easy for it to manipulate the results in a number of ways. Polling places were moved during the middle of election day, and, mysteriously, only likely PRI voters knew where they had gone. Some people voted more than once, and PRI supporters stuffed the ballot box with fistfuls of pre-marked votes. The vote count often bore little or no resemblance to the actual tally. Once the votes were in, *alquimia electoral*—literally, **electoral alchemy**—took place. A few days later, the CFE would report the official election results, which were widely viewed as fraudulent. As one recently “elected” PRI governor put it, “If it is fraud, it is patriotic fraud.”

Electoral fraud became a serious political issue in 1988 when, it is all but universally assumed, the PRI stole the presidential election. From 1985 to 1988, the opposition staged over nine hundred demonstrations to protest the cheating. After the 1989 municipal elections, opposition groups seized over a hundred town halls to protest alleged electoral fraud. In the demonstrations that followed, at least twenty protesters were killed by police.

Since then, elections have been conducted more honestly, but the corruption has hardly disappeared. In the months before the 1991 elections, about 8 percent of the voters (or 3.1 million people) registered to vote, but the CFE “lost” their enrollment cards. In the state of Guanajuato, Fox, then the PAN’s gubernatorial candidate, claimed that more PRI votes were cast than there were registered voters at several hundred polling stations. He also alleged that voting credentials were withheld from his supporters and used by others to cast multiple ballots for his PRI opponent. In this case, the corruption was so blatant that the PRI candidate had to step aside and cede the state to the opposition.

That said, the PRI campaigns are not merely pork barrel politics in action. Prior to 2000 the PRI used them to legitimize its rule, not simply by maximizing its vote but also by building broader awareness and support through a process that John Corbett calls “symbol saturation.”<sup>3</sup> In 1982 de la Madrid made nearly two thousand public appearances during his campaign. PRI symbols were everywhere—on posters, walls, T-shirts, and plastic shopping bags. Party leaders in Oaxaca gave prizes to workers who did the most to make the party known. Opposition parties did not have either the money or the activists to match the PRI’s efforts.

The bottom line is that the PRI always won—at least until the 1997 congressional election. Prior to 1988 it had never won less than 72 percent of the reported presidential vote or less than 65 percent of that for the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the legislature. It had never lost a presidential election. Through the 1985 elections, it had never lost a governorship and had failed to win only a single Senate seat. Even after its support began to erode in the 1980s, it was still able to maintain control of more than 95 percent of the country’s two thousand municipalities.

Like Germany and Japan, Mexico now has an electoral law that combines single-member districts and proportional representation for the Chamber of Deputies. It

has a total of 500 seats, 300 of which are elected from single-member districts. The rest are selected from party lists following a complex formula that brings each party’s representation closer to its share of the vote. Prior to 1997 no opposition party ever won more than nine single-member districts, which meant that the proportional side of the voting had no practical effect, because the PRI had already won an overwhelming majority of the seats before the last 200 were allocated. (See table 16.3.)

By the mid-1990s the PRI had been forced to accept sweeping reforms that made the 1997 elections by far the most honest since the revolution. A truly independent **Federal Electoral Institute (IFE)** was created to supervise the balloting. Voters were given registration cards with their pictures on them. Workers at polling places were given at least rudimentary training, and independent officials monitored the voting at most of them. Most importantly, the IFE developed a mechanism for reporting the vote tallies the night of the election, leaving the ruling party with little time to engage in its electoral shenanigans.

This new sense of fairness, combined with the social and economic problems facing the country, produced the most dramatic change in Mexican electoral history in the twentieth century. In 1997 the PRI lost its majority in the Chamber of Deputies. The PRI was still the largest party, but the PAN and PRD together won significantly more votes and slightly more seats.

The first election of the twenty-first century finally saw the PRI defeated. (See table 16.4.) The campaign went badly from the beginning. The outgoing president, Ernesto Zedillo, did not hand-pick his successor, although it was fairly clear that he supported Francisco Labastida, who ultimately won the nomination (see the section on the state). Labastida turned out to be a lackluster candidate who had to support an administration that had had little success in dealing with Mexico’s economic difficulties or with the rebellion in Chiapas, both of which reached crisis stage in the first days after Zedillo took office. As we will see shortly, the PRI also faced a formidable opponent in Fox, who had been on the political scene for more than a decade and had been running informally for the presidency since 1997. Although many observers called Fox’s victory an upset, it probably was not, because the polls showed that voters were looking for change.

Even before its first partial defeat in 1997, the PRI had weakened considerably. In part, this reflected the changes in the electoral system that made voting more honest, gave opposition parties more seats, and so provided people with more of an incentive to vote for them. This weakness also grew out of its policy failures, which we will

<sup>3</sup>John Corbett, “Linkage as Manipulation: The *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* in Mexico,” in *Political Parties and Linkage: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. Kay Lawson (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986), 335–336.

**TABLE 16.4** The 2000 Mexican Election

CANDIDATE/PARTY	PERCENTAGE VOTE FOR PRESIDENT	PERCENTAGE VOTE FOR CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES	NUMBER OF SEATS IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES	PERCENTAGE VOTE FOR SENATE	NUMBER OF SEATS IN SENATE
Vicente Fox/PAN	42.5	36.9	223	36.7	51
Francisco Labastida/PRI	36.1	36.9	209	36.7	60
Cuautémoc Cárdenas/PRD	16.6	18.7	68	18.9	17
Other/spoiled ballots	4.8	6.1	—	5.4	—

discuss toward the end of the chapter. Most importantly of all, its base of support was rooted in Mexico's version of **corporatism**, which had been eroding for decades.

In Germany, we saw that corporatism was used to smooth economic policy making. In Mexico, the PRI used it, instead, to secure its control.

Recall that an official trade union (the Confederation of Mexican Workers, or CTM) and two peasant organizations were created during the Cárdenas administration. Since then, other unions have been created for railroad, electrical, and telecommunications workers. Even journalists and photographers have their official PRI associations. Until recently, nearly all workers or peasants belonged to one or another of these quasi-official organizations, which blanket Mexican society and have played an important role in solidifying PRI support in three main ways.

First, they have provided Mexicans with tangible benefits that some theorists think are more powerful than the attitudes we normally associate with legitimacy. For example, more than 2 million families benefited from land redistribution during the 1950s alone. Government-sponsored health-care programs are often administered through these organizations. Photographers could buy inexpensive film only through their professional—and PRI-sponsored—association. Rest assured that the PRI made certain that people remembered who was responsible for providing such benefits.

Second, by tying Mexicans who were poor and powerless to the regime, the PRI was probably able to reduce the amount and severity of the protest it might otherwise have faced. Put simply, these organizations provided another example of the “causal arrow” running “downward” from state to society.

Third, these organizations gave the PRI a pool from which to recruit grassroots leaders and candidates. This, in turn, means that workers or peasants who saw themselves as potential leaders built their careers more by being part of the larger PRI machine than by being advocates for those they supposedly represented.

The PRI's hold on these organizations and their control of their constituents began to erode as the economic

crisis deepened and its own policies became more market oriented. In the late 1980s, in particular, the CTM engaged in a series of strikes at some of the maquiladora factories, apparently against government wishes. More importantly, as civil society expanded, the PRI found it harder to incorporate well-educated urban voters into any of these networks.

All this suggests that the PRI is in trouble. After more than seventy years in power, it has to start from scratch and create a new identity for itself as a party of opposition. This means, in turn, that it will have to develop new ideals and policy proposals it can use to rebuild support. And perhaps most damaging of all for the PRI, it has to do so with a declining base of support in Mexico's rural areas and among most traditional voters.

By early 2002, the PRI had begun something of a political comeback. In the fourteen state elections since its defeat at the hands of Vicente Fox in 2000, it won almost 42 percent of the vote, compared to just 27 percent for the PAN. It also staged a hotly contested election for its new leader in which Roberto Madrazo edged out Beatriz Paredes in a ballot that was open to all Mexican voters.

### *The Other Parties*

Unlike the former Soviet Union, Mexico has always had more than one party. However, until 1988, no opposition group posed a credible threat to the PRI. Some parties that were supposedly in opposition were actually funded by the PRI in a peculiar attempt to give the outside world the impression that Mexico was a viable democracy.

### **The PAN**

Until the late 1980s only one opposition party really mattered—the PAN (National Action Party). It was formed in 1939, mostly by people drawn from the Catholic Church and the business community who found Cárdenas's reforms too radical. During its first half-century the PAN was nowhere near strong enough to be able to beat the PRI. Its support was concentrated in the north and other relatively affluent areas of the country. There were questions, too, about whether the PAN was one of the par-



ties that accepted support from the PRI ([www.pan.org.mx](http://www.pan.org.mx)).

By the 1980s, however, the PAN was a viable opposition party, though it was still too weak to mount a serious challenge to the PRI. Nonetheless, it had staked out a strongly probusiness position for itself and even gained some verbal support from the Reagan administration. Most importantly, it had demonstrated that it could consistently win one vote out of six, even according to the official figures.

The PAN's first real breakthrough came with the 1983 local elections, when its candidate was elected governor of Baja California Norte. Its progress and image were blunted somewhat by the PRD's arrival on the scene in 1988 (to be discussed shortly), though even then the PAN's vote at worst held steady and, given the fraud that year, probably actually increased marginally.

The PAN has been the biggest beneficiary of anti-PRI sentiment since then. It won a full quarter of the vote in 1994 and 1997, which set the stage for its breakthrough in 2000.

The PAN's ultimate success cannot be separated from the personality of its current leader. The six foot five inch Fox is one of the most charismatic leaders Mexico has seen since Lazaro Cárdenas. He has a broad appeal because he can present himself as an earthy farmer (he has been known to give the finger to PRI politicians) and a savvy business executive given his U.S. education and career at Coca-Cola. And in 2000 he made a conscious decision to try to unify the opposition by appealing both to the left and to traditionally conservative, Catholic PAN supporters. He did this, for instance, by allying with Mexico's small Green Party to form the Alliance for Change and by associating himself with left-of-center intellectuals such as Jorge Castañeda and Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, who became his foreign minister and chief economic adviser respectively. The reforms of the 1990s also made elections largely publicly funded, which meant that the telegenic Fox had plenty of money to run Mexico's first "modern" campaign.

The bottom line is that Fox scored a resounding victory. He won an overwhelming majority among those who claimed that their primary reason for voting was to produce change. He also did extremely well among middle-class voters, women, and others who are at the core of the growing civil society. Finally, he convinced about 30 percent of the people who had voted for Cárdenas in 1994 to switch, thereby eliminating the possibility that the PRI could squeak into power again against a divided opposition.

What we can't determine yet is what Fox's victory means for the future of the PAN or the party system in

general. Whoever runs as its candidate in 2006 will not enjoy his popularity. Because it lacks a majority in Congress, the party has not been able to see all of its proposals enacted. In short, the PAN could well lose some of its support by the time the mid-term congressional elections occur in 2003.

## The PRD

In 1988 it looked as if the more serious challenge to the PRI's hegemony would come from a new and unlikely source—Cuautémoc Cárdenas, son of the last radical president, who had named him for the symbol of Indian resistance to Spain at the time of the conquest. The elder Cárdenas had criticized the PRI's conservative, antirevolutionary turn in diaries that were published after his death in 1970, which served to crystallize left-wing dissatisfaction with the government. This dissatisfaction continued to mount, especially after Miguel de la Madrid introduced his "liberal" reforms in the 1980s. Meanwhile, the younger Cárdenas emerged as the leading advocate of this new left.

In 1986 many of the leftists organized their own faction within the PRI. As soon as Carlos Salinas's nomination was made public, Cárdenas and labor leader Porfiro Muñoz Ledo dropped out of the PRI to form the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution). Cárdenas declared his own presidential candidacy and stressed many of the same populist themes raised by his father nearly a half-century earlier.

The PRD did surprisingly well in 1988. Cárdenas claimed that it actually won the election, which it was denied only because of the most extensive voting fraud in Mexican history ([www.cen.prd.org.mx](http://www.cen.prd.org.mx)).

The PRD was unable to maintain that strength during the 1990s. The PRI adopted new welfare and social service programs that ate away at some of the PRD's support. Some observers also claimed that it was too left-wing for the 1990s, a claim that may come back to haunt the party in the future as well.

The PRD did stage an impressive comeback in 1997 and finished in a dead heat with the PAN. Perhaps more importantly, Cárdenas scored a landslide victory in the Mexico City mayoral election, with 47 percent of the vote, or more than 20 percent more than his closest rival. He did poorly in 2000, however, as the PAN was able to appeal to the left as well as the right. Still, it has a major delegation in Congress and in many ways holds the balance of power, given that the PAN has to cooperate either with it or with the PRI to get legislation through. It also controls a number of cities, including Mexico City, and states, including Michoacan, which was won by





Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, former mayor of Mexico City and one of the country's leading left-wing politicians.

Lazaro Cárdenas, the grandson of the famous president, which makes him the third member of his family to have been governor there.

### *The People, the PRI, and Civil Society*

What we can say with some certainty is that Mexico is unlikely to return to the corporatist, camarilla-based rule of the PRI. This will probably be the case even if the PRI works out its internal difficulties and does not splinter, as some observers predict. Rather, this style of politics is not likely to succeed because of the changes in Mexican society that have led to the emergence of a viable civil society.

I could list the dozens of human rights, environmental, labor, and other associations that have made the front pages since the 1980s as evidence of this trend. Given the macho aspect of Mexican culture discussed earlier, however, there probably is no better single example to illustrate how much the country is changing than its burgeoning women's movement.

The modern Mexican women's movement is quite new. In the 1960s and 1970s it was limited almost exclusively to wealthy, educated women who had been influenced, among other things, by feminists from the United States and other Western countries.

Since the late 1980s the women's movement has broadened its appeal considerably. It started with a "historical accident," which so often plays an important role in political change. In 1975 Mexico City hosted a

### Democratization in Mexico

**UNDER THE PRI, Mexico was what political scientists call a "semiauthoritarian state." It had the trappings of democracy, including competitive elections and constitutional guarantees of basic civil liberties. In practice, access to power was highly limited because power itself was concentrated in very few hands, mostly those of the national PRI leadership, which was itself a self-perpetuating oligarchy. There were concerns, too, about how much those civil liberties were honored, especially with the upsurge in crime and corruption involving the police in recent years.**

**As a result, the 2000 election that swept the PRI from power for the first time since the 1920s marked a sea of change in Mexican politics. However, it will take a few years of expanding democratic practices, lasting at least until the next presidential election, before we can state that Mexico has become democratic with any degree of certainty.**

UN-sponsored conference to kick off International Women's Year, itself the beginning of a decade-long effort. It was hard for either the foreign participants or Mexican women to ignore the inequalities between men and women in Mexico when such an event was taking place there.

About that time, the earlier, rather elitist women's movement began to lose support and largely gave way to what has been called "popular feminism," which organizes poor and middle-class women in both the cities and the countryside. There is no single popular feminist movement. Rather, it consists primarily of organizations that come together around mostly local issues, ranging from the aftermath of the 1985 Mexico City earthquake to the lack of potable water or decent schools in small towns.

These organizations combined protests over the kinds of issues we see in feminist movements in most countries (for example, abortion, violence against women, and unequal pay) with concerns for the poor in general. Meanwhile, the economic changes of the past generation have created more employment opportunities for women at all levels, from manual and clerical workers to corporate executives. No one knows how strong these loosely organized movements are, though they certainly pale in comparison with the PRI and its officially sponsored women's organization. Nonetheless, it does seem safe to assume that, as Mexico democratizes and as economic developments further erode traditional social structures, these women's groups—along with other non-PRI movements—will grow dramatically.

## The Mexican State

### *The End of an Era?*

This section on the Mexican state has two main goals.

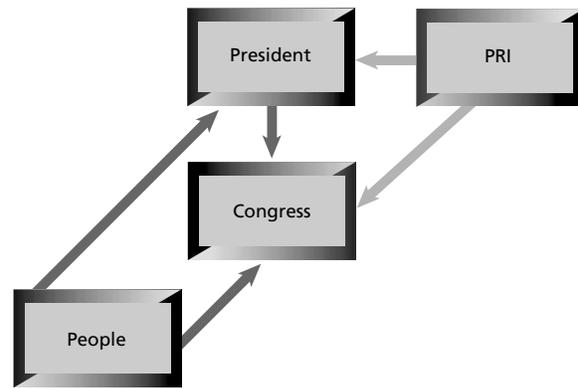
First, it describes the way the Mexican state operated under the PRI, with some early indications of how it might change under Fox. It should be pointed out from the outset that there have been no basic changes in state structures and procedures since Fox took office on 30 November 2000. Nor has Fox given many signs that he wants to change the formal rules of the game. Besides, he lacks the votes in Congress he would need to pass constitutional amendments. There is little doubt that the government is more open, but it remains to be seen how much of a difference this will make in terms of holding it accountable, changing policies, and the like ([www.georgetown.edu/pdba/constitutions/Mexico/mexico.html](http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/constitutions/Mexico/mexico.html)).

Second, the material on the Mexican state will also provide one final example of the fact that constitutional theory and political reality are often not the same. As the revolution was drawing to a close in 1917, the men who would later form the PRI wrote a new constitution that they supposedly patterned after the one used in the United States. Indeed, there are a fair number of parallels between the two—at least on paper. Like the United States, Mexico has a bicameral legislature, with a lower house that, until recently, elected members from single-member districts of roughly equal size and an upper house giving each state two seats. Both are federal systems in which state and national governments are supposed to share power. Both are supposed to have a clear separation of powers, so that the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the national government can “check and balance” each other.

In practice, the Mexican state has not been anything like the American. The constitution is not a sham document, as it was in the Soviet Union, written with the knowledge that it would never determine the way politics operated. Rather, the system turned into a semiauthoritarian and, until recently, highly stable one-party state because of a number of mostly informal and supposedly temporary arrangements that became a lasting part of the Mexican landscape as part of the way the PRI institutionalized the revolution.

### *Nonreelection and Presidential Domination*

One parallel with the Soviet Union was that real power over policy making was held in relatively few hands. Rank-and-file PRI activists and elected officials had little



**FIGURE 16.1** Traditional Decision Making in Mexico

influence over who made those decisions, let alone what they decided to do. (See figure 16.1.)

The PRI’s hegemony itself had two vital and overlapping components above and beyond its ability to “win” every election that mattered, neither of which has changed with the election of a non-PRI government. The first is the principle of nonreelection; the second is the concentration of power primarily in the hands of the president.

The principle of nonreelection, which exists at practically every level, means that a new president faces inexperienced members of Congress and state officeholders (many of whom are also dependent on him for their positions) and appoints people to all key bureaucratic and judicial positions upon taking office. In other words, any new president can bring in a whole new team and embark in new policy directions in ways that happen only during rare periods of realignment in more fully democratic systems.

The principle of nonreelection has another, equally important implication. Like everyone else, presidents cannot stand for reelection and are expected to leave political life completely at the end of their term. As Frank Brandenburg pithily put it, Mexico has been able to “avoid personal dictatorship by retiring their dictators every six years.”<sup>4</sup>

No recent president has had the unquestioned power of a true dictator. That said, any Mexican president is far more influential than his American counterpart, who, as we saw in chapter 2, has little more than the power to try to persuade people, who do not have to agree with him.

The constitution gives the president considerable leverage. He is allowed to initiate legislation, and virtually

<sup>4</sup>Frank Brandenburg, *The Making of Modern Mexico* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 141.

all bills of any importance originate in the executive branch. He can issue decrees on a wide variety of subjects, including the way a law is implemented, the transfer of funds from one account to another, and even the authorization of expenditures above original appropriations. But the president's real sources of power are informal, in the way the system has evolved over the years.

Although there was considerable variation in the way PRI presidents led, they all followed a common pattern driven by the constraints of the single, six-year term. For all intents and purposes, the president's term began before he took office, with the nomination and election campaign in which the candidate started to lay out his own agenda and style. Upon taking office, the president enjoyed a period of consolidation that lasted as long as a year and a half, during which he put his own team into place. It was primarily in the next two years or so that the president could implement substantial new policies of his own. In the last two years, his attention had to turn to the succession, and even before the election actually occurs, *de facto* power began to shift to the next president.

Presidential domination hinged on the way the president was selected. Because the president's political life concluded with the end of his term, the only chance he had to influence politics after his retirement was through the selection of his successor. Until Zedillo's administration, the outgoing president chose the next PRI candidate (and hence the next president) from the cabinet secretaries in office during the middle of his *sexenio*. The president was thus drawn from a very small and narrow pool of candidates. Beginning in the 1980s, most of them were relatively young men who were sons of PRI politicians, Mexico City-based, American-educated in economics or public administration, and part of the outgoing president's personal network of supporters. Salinas, for example, had been associated with de la Madrid since his student days, when he took a course from his mentor and the future president.

A little more than a year before the election, the party chair (himself a client of the president) released a list of perhaps a half dozen possible candidates to the press. Supposedly, the list was the result of a wide consultation within the party (though it is not clear that the president consulted at all widely) so that it could be subject to considerably broader scrutiny in the population as a whole (which it also was not). Within a few months, the president made his final choice known (though he usually knew it before the short list was presented), and all the other potential candidates jumped on his bandwagon. Only then did the party hold a convention to officially nominate the president's choice. The president-

designate then began his campaign by exercising the first of his many informal powers: determining who the party's candidates for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate would be.

The incoming president had tremendous latitude in filling other posts. The president directly appointed thousands of people to posts in the twenty-four cabinet-level departments and the hundreds of quasi-independent agencies and public corporations. Normally, only about 35 percent of those appointees held high office in any preceding administration, thereby providing the new president with an ample opportunity to assert his independence. He also selected the next chair and other leading officials of the party, thereby giving himself effective control over nominations for all lower elected offices.

The system of all-but-total presidential dominance may not continue even if the PRI returns to office. In March 1999 President Zedillo announced that he would not personally designate his successor. Instead, the PRI would hold an American-style campaign with debates among the contenders and then a primary election. Jorge Castañeda, who published a book on presidential transitions shortly before being named foreign minister by Fox, claims that Zedillo made it abundantly clear that he wanted Labastida to win the nomination and that, as a result, the party machine fell into step behind his candidacy.

No one knows how Fox will handle the succession, though it almost certainly will not be the same old *destape* (unveiling) or *el dedazo* (finger tapping). Fox may be able to determine who gets the PAN nomination, but even that is not a foregone conclusion, because he does not have the best of relations with the party's organizational leadership. Even if he does, that candidate will almost certainly be in a very competitive race, one that he (or conceivably she) might not win.

### *The Cabinet, the Bureaucracy, and the Judiciary*

The president's appointive power extends to the entire state, which means he has tremendous leverage over the way policy is implemented as well. Under the PRI, most important positions in the cabinet and bureaucracy were filled either from his personal *camarilla* or from a small group of other politicians who had the new president's trust. Others were chosen less on the basis of their positions on the issues the new government would face than on their personal connections ([www.mexonline.com/mexagncy.htm](http://www.mexonline.com/mexagncy.htm)). 

What this meant was that, even more than the society as a whole, the government was based on patron-

## VICENTE FOX



© AFP/CORBIS

Vicente Fox's victory forced the PRI from office for the first time in seventy-one years.

Born in 1942 to a wealthy farmer and devout Catholic, Vicente was educated at a Catholic university in Mexico City and then at Harvard. He returned home to work for Coca-Cola, helping the company beat out Pepsi for the number one spot in the Mexican soft drink market. Today, he manages a 1,200-acre ranch where he grows vegetables and raises cattle and ostriches for export. When he ran for president, he was divorced, but shortly after taking office he married his public relations adviser.

Fox is a political veteran. He was first elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1988. He ran for governor of Guanajuato in 1991 and probably would have won had the votes been counted honestly. He did win the seat four years later and almost immediately began his campaign for the presidency.

Fox is both charismatic and controversial. Although he claims to admire "third way" politicians such as Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, Fox has strong right-wing roots. He also tries to strike an earthy, populist tone despite his family's wealth. He rarely wears a suit, preferring blue jeans and a belt with a massive belt buckle bearing his name. He also does not shy away from controversial statements. During the campaign he referred to his opponent, Francisco Labastida, as a sissy and a transvestite.

Fox holding a press conference wearing traditional Indian clothing.

client relations. Virtually everyone in office owed his or her position to someone higher up in the hierarchy and thus, ultimately, to the president. Ambitious politicians enhanced their careers by exchanging favors with their patrons and clients, not by campaigning on their record or the issues.

There have been some changes over the years. At first, the PRI was little more than a loose coalition of revolutionary leaders held together by military officers turned politicians. Not surprisingly, the most important cabinet position and the source of future presidents was the minister of defense. As the regime indeed became institutionalized, the center of gravity shifted to **Gobernación**, the ministry responsible for internal security and the administration of elections. With the growth in the foreign debt and the emergence and other complex economic issues, the *tecnicos* came to dominate the PRI, and the various economic ministries became the most important stepping-stone. But this should not obscure

the basic point being made here: The *tecnicos*, like everyone else, rose to positions of prominence because of their personal connections in the shifting PRI constellation of patron-client relations.

Fox does seem to want to break this pattern. His cabinet consists of prominent politicians and business leaders, many of whom had spent years opposing the PRI. Many of them, however, do not have a long prior history with the PAN or with Fox himself, and so it remains to be seen how well his team will work together.

It wasn't just the cabinet, however. The rest of the vast government bureaucracy, which employs about one out of every five Mexicans, was also part of the PRI machine. The Mexican bureaucracy bears less resemblance to a classic civil service than any of the others considered in this book. No country in Latin America has traditionally had a strong, professional civil service that is recruited by merit, that willingly serves any government no matter what its ideology, and that provides

career-long opportunities to the men and women who join it. Mexico's, however, may be the least professional of them all.

Individual civil servants tend to move from agency to agency with their bosses, who, in turn, move more frequently than politicians in any other Latin American country. As with the Congress, there is so much turnover that it is hard for anyone to develop the expertise that comes from extended experience.

These bureaucratic weaknesses may not have been a serious problem when the demands on Mexican government were not very great. Now, however, they are a major contributor to Mexico's woes.

Mexico also has a Supreme Court with the power (on paper) of judicial review. But, unlike its counterpart in Washington, it almost never overruled an important government action or policy under the PRI. This is the case because even the judiciary is subject to presidential control. As in the United States, judges are officially appointed for life. In practice, judges, too, resigned at the beginning of each *sexenio*, allowing the incoming president to place his loyalists on the bench, as well as in the state houses, bureaucratic offices, and party headquarters. There are some signs that the court has become a bit more independent and aggressive since Zedillo, but it is far too early to tell if it can become an institution that regularly challenges any government's authority.

### *Congress and the Legislative Process*

As noted earlier, the constitution established a bicameral legislature roughly paralleling the American system. Members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected for three-year terms. Senate terms last six years, with half its members elected every three years.

Although the Congress has to approve all legislation, it has rarely been anything more than a rubber stamp. There was no Mexican version of cabinet responsibility that obliged the PRI's members in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate to fall in line behind their president, but they consistently did so because of the way power politics traditionally worked in Mexico.

The roots of congressional weakness lie in the same peculiarities of Mexican presidentialism that have been at the heart of this section so far. Members of each house can serve only a single term at a time. Therefore, it is impossible for them to develop the expertise or the seniority that make U.S. congressional committee chairs, for instance, so important.

Even more importantly, PRI members of Congress were subservient to the president, who selected all its

nominees. In the longer run, career advancement came only from building personal connections with more influential power brokers, not from making one's own mark in the legislature. Moreover, with the rise of the *tecnicos*, a congressional seat was no longer much of a stepping-stone for reaching the elite. Most members, instead, were PRI loyalists whose seats were rewards for years of effective party work.

As a result, prior to 1997 all significant legislation was initiated by the president and passed the Congress as easily as in parliamentary systems. Thus, the PRI voted as a bloc to confirm the questionable results of the 1988 election. The next year, it again voted unanimously to endorse President Salinas's bill to privatize the banks.

The 1997 election changed all that. Even though the PRI still held the presidency and a majority in the Senate, the PAN and the PRD held the balance of power. Because they did not agree on much and were not able to develop an alternative to the PRI's program, Mexico developed its own version of gridlock that students of the U.S. Congress should find familiar. And this remains the case today despite the Fox/PAN victory in 2000. There still is no majority in either house, and the country has no tradition of compromise decision making. Again, this is another area in which it is too early to tell how much change will occur under Fox.

### *The Federal System*

Much the same can be said for state and local governments. Mexico is a federal system, officially known as the United Mexican States. The country is divided into thirty-one states plus the Federal District (Mexico City). The states, in turn, are subdivided into more than two thousand municipalities, which are more like an American county than a city. Each state has a governor and unicameral legislature. Each municipality has a mayor and municipal council.

In practice, the states and municipalities have little or no power because the PRI dominated there as well. Despite the increase in support for other parties in recent years, the opposition controls only about 15 percent of the municipalities and a quarter of the governorships. In other words, state and local government has, for all intents and purposes, been another appendage of presidential power. Not only did the president select the PRI's candidates, but he could remove governors or mayors from office. Again as with the members of Congress, governors and mayors could build their careers only by strengthening their position in the PRI's network of patron-client relationships, something that rarely happened with a politician who rocked the party boat. In addition, each national

ministry maintained a federal delegate in each state to deal with overlapping jurisdictions and to make certain that the president's preferences were carried out.

Here, too, there were changes afoot even before 2000. By the mid-1990s it was no longer surprising when the PRI lost a state or local election. The PAN and the PRD have been developing enduring bases of support. By far the most important event here was Cárdenas's victory in Mexico City, which gave the PRD control over the Federal District, in which roughly one out of every six Mexicans lives. The PAN, too, has taken control of a number of northern states. And its governors, in particular, have begun trying to promote investment in their states, perhaps reflecting the party's roots in the business community.

### *The Military*

There is only one area in which the PRI's long-term control of the government has won nearly universal approval: curbing the political power of the military. The military repeatedly intervened in Mexican politics well into the twentieth century. Similarly, it remains an important and often uncontrollable political force in the rest of Latin America.

In Mexico, however, the military has been effectively depoliticized. The original PRI politicians were all generals, and in 1946 Miguel Alemán became the first civilian president in thirty years. However, over the past half-century, the military has been turned into a relatively disciplined force with a professional officer corps. The military does play a role in issues of defense and national security, which includes internal as well as external threats. But otherwise, unlike what we saw in Iraq, it stays out of politics.

There is now some concern about the military, though not with any threat of a coup. Rather, there is little doubt that at least some high-ranking officers are corrupt, including more than a few who have close ties to the drug lords.

### *Corporatism and Corruption*

Mexican politicians have never stressed individualism or the need to give the people as such access to the decision-making process. Rather, the emphasis has been on incorporating groups in a version of corporatism similar to that which helped create the integrated elite in France, Germany, and Japan.

Mexicans have taken corporatism further and turned it into something quite different. As we saw earlier, the government created and/or legitimized organi-

zations that at first glance looked much like the interest groups we find in industrialized democracies but that existed primarily to keep the PRI in office.

As such, they are part of the elaborate spoils system that is responsible for much of Mexico's corruption. Every political system (and for that matter, just about every organization of any sort) has some degree of corruption. It is, however, an especially serious problem in Mexico, where it is built into the very logic of the system.

It is impossible to determine exactly how much corruption there is in Mexico. Most analysts believe there are few totally honest PRI officials anywhere in the country. During the last year of a presidency—the so-called *año del hidalgo*—the outgoing president bestowed lucrative jobs and other favors on the faithful.

Most public enterprises have been mismanaged. Racketeering and embezzlement are commonplace. Before oil prices plummeted, PEMEX officials routinely accepted kickbacks from their suppliers, many of which they partially owned. Petrochemical union officials, in turn, demanded a share of workers' salaries as a condition of employment. The best estimate is that over the past half-century elites siphoned off about \$90 billion for their foreign bank accounts and investments, a sum roughly equal to the total Mexican debt.

Recent presidents have tried to crack down on some of these corrupt practices. De la Madrid had Echeverría's minister of agriculture arrested and the former head of PEMEX imprisoned. The former police chief of Mexico City was accused of involvement in the narcotics trade and, possibly, in the death of U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency officer Enrique Camarena Salazar. Antonio Zorilla Perez, the former head of a since-disbanded federal police force and a former PRI congressional candidate, was arrested in 1985 for his involvement in the murder of Mexico's leading journalist, Manuel Buendía. The former director of Mexico's largest mine, which had gone bankrupt, was also arrested, and charged with organizing a multimillion-dollar fraud.

Similarly, Salinas ordered the arrest of four leading stockbrokers, one of whom was among the PRI's leading contributors. He also promised free elections and released more than four hundred political prisoners the government had never even acknowledged were being held.

The crackdown went further under Zedillo. Dozens of people at or near the top of the PRI power structure have been implicated, including Salinas's brother, who was accused of ordering the assassination of the PRI's secretary general, Jose Ruiz Massieu. This, and accusations that the family had made tens of millions of dollars, forced former president Salinas to flee the country and live in exile in Ireland.

Even more appalling may be the case of another member of the PRI elite, Carlos Hank Gonzales, who played a critical role in getting Zedillo the PRI nomination. Hank had used his years in public life to become a billionaire, stating that “a politician who is poor is a poor politician.” One of his sons was caught trying to import ivory and skins of endangered species into the country. The Hanks are reportedly deeply involved in the drug trade and have been implicated in a number of murders, including that of the Catholic cardinal of Guadalajara in 1994. Needless to say, the likes of Salinas and Hank could only have gotten away with it because of their connections. Zedillo may have been more committed than his predecessors to the eradication of corruption. However, with the exception of Raul Salinas, he did not break the unwritten rule that no member of the top elite can be indicted.

## Public Policy

### *Debt and Development*

Had this book been written twenty-five years ago, we probably would have been viewing Mexico through a very different and far more optimistic lens. Its stable government had smoothed the transition from revolutionary egalitarianism to state-sponsored industrialization. An annual average growth rate of 6.5 percent was being translated into new enterprises, some owned by the state and some by the private sector, and into an improved standard of living for most people. Moreover, Mexico seemed to be breaking the bonds of dependency by building its own industrial base and relying less on imports.

This Mexican model of stable development is long gone. The sharp decline in oil prices in the early 1980s sparked a general decline that left no part of the economy untouched. Even more importantly, the last three PRI presidents abandoned what were essentially autarkic policies and adopted new ones more in keeping with the structural adjustment policies demanded by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other northern financial institutions.

It is far too early to tell if they will stimulate the rapid economic growth their advocates claim, let alone deal with poverty, inequality, and other issues that are low on their lists of priorities. In the short run, they have done little to stop the decline and have probably widened the gap between rich and poor.

### Early Success

Industrialization was aided in the 1940s by high wartime demand for Mexican manufactured goods, minerals, and labor in the United States. More importantly for our

purposes, it also was the product of a series of government policies that development economists call **import substitution**.

Despite the government's revolutionary origins and the huge role it was to play in industrial development, this was not a socialist policy. Rather, the government saw public ownership as providing it with more leverage over the economy, which it could use to stimulate growth. The government stepped in where the private sector could not or would not act—for instance, in extending the railroad, highway, electricity, and telephone networks or in keeping troubled industries afloat. Rarely did it take a private enterprise over for ideological reasons. We should not underestimate the state's power, because it did incorporate most of the major privately owned industries into the corporatist system. This made most of their owners and employees almost as dependent on the state as they would have been had their industries been publicly owned.

At the heart of these efforts was NAFINSA, the National Development Bank, which supplied about half the total investment funds. Much of that money did go to the public sector, beginning with the nationalization of the railroads and PEMEX in the 1930s. The expansion of the state sector continued over the decades. By the end of the 1970s, the government owned all or part of more than a thousand companies, including smelters, sugar refineries, hotels, grocery stores, and even a shampoo factory. The wave of nationalizations ended in 1982 when the banks were taken over during the last weeks of López Portillo's presidency.

Taxes were kept low, and the prices of such key commodities as oil were subsidized to spur investment. Tariffs, in contrast, were kept high, averaging about 45 percent of the cost of the product being imported. Almost 95 percent of all imported goods required expensive government licenses and, as with everything else involving the government, entailed lots of red tape and often substantial bribes.

The combined public and private sector efforts paid off. The economy as a whole grew by more than 6 percent per year from 1940 to 1980. Industrial production rose even faster, averaging nearly 9 percent for most of the 1960s. Agriculture's share of total production dropped from 25 percent to 11 percent, while that of manufacturing rose from 25 percent to 34 percent. Development was concentrated in relatively labor-intensive, low-technology industries, such as food, tobacco, textiles, machinery, iron and steel, and chemicals. Exports grew tenfold, and manufactured goods came to account for a quarter of the total. The peso was one of the world's most stable currencies because the government kept it pegged at 12.5 to the dollar from 1954 to 1976. All this growth oc-

curred without much of the inflation that was plaguing many other Latin American economies.

Don't let this picture mislead you into thinking everything was fine. Relatively little attention was paid to the equality and social justice issues that had led to the revolution in the first place. Social services programs were limited at best. For example, there was no unemployment insurance of any kind. Mexico's income distribution was (and still is) among the most unequal in the third world. Rapid industrialization brought with it congestion and pollution.

Nonetheless, when compared with the rest of the third world, Mexico was doing rather well.

### The Crisis

Although few economists or politicians realized it at the time, the economic boom began to slow during the 1970s. Neither the private nor the public sector proved able to spark the next stage in Mexico's industrial revolution, in which it would make more sophisticated, higher-technology products.

Moreover, at this point, the mismanagement of key industries became a problem. It was estimated, for instance, that PEMEX employed three or four times the number of workers it really needed. Rapid population growth meant that more workers were entering the workforce than there were jobs for. There was a dramatic increase in government spending brought on by the last wave of nationalizations and a belated attempt to deal with social problems. To make matters worse, government revenues did not keep up with spending, creating budget deficits that, in turn, led to the key external problem, the accumulating national debt.

The budgetary and investment fund shortfalls were filled by heavy borrowing, mostly from northern banks and governments. Because of the heavy debt load and ensuing political problems during prerevolutionary times, PRI governments had borrowed very little early on. In 1970 the total debt was only \$6 billion. But by the beginning of the López Portillo presidency in 1976, the debt was already \$26 billion, and it would reach \$80 billion by the time he left office six years later. Ultimately, the total debt would reach a peak of over \$107 billion in 1987, making Mexico one of the most heavily indebted countries in the world. Debt already accounted for 16 percent of its annual GNP in 1970. By 1987 its share was up to 70 percent, making Mexico a leader in the world's **debt crisis**.

The borrowing was just the tip of the iceberg. Whether it wanted to or not, Mexico was being drawn into the global economy, which made it harder and harder to retain import substitution. The artificially low rate at which the peso was kept made it difficult for

Mexico to import the new technologies it needed to continue its development. This, in turn, made investment abroad ever more lucrative, leading to a massive capital flight to the United States and elsewhere in the second half of the 1970s.

The government also made one extremely costly mistake. López Portillo based his economic strategy on the assumption that oil prices would remain high. The rapid price increases and supply uncertainties in the global oil market after the OPEC oil embargo of 1973–74 came just as Mexican production capacity increased. Then, after the Iranian revolution in 1979, oil prices shot up again. Therefore, Mexico began selling massive amounts of oil. From 1979 to 1981 alone, Mexican oil revenues increased from \$3.9 billion to \$14.5 billion and accounted for almost 75 percent of all exports and for 45 percent of all government revenues.

Oil revenues thus papered over many of the underlying economic problems. Nonetheless, budget deficits and overseas borrowing continued to mount. Increased imports of consumer goods outpaced the growth in exports. Inflation broke the 20 percent barrier for the first time. The low value of the peso and high interest rates abroad accelerated capital flight by the so-called *sacadores* (dollar plunderers).

When oil prices began to drop in 1981, the government assumed that the decline would be temporary. It was wrong. By the summer of 1982 the Mexican economy was on the verge of collapse.

The government responded by closing the foreign exchange markets in August and nationalizing the banks in September. But the economy reeled out of control. By 1983 inflation had topped 100 percent, and it remained high, reaching a peak of 159 percent in 1987. The economy actually shrank for three of the five years from 1982 to 1986. The peso was allowed to float freely, and the exchange rate went from 56.5 pesos to the dollar in 1982 to 1,460 in 1987. This had devastating consequences for a country that was so dependent on imports, most of which had to be paid for in ever more expensive dollars.

The economy suffered yet another jolt in 1985. A devastating earthquake in Mexico City cost the government somewhere between \$4 billion and \$5 billion, an amount it could not afford. Meanwhile, the price of a barrel of oil dropped another 50 percent, which cut export earnings from \$16 billion in 1985 to only \$9 billion the following year.

### Reform

The onset of the economic crisis led to two fundamental shifts in Mexican politics: the election of Miguel de la Madrid, and his government's agreement to debt

reduction plans demanded by the country's public and private creditors.

The PRI has never been ideologically homogeneous. Rather, like other dominant political parties such as the Japanese LDP, it is a loose collection of factions that support a variety of ideological positions. This diversity has given the PRI valuable flexibility, because on a number of occasions it opted for a presidential candidate who would set the country off in a new direction. Prior to 1982 this **pendulum effect** led to alternation between presidents who emphasized social reform and those who stressed economic development. But not until the election of de la Madrid had a president pursued policies that would increase the importance of market forces.

López Portillo thus chose someone with radically different ideas. To some degree, the outgoing president must have realized that policies like his would no longer work. To some degree, too, de la Madrid's nomination reflected the emergence of the *tecnicos* as a force in Mexican politics. Finally, his nomination was to some degree the result of his reputation for honesty and competence.

Whatever the exact reasons behind his nomination, de la Madrid took office in what amounted to a power vacuum. López Portillo's policies and his entourage were so discredited that de la Madrid started with a clean political slate and more latitude than most of his predecessors in recruiting his team, which included a disproportionate number of fellow *tecnicos*.

Despite forty years of import substitution and other policies designed to maximize Mexican economic autonomy, the country actually found itself more dependent on the outside world than ever. Under the best of circumstances, Mexico would have had trouble competing in the global market with its inefficient industries, limited investment capital, and overvalued currency.

The crisis made this difficult situation all but impossible. Moreover, it occurred at precisely the time that import substitution models were losing favor in international circles and being replaced by **structural adjustment**, with its emphasis on unrestricted trade in free markets as the best "engine" for economic growth.

Thus, the policies pursued by the last Mexican governments of the twentieth century had a lot in common with what we saw in India and South Africa. The one key difference was that Mexico adopted them earlier and more wholeheartedly.

No foreign bank or government dictated what Mexican policy had to be. Rather, the extent of the debt and the need for outside help in repaying it left the Mexican government in a far weaker position with far fewer options to choose from than it had had prior to 1982. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the massive bor-

rowing left the Mexican economy hostage to its creditors, who held the upper hand in negotiating deals to restructure the debt.

In short, the combination of the values held by a generation of leaders and the crisis conditions led to one of the most dramatic economic turnarounds in modern history. Quickly, the de la Madrid government adopted four overlapping sets of policies that the Salinas and Zedillo administrations continued and added to:

- **Debt reduction.** Even before he took office, de la Madrid began negotiations about debt repayment with the IMF, the World Bank, northern governments, and private banks. The most sweeping measure was part of U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas Brady's multinational plan that consolidated some loans, turned others into bonds, and reduced Mexico's annual interest payments to banks by one-third. The agreement also offered incentives designed to keep up to \$7 billion in capital in the country for future investment. Mexico still was paying an average of \$10 billion a year in debt service, reducing the interest but not the principal on most of its loans. Mexico suffered a second fiscal crisis in the first weeks of Zedillo's term in office when portfolio investors removed about \$5 billion in capital from the Mexican market, which sparked a run on the peso and forced Mexico to accept another expensive bailout package brokered by the United States. In other words, even with the Brady plan, past borrowing continued to plague the Mexican economy, forcing the government to take out yet more loans to pay off yesterday's debt and siphoning off money it could desperately use for other, more productive purposes.
- **Sharp cuts in government spending.** By early 1983 Mexico and the IMF had reached basic agreement on a severe austerity plan. Government spending would be sharply reduced in an attempt to cut the deficit by half within three years. Subsidies would be cut and the prices charged by such government agencies as CONASUPO, which provided basic foodstuffs at below-market prices, would be increased. The Salinas and Zedillo administrations actually cut government spending and raised taxes even further. They were able to keep the deficit low (1.25 percent in 1999) and bring inflation under control. However, the social service programs, which were never very good to begin with, were seriously compromised.
- **Privatization.** To truly give market forces a major role in the Mexican economy, the government de-

cided to give up much of its economic power by privatizing public enterprises, especially those that were a drain on public finances. In February 1985 the government made an initial announcement that 237 parastatals would be sold, and privatization has continued apace. Of the 1,155 firms the government controlled in the mid-1980s, only about 100 remain in state hands today. The government does, however, retain control of some of the largest and most important ones, including most of PEMEX. But Fox has indicated that he might privatize more of them.

The most significant privatization came in 1990 when the Salinas government returned the banks to the private sector. Actually, the first steps in that direction had begun within months of the initial nationalization, when the de la Madrid government allowed Mexican investors to buy 34 percent of the shares in any bank and foreign investors to purchase some nonvoting shares. With the 1990 decision, the state sold off most of its remaining stake in eighteen commercial banks, retaining only a limited, minority interest in some of them. The \$6.5 billion it raised was supposed to be used to provide basic services, including drinking water, sewers, electricity, schools, housing, and health care, but, in fact, little of it ended up there. All the signs are that PRI insiders were able to gain control of these companies and become wealthy overnight. According to one measure of wealth, Mexico had 24 billionaires in 2000, more than half of whom earned their wealth in the newly privatized banking system.

- **Opening up the economy.** The United States and the other creditors also insisted that Mexico open up its economy to more foreign investment. This began as early as the 1980s, but reached its peak with the 1994 implementation of NAFTA, which will remove all barriers to trade over the course of fifteen years. The government also agreed to join GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and its successor, the WTO (World Trade Organization), the body that shapes international trade policy and requires free-market policies. Policies designed to make the economy more market oriented removed many of the rules on imports, which made it easier to import needed new technologies. Only 6 percent of imports now require government licenses. Tariffs have been reduced on average to 10 percent, the lowest rate in Latin America.

In some ways, the opening of the economy has clearly paid off. A mini-“silicon valley” is developing in Guadalajara, where IBM, Hewlett-Packard, and other high-tech

U.S. firms are assembling computers for the Mexican market and even for export. Most of the new industrial development originally was concentrated in the north, where special laws have long allowed foreign firms to open maquiladora factories that use duty-free imported components, assemble intermediate or final products, and then export what they manufacture. In 1990 more than fifteen hundred of these maquiladora plants were making such products as GI Joes and Barbie dolls, televisions, and automobiles for American and Japanese firms. The rules have since been loosened so that similar establishments have been opened elsewhere in the country. Mexico is attractive to these firms because wages are about an eighth of what they are north of the border. In fact, wage costs are so low that some Nissans built there are actually being shipped back to Japan. One American consultant estimated that it would make sense for any American firm that spends as little as 30 percent of its total expenditures on wages to relocate the manufacturing parts of its business in Mexico.

Economists who focus on conventional measures of success and failure tend to rate the reforms fairly highly. Inflation is down, and in some years, so is debt. Growth rates have often been respectable, and there is a more visible middle class.

Scholars who focus on other issues are less optimistic, especially those who focus on equity. There has been something approaching a 50 percent decline in real wages. A total of 40 percent of the workforce is either unemployed or underemployed, and jobs have to be found for the million or so people who enter the workforce each year. About 40 percent of the population suffers from some form of malnutrition. Mexico's income distribution remains, in the World Bank's estimation, one of the world's worst.

While Mexico's yuppies are driving BMWs, listening to CDs on their Sony stereos, and buying Pampers for their children, millions of poor people still lack indoor plumbing, hot water, health care, and adequate housing. The government tried to soften the impact of the economic reforms on the poor through the creation of the Program for National Solidarity (PRONASOL) during the Salinas administration. PRONASOL provided federal grants to local groups that develop plans to alleviate poverty in their regions. In classic Mexican corporatist style, however, the program was administered through the president's office and was used as a way to solidify support for the PRI's reformist wing. In many people's eyes, it turned into little more than another body to distribute pork barrel benefits. It has since been abandoned.

It also is not clear how much development the policies will lead to if by development we mean sustained,



A man browsing the automotive shelves during the opening of the world's largest Wal-Mart, in Mexico City, in 1995.

AP/Wide World Photos

long-term growth. Some especially optimistic analysts think Mexico could be one of the next NICs, the South Korea of the early twenty-first century. Such development, however, works on the assumption that global markets will continue to grow and that trading patterns will favor a country with Mexico's location, pattern of industrial development, and labor force, none of which seems certain in these uncertain economic times. And even if Mexico does prosper, it is likely to have an exaggerated version of the distorted development we find in most of the supposedly successful third world economies.

In fact, only two things are clear.

First, there will not be significant economic policy changes under Fox. The preceding three PRI presidents had already done most of his work for him. Largely as a result of global pressures, the once revolutionary PRI had turned its back on egalitarian goals and adopted modern, market-oriented policies as fully and as quickly as any government in the world.

Second, Mexico is losing control of its own economy and development. It may turn out that the reforms lead to substantial growth and generate a lot of wealth. But much of the new wealth—and concomitant political power—will lie in the hands of the foreign investors who supply the capital and the foreign bankers who attach

conditions to their loans. For instance, U.S., not Mexican, telecommunications firms were lined up to buy the lion's share of Telefonos de Mexico. The U.S. government and private American firms are putting pressure on the government to allow outside investment in PEMEX and to increase the amount of oil it can sell in the United States even though the petrochemical giant is seen as a symbol of Mexican independence and national pride. Although the high-tech firms that have built factories in Guadalajara provide jobs and other benefits for people in the area, it is also true that the Americans control how those factories are run and repatriate almost all their profits back to the United States—just as they do with all the maquiladoras along the border.

With NAFTA, dependency on the United States is only likely to increase. It may become possible, for example, for an American firm to completely own its own subsidiaries or to buy previously Mexican-owned firms. The increased integration of the two economies will not be without benefits for Mexico overall or for its big-business community and the fortunate few who find jobs in the new industries. However, the benefits will be mixed because American firms will gain more from their access to inexpensive labor, raw materials, and services, as well as new markets to sell and invest in.

As Cuautémoc Cárdenas put it in an article in the influential American quarterly *Foreign Policy*:

No past Mexican regime has ever gambled its fate so completely on the political and economic support of the United States. This liberalization does not contribute to economic modernization or to the establishment of a healthy and equitable relationship with the world—particularly with the United States. On the contrary, it promotes an international division of labor that returns Mexico to its nineteenth-century status as a supplier of raw materials and cheap labor and a purchaser of consumer imports.<sup>5</sup>

It may well be that the proponents of a more open economy are right. These reforms could well be inevitable and may be the only viable way forward for Mexico. In time, they may produce the “trickle down” effects that benefit the poor. But the fact of the matter is, also, that they have eroded part of Mexico’s economic sovereignty and, with it, its national pride.

## ***U.S.-Mexican Relations***

### **General Patterns**

Leftist scholars who study the third world often write about the impact of the “north” and the leverage it exercises over the “south.” But they often have a hard time pinning down that impact because there is no single actor called the “north.” Rather, they are actually talking about a mixture of states, corporations, and financial institutions whose individual effects are often difficult to sort out.

This is not the case for Mexico, where the impact of a single country to the north, its corporations, and the international financial institutions it controls is all that really matters. Ever since 1821, the United States has had a tremendous influence on the way Mexicans live. And power does not flow only in that one direction. As we will see, Mexico retains considerable freedom to act as it wants in global affairs. Certain aspects of U.S.-Mexican relations can even work to the detriment of some Americans, as will probably be the case for workers in heavy industry under NAFTA.

Nonetheless, when all is said and done, the relationship is much the same as it always has been. The United States rarely tries to dictate Mexican domestic or foreign policy. But because of its size, wealth, and geopolitical power, far more often than not, Mexican policymakers

## **Liberalization and Globalization in Mexico**

**THE TRENDS** buffeting Mexico are not unique. Indeed, as we saw in the previous three chapters, globalization is a major factor in political life throughout the third world, and one of its most important effects has been toward a more liberal or market-oriented economy.

What makes Mexico unusual is the speed with which those forces hit the country and the directness with which its government reacted. Long one of the most autarkic of governments, the PRI all but overnight switched from import substitution to structural adjustment, rather than making the more typical and gradual transformation as we saw in chapter 13 on India.

follow U.S. wishes, especially when the issue at hand matters a lot to their counterparts in Washington.

Mexican foreign policy involves far more than merely its relations with the United States. However, the United States is a dominant presence in Mexican affairs to a degree that far exceeds the impact of one country on any other considered in this book.

One former U.S. ambassador recently remarked that he had once apologized to the Mexican foreign minister for having to raise a trivial matter. The minister told him not to worry because about 85 percent of his time was devoted to U.S.-Mexican relations anyway.

In other words, as we already saw with the economy, the United States plays a vital role in Mexican affairs. The same can hardly be said for Mexico’s influence on American politics. Again, to take trade as an indicator, Mexico may be the United States’s third-most-important trading partner, but exports to and imports from Mexico account for only about 5 percent of the U.S. total as compared with about two-thirds of theirs.

Similarly, when U.S. officials visit Mexico, they can count on working with the most important leaders in the country. Conversely, when Mexican leaders come to the United States, they normally spend the bulk of their time with relatively low-ranking officials, such as the undersecretary of state for Latin American affairs.

Recent U.S.-Mexican relations have been fairly peaceful and even cooperative, but historically there have been moments of intense tension and conflict. In fact, in one form or another, those tensions have existed from the beginning. U.S. intervention affected the course of the Mexican revolutions of 1810 and 1910, and almost

<sup>5</sup>Cuautémoc Cárdenas, “Misunderstanding Mexico,” *Foreign Policy* (Winter 1989–90), 113, 124.

everything in between. As the extremely nationalist journalist Gastón García Cantú put it:

**From the end of the eighteenth century through 1918, there were 285 invasions, incidents of intimidation, challenges, bombardments of ports, and subtractions of territory out of which seven American states were carved. No people in the world have had their territory, wealth, and security as plundered by anybody as Mexico has by the United States.<sup>6</sup>**

With the consolidation of the PRI regime, relations improved to the point that the United States no longer contemplated direct intervention in Mexican affairs. Still, by the time Cárdenas took over in 1934, U.S. interests controlled more of the Mexican economy than ever. His reforms did strain relations some, but not as much as they might have a generation earlier, in large part because the United States found itself facing far more serious threats elsewhere.

During World War II, U.S.-Mexican relations took a decided turn for the better when Mexico declared war against the Axis powers. Although few of its troops fought, Mexico supplied the United States with oil, food, and other raw materials that it could no longer get from its traditional suppliers. Moreover, the so-called *bracero* program brought Mexican labor to U.S. factories and fields, freeing Americans for military service.

After the war, the United States found itself with a global role for the first time as it became preoccupied with the communist threat. Given Mexico's stable, non-communist regime, it receded from center stage in U.S. foreign policy concerns.

This is not to say that tensions completely disappeared. Mexico frequently criticized U.S. foreign policy, especially the interventions in Latin America prompted by U.S. fears of communism. Thus, Mexico opposed the CIA-backed overthrow of leftist governments in Guatemala in 1954 and Chile in 1973. Mexico similarly supported Cuba's right to have a communist government while opposing such U.S. attempts to topple it as the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. The Mexicans were among the first to break with the Somoza family dictatorship and to support the leftist Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Later, they were among the most strident critics of the Reagan administration's support for the Contra counterrevolutionary movement after the Sandinistas won.

<sup>6</sup>Cited in Robert Pastor and Jorge Castañeda, *Limits to Friendship: The United States and Mexico* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 123.

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## AMERICAN FEARS OF MEXICO

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In a peculiar way, many Americans live in fear of Mexico, as we saw most visibly in the 1992 and 1996 presidential campaigns of Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan.

To get a first glimpse at this fear, consider the following incident. During the summer of 1991, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service began constructing a fourteen-foot-high wall along the border between San Diego and Tijuana. Ironically, the wall was made of metal slabs originally manufactured to serve as temporary runways during the Gulf War to liberate Kuwait. Even more ironically, at precisely that moment in history when we celebrated the collapse of a Berlin Wall built to keep East Germans from fleeing to freedom, the U.S. government was building what many Mexicans called a Berlin Wall to keep their citizens out of the United States.

On the one hand, Perot and Buchanan focused on the obvious fear of what many take to be uncontrolled illegal migration of Mexicans into the United States. Just below the surface lie other fears—of drugs, the economic drain many believe the third world countries impose on rich countries, the global population explosion, and the like.

On the other hand, these fears tend to blind people in the north to their own power, to their ability to determine what happens on the other side of the more often invisible wall that divides north from south.

There was an increase in tension between the two countries in the 1980s. In part this had to do with the Mexican economic crisis and its resentment of the U.S. role in forcing debt negotiations and the other policy shifts discussed earlier. In part, too, it had to do with the Reagan administration's dissatisfaction with Mexico's Central American policy and its open courtship of the PAN, which it saw as a conservative, procapitalist, and realistic alternative to the PRI.

U.S.-Mexican relations have improved considerably since the election of de la Madrid. Mexico's new pro-market policies meshed nicely with those of the Reagan, Bush, Clinton, and Bush junior administrations.

These improved relations, however, should not obscure the main point being made here. At all times this has been an unequal relationship dominated by a United States that has actively pursued its own interests, often without paying much attention to what the Mexicans wanted.

In this overview, then, we can see four key themes in Mexican foreign policy in general and in its relations with the United States in particular.

First, Mexican rhetoric under the PRI often was nationalistic. On one level, this is true of all countries, which naturally pursue what they perceive to be their own interests in international relations. But, perhaps because it has lived under the American shadow for so long, national pride is particularly important in Mexico whether expressed in formal policy or in textbooks.

Second, in the Estrada Doctrine of 1930, Mexico committed itself to opening and maintaining diplomatic and other relations with all countries, including those whose policies it did not support. At least rhetorically, it has consistently championed the equality of all nations, nonintervention in other nations' affairs, national self-determination, and peaceful conflict resolution. It has also been one of the few countries willing to grant political asylum to refugees of almost all political stripes.

Third, from a U.S. perspective, Mexico has pursued a somewhat left-wing foreign policy. As we saw earlier, it has been willing to criticize U.S. intervention in the third world and has generally supported what it takes to be the interests of the third world as a whole. This was evident, for example, in its sponsorship of the Delhi Declaration in which the leaders of India, Tanzania, Argentina, Sweden, and Greece, as well as President de la Madrid, came out against further expansion of the nuclear arms race. However, Mexico's leftism has always been pragmatic, especially when there was any danger of serious opposition from the United States. Thus, it never advocated a Sandinista victory over the Contras or gave more than token support to leftist rebels in El Salvador.

Finally, there is a strong undercurrent of wariness regarding the United States both in Mexican public opinion and in its foreign policy. On the one hand, Mexican leaders realize that they must get along with their powerful neighbor to the north, and life in the United States is attractive to most Mexicans. On the other hand, most Mexicans remain highly suspicious of U.S. policies and intentions. One recent poll found that 59 percent of those sampled thought of the United States as an "enemy country," and 47 percent claimed that their opinion of the United States had worsened during the 1980s.

Virtually no Mexicans take U.S. declarations that its policies are altruistic seriously. Instead, Mexican leaders realize that the U.S. presence and its influence over foreign policy are facts of life. Their protests and seeming intransigence have been on issues that are not terribly important or in ways that are not very threatening to the United States. In fact, to cynical observers, they have been designed to placate Mexican voters rather than to demonstrate any real Mexican autonomy.

## Immigration

In recent years no issue has revealed the unequal power in U.S.-Mexican relations more than the migration of millions of Mexicans to the United States. Migration between the two countries is not a new phenomenon. People have been moving from Mexico to the United States since colonial times.

It only became a serious political issue, however, after World War II. As we saw earlier, the United States actually encouraged Mexican migration during the war. However, with the defeat of Germany and Japan and the demobilization of millions of U.S. soldiers, the Mexicans became "excess" labor, and the United States began sending them home.

For the next forty years, U.S. policy followed a similar pattern. During times of economic expansion, immigration policies were loosened and/or U.S. officials turned a blind eye to the hiring of illegal or "undocumented" aliens. But when unemployment rose and Americans began to complain that illegal Mexicans were taking "their" jobs, the U.S. government tended to force the immigrants back out again.

In all, there were four major crackdowns—in 1947, 1954, 1964, and 1986. Whether economically justified or not, each was handled in a way that was bound to anger Mexicans. The 1954 program, for instance, was known as Operation Wetback and was directed by an army general as a military operation.

In 1986 Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act, which created an amnesty program for Mexicans who had been in the United States illegally for five years, limited further immigration, and, for the first time, imposed penalties on U.S. employers who knowingly hired undocumented workers. The act, of course, applied to all illegal immigrants, but it was widely perceived as an anti-Mexican act because something on the order of two-thirds of all undocumented immigrants were Mexican.

Despite the law and the efforts of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to close off the border, the immigration continues. The INS stops about 200,000 people a year trying to cross the U.S.-Mexican border illegally, but to little or no avail. No one knows how many people pay the "coyotes" (men who try to sneak people across the border) to get them into the United States and, sometimes, find them a job. Not surprisingly, a huge black market in counterfeit and stolen "green cards" and other documents has sprung up. Most experts think that somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000 Mexicans move to the United States each year, of whom only 50,000 or 60,000 do so legally.

Concerns now extend beyond immigration itself to its impact on U.S. society as a whole. For example, California has immigrants from dozens of countries, but the bulk of them are Mexican. Fears about the cost of providing them welfare, education, and other social services, and about the “dilution” of American culture, were key reasons behind Proposition 187, which passed in a referendum in 1994, and the various, so far unsuccessful, attempts to make English the only language to be used in official state business and in education.

None of these policies have had much of an effect—the immigrants keep coming anyway. Today, an estimated 3 million Mexicans are living in the United States illegally.

In most Mexicans’ eyes, U.S. immigration policy has been extremely biased and shortsighted. They note that many Americans believe that the roots of migration lie exclusively in Mexico, in the lack of jobs. Although most Mexicans will admit that migration strains U.S. educational, social service, and health-care systems, they argue that U.S. politicians overstate the problem. They point out that few undocumented Mexicans are taking jobs from Americans. Instead, most have taken jobs that Americans are no longer willing to do. They also point out that the migrants themselves are not the riffraff they are so frequently portrayed as being in the media. The immigrants disproportionately come from the most talented and dynamic sectors of Mexican society and include 10,000–15,000 professionals a year.

Similarly, they note that the United States has never fully acknowledged the benefits it gets from the migration or the role that its businesses have played in perpetuating the problem by hiring people they know are there illegally. And they complain that the racism and indignity that everyone of Mexican origin is subjected to are not even on the U.S. policy-making agenda. Further, they charge that U.S. policy does not address the root cause of the problem in Mexico itself. The Mexican government would prefer not to have migration serve as a safety valve for the discontent that might erupt if the migrants had to stay at home unemployed or underemployed. However, to deal with the social and economic problems they feel are at the roots of the waves of migration, Mexican leaders would rather see the United States invest billions of dollars to provide more jobs in Mexico rather than in trying to close the border.

This is the area in which Mexican politics may change the most during the Fox presidency. He has a unique relationship with President Bush. As we saw earlier, they share similar family origins and similar values. What’s more, Bush has electoral reasons of his own for wanting to gain more support among Hispanic voters.

Therefore, the first serious discussion of immigration reform occurred six months after the two men took office, but were put on hold after 9/11.

## Drugs

Similar arguments can be made about U.S.-Mexican relations regarding drugs. There is no question that the United States has a serious drug problem. There is also no question that many of the drugs Americans consume enter the country from Mexico. Marijuana probably generates more income in the poor state of Sinaloa than all legal crops (though it should be pointed out that marijuana is also the leading cash crop in California). In recent years, as U.S. drug enforcement efforts have made it harder to import drugs along the east coast. Thus, as much as 70 percent of Colombian and Peruvian cocaine enters the United States across the Mexican border.

During the 1980s the U.S. government decided that it would concentrate less on reducing the demand for drugs and more on cutting the supply in what the Bush and Reagan administrations called the “war on drugs.” And, as with immigration, this has led some Americans to blame Mexico for much of the drug problem. Also, after the murder of U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agent Enrique Camarena Salazar, U.S. officials were highly critical of Mexican authorities for their failure to do much about the problem and for their involvement in drug trafficking itself. Such criticisms surfaced again in the mid-1990s with the scandals implicating the Salinas, Hank, and other leading PRI families in the drug trade.

There is now considerable cooperation between policymakers and enforcement agencies on drug issues on both sides of the border. The CIA, FBI, and other U.S. agencies train Mexican officials, though they are also skeptical of the commitment south of the border.

In this case, the tension emerges less from misunderstanding than from the different national interests in the drug issue. Mexico itself does not have much of a drug problem; few Mexicans use marijuana, heroin, or cocaine. Moreover, even though the money is never included in official statistics and is never taxed, the profits from the drug trade amount to at least \$2 billion in additional income for Mexicans. In this regard, the Mexican government has good reason to resist Washington’s more drastic and invasive demands.

As with immigration, the point is not that U.S. policy is wrong per se. Rather, the problem is that it has contributed to the weakening of effective Mexican sovereignty. The Mexican government really has had no choice but to allow the DEA to operate inside Mexican territory, something Americans cannot ever imagine

AP/Wide World Photos (Jose Luis Magina)



Marijuana seized by Mexican authorities in 1996. Many Americans argue that the Mexican government is not doing enough in the war on drugs.

allowing another government to do on their soil! The Mexicans have been able to block some U.S. proposals, including one that would have allowed air force jets to pursue drug suspects into Mexican air space. But U.S. policymakers have largely turned a deaf ear to Mexican requests to pursue policies that address Mexican needs, particularly ones that would provide marijuana and poppy growers with the opportunity to make a decent living raising other crops.

## Feedback

The same ambiguity regarding democracy and Mexico that we have seen throughout this chapter exists with the press as well. Mexican newspapers, magazines, and television stations are ostensibly independent of government control. The mass market press, however, rarely took PRI governments on, failing to report on electoral fraud and other flagrant violations of the law and democratic principles because the government has considerable leverage over it. The PRI had a virtual monopoly over the sale of newsprint. It also provided chronically underfunded and understaffed newspapers with much of their information, which often found its way onto the front pages with next-to-no investigation or even editing. The largest newspaper chain and, until recently, the one television

network with a national audience were controlled by PRI loyalists.

Occasionally, the government did clamp down, as when it engineered the firing of the editorial team at the independent and often critical magazine *Excelsior* in 1976. But more often, the press censored itself. Mass circulation dailies and television news provided bland coverage and tended to avoid controversial stories altogether. Instead, they presented government proclamations and covered the actions of its leaders in ways that made them seem little more than propaganda outlets for the PRI.

That said, pressures to open up the media have been building for years and have already had an impact. There are more independent outlets, though most of these still only reach the relatively well educated and affluent. Now, of course, the PRI-dominated media are critical of the Fox administration. Similarly, the opening up of the economy and the technological revolution have brought in more media that are not controllable by the government, including satellite access to CNN and the U.S. networks' Spanish-language services.

## Conclusion: Mexico and the Third World

The most important theme in these pages on Mexico is the erosion of national sovereignty. Erosion of real national sovereignty is occurring every-



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where, but it is especially evident in Mexico and the other third world countries considered in this book.

Mexican governments are less and less masters of their own destiny. I don't want to overstate this point. Few countries are giving up their *legal* sovereignty. Still, as this and the other four chapters on the third world show, the growing interdependence of the world's economic and other systems is sapping all countries of at least some of the ability to determine their own destinies. This trend is especially marked in the third world, where governments lack the wealth and other resources of the liberal democracies in the north.

It may be that this "globalization" is inevitable and irreversible. This should not, however, keep us from thinking about the ways in which it is reinforcing existing imbalances in the distribution of wealth and power or from worrying about what the consequences might be as globalization continues.

## Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of Mexican politics presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the "right direction" or is on the "wrong track." If you were asked such a question about Mexico, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?
3. How did Spanish imperialism and the U.S. influence shape Mexican political life before, during, and after the revolution?
4. Why did the PRI emerge as the dominant political force in Mexico? How was it able to stay in power for so long?
5. What is the evidence for and against claims that Mexico is democratic? Which do you find more compelling?
6. Why has support for the PRI declined in recent years? What implications does that have for democratization in Mexico?
7. Mexico has been among the countries that has most fully adopted structural adjustment after having been among those to have most rigorously followed import substitution.

## Key Terms

Concepts	People	Acronyms	Organizations, Places, and Events
Camarilla	Cárdenas, Cuautémoc	CFE	Confederation of Mexican Workers
Corporatism	Cárdenas, Lazaro	CTM	Federal Election Commission
Debt crisis	De la Madrid, Miguel	IFE	Federal Electoral Institute
Electoral alchemy	Díaz, Porfirio	NAFTA	Gobernación
Import substitution	Fox, Vicente	NIC	Immigration Reform and Control Act
Maquiladora	Salinas, Carlos de Gortari	PAN	Institutional Revolutionary Party
Mestizo	Santa Anna, Antonio López de	PEMEX	National Action Party
Newly industrializing country	Zedillo, Ernesto	PRD	North American Free Trade Agreement
Nonreelection		PRI	Party of the Democratic Revolution
Patron-client relations			
Pendulum effect			
Sexeño			
Structural adjustment			

Why was this the case? What impact has the shift in economic policy had on Mexican politics?

8. What impact does the United States have on Mexico?

9. Mexico entered new and uncharted territory with the election of Vicente Fox in 2000. What patterns in its political life do you think will be most likely to change? To stay the same?

### Further Reading

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Mexico's preeminent political scientist, who is now foreign minister in Fox's government.

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Levy, Daniel C., and Kathleen Bruhn, with Emilio Zebadua. *Mexico: The Struggle for Democratic Development*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. A good overview of Mexican history focusing on the obstacles preventing the development of democracy.

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Warnock, John. *The Other Mexico: The North American Triangle Completed*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1995. The best left-of-center critique of the PRI and structural adjustment.

**EXPLORING with the CD-ROM**

The third world has the largest number of countries of the three main types covered in the book. Not surprisingly, the countries differ among themselves far more than those covered in either part 2 or part 3.

The MicroCase data provide you with quantitative evidence of how difficult life is in most of the third world. As with parts 2 and 3, the exercise begins by guiding you through a series of maps that demonstrate how much poorer and less democratic the third world is than the industrialized democracies and most of the current and former communist regimes. The exercise then takes you “inside the third world” to explore the links between interethnic conflict, the fighting of civil wars, continued poverty, and the difficulty in establishing stable democracies in Africa in particular and the third world in general.

The third world, however, is also home to some promising innovations, including micro-credit, which is helping millions of families escape poverty. South Africa has a new constitution, and its Truth and Reconciliation Commission is an institution that has been adapted for use in at least fifteen other countries. The CD-ROM contains both the constitution and the executive summary of the commission’s final report. Read them to see how the leaders of the “new” South Africa have tried to use the law to create and support their multiracial democracy.

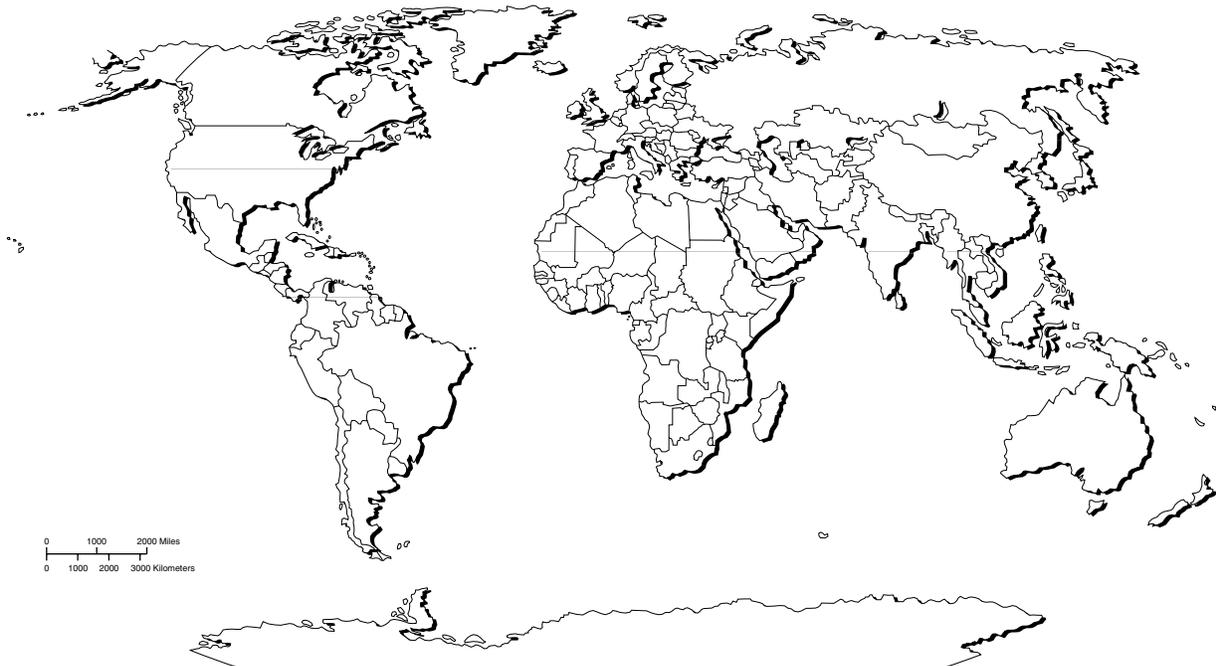
Finally, readers who were shocked by the conditions in most third world countries may also find Charles William Maynes’ article “America’s Fading Commitments” unsettling. Maynes is one of the leading mainstream analysts of U.S. foreign policy. In this article, he chronicles the declining support for foreign aid and other forms of development assistance in the United States. Although other developed countries have not followed Washington’s lead, the size of the United States means that its cutbacks have had a significant impact on the third world. Written in 1999, Maynes’ article and others like it deserve our renewed attention in the wake of the events of September 11.

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# DANGER . . . AND OPPORTUNITY

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Crisis
- Danger
- The Wheel of Fortune
- Constraints on States and Citizens
- Opportunity: A Change in the Way We Think
- Conclusion: Student and Citizen



*Sometimes I wonder if we put all the problems on a circular board, all the proposed solutions on an outer wheel, and just spun away, and implemented each solution wherever it stopped on the wheel, whether we wouldn't do as well.*

RICHARD FEINBERG

## Crisis

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I began this book with a discussion of September 11. I will begin concluding the book with it as well.

There, I used the attacks that day and their aftermath as a lure, to show you in the first paragraphs of this book why politics in other countries matters. Here, I want to use them to begin putting everything we have covered since those first few paragraphs in perspective.

In other words, the events of 9/11, like many of the other examples in the body of this book, offer us a great way to end it for two reasons. First, we can use them to sum up what we have seen in the course of sixteen chapters and a semester. Second, and more importantly, we can use all those facts, dates, names, and places to help make sense of the world we live in and to illuminate what we could or should do about its problems.

The events of 9/11 began one of the most important political crises of recent years. The unexpected and, to some, previously unimaginable magnitude of the attack amounted to a political wake-up call. So, too, did the later anthrax attack and the growing realization that the United States and other countries could readily be the targets of biological, chemical, and radiological attacks as well.

These were by no means the world's first serious terrorist attacks. And, as we will see in more detail in this chapter, they were certainly not the first or even the most intellectually compelling evidence that **globalization** is a phenomenon we need to take seriously. Nonetheless, the attacks were a powerful, visible, and unavoidable symbol of the dangers we all face.

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*Note:* I have dealt with the issues in this chapter in more depth in two other books, *Beyond Confrontation: Transforming the New World Order* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996) and *International Conflict Resolution* (London/New York: Continuum Books, 2001).

As the days and weeks wore on, however, there were signs of better things to come. The United States worked better than ever with its traditional allies and made great strides with other countries with which it had had less amicable relations, including Russia and China. And it wasn't just the United States. There is ample evidence, for instance, that the horrors of 9/11 finally convinced the Irish Republican Army that it had to begin handing in its weapons as the last major step toward peace in Northern Ireland.

I wrote this edition of the book in the shadow of 9/11, and it is thus not surprising that it is filled with similar "bad news/good news" stories. The good news starts with Tony Blair's adoption of the third way following a generation of ideological division in Britain. We also saw the "thirty glorious years" in France after decades of economic stagnation. We saw how the Japanese economic "bubble" burst and how recent governments have done little to spark the economy. We saw how countries as different as Germany and South Africa overcame generations of racism and authoritarian rule and became democracies marked by racial and ethnic tolerance. We saw China and Russia take different paths away from a totalitarian past even as Iraq became, if anything, more authoritarian. Finally, we saw Mexico and India make major changes in their political and economic policies as a result of pressures from both their citizens and the international financial community.

But this conclusion is not simply a list of "good news/bad news" examples from the book. Rather, I want to take this discussion to another level so that you can put the two themes of its subtitle—global challenges and their domestic responses—in perspective. To do so, we have to think of them as part of an interconnected global **crisis**.

I use the word *crisis* in a particular way that has its origins in both the Greek and the Chinese languages. The English word *crisis* has its etymological roots in the Greek *krisis*, which literally means "a turning point." Doctors use the term in this way to define the moment when a patient is in a life-or-death situation. The ancient Chinese brought together two characters to convey what we mean by crisis. The first is the part of a crisis we in the West pay the most attention to—danger—and the second has to do with opportunity. In the paragraphs that follow, *crisis* will be used in both senses of the term.

People have dealt with crises since time immemorial. Our ancestors faced and overcame them time and time again. Today's evolutionary theorists are convinced that all life (and not just humanity) made major strides forward whenever it adapted effectively to a radical new change in its environment, something the dinosaurs

were not able to do during a period of global cooling some 60 million years ago.

Many things happen in a crisis. However, the “success stories” all have one common characteristic. To understand the dangers and seize the opportunities, people had to think “outside the box,” to develop new and creative ways of understanding their problems and then solving them.

This was certainly true in the aftermath of 9/11. Many people who work, as I do, in the field of conflict resolution had to grapple with the need to bring the perpetrators of those horrific acts to justice, which seemed to require the use of force. Many hawks in the national security agencies of Western governments had to grapple just as hard with the realization that there was no purely military way of eliminating terrorism.

From this perspective, the terrorist attacks and the war against terrorism are but the “tip” of a much larger political “iceberg.” This chapter, then, will give you a first glimpse at some new ways of thinking about political life. You can use them both to sum up what you have learned and to prepare to deal with such issues later in your educational career and your life as a citizen.

The picture that follows in the rest of this chapter is an ambiguous one. Just as in the sixteen chapters that came before it, it conveys a mixed message. Some parts of it will strike you as reflecting some of the world’s more ominous problems. Other parts will strike you as indicating real rays of hope and—even more importantly—tangible accomplishments.

In so doing, I don’t mean to be confusing. Rather, as I will suggest throughout the chapter, any period of dramatic change brings with it unexpected and unpredictable difficulties. But it also opens the door to new social, economic, and political possibilities.

## Danger

**A**s is often the case with a new and controversial issue, political scientists do not agree on the issues associated with globalization that we should be focusing on. You will therefore encounter dozens of equally insightful formulations of what globalization is and what impact it is having. What follows is simply one version, which revolves around four overlapping dangers.

### *The Growing Cost of Violence and War*

No one who has seen videotape of the planes slamming into the World Trade Center needs to be reminded of the cost of war. To be sure, there have been other and more



AP Photo/Tom Hanson

The last standing fragment of the World Trade Center towers in New York.

brutal conflicts around the world. However, the image of the collapsing towers and the more than three thousand lives lost is as powerful a symbol as we have of the realities of violence and war.

In this sense, the costs of war and violence are not new. Indeed, they have been a part of the human experience ever since the beginning of recorded history.

However, over the past century or so, they have escalated for two central reasons. First, new technologies have led to the production of newer and ever deadlier weapons. Second, interdependence and now globalization have turned many local disputes into at least regional conflicts and, in some cases, like the war on terrorism, an all-but-global one.

During the cold war most people were preoccupied with the threat of nuclear war, because it could have meant the end of civilization as we know it. Millions would have died in the countries that fired missiles at each other in an all-out war. Millions more in “noncombatant” nations would have died as well from radiation-induced diseases in the months and years that followed. Global economic and communication networks would have been hopelessly disrupted, spreading even more chaos, illness, and death. Controversial studies about a possible “nuclear winter” showed that the explosions would have hurled enough dust and soot into the atmo-

sphere to cause an extended period of dark skies and low temperatures leading to permanent and irreversible ecological effects—much like the climatic changes that scientists believe wiped out the dinosaurs.

With the end of the cold war, the chances of a major nuclear war have all but disappeared—at least for now. As a result, analysts have been able to focus on the impact conventional war, and even the preparation for it, has had on states and their citizens over the past half-century or so.

During the cold war, the United States and the former Soviet Union saw virtually every conflict in the third world as a kind of **zero-sum game** that would end up with a single winner and loser. Each side feared that it would lose yet another country to the other's camp. Superpower conflict did not entirely explain why the many wars fought, for example, in Central America over the past half-century began. Their roots lie in long-standing economic and ethnic antagonisms. But the perception that regional war reflected East-West tensions meant that each superpower was willing to pour in billions of dollars in aid, and sometimes its own soldiers, so that "its" side didn't lose.

The consequences were wars of gargantuan proportions, most of which turned into bloody stalemates. Regional wars typically dragged on without a decisive victory for either side and without a resolution of the underlying differences that sparked the conflict in the first place. Even when wars did yield winners and losers in the conventional sense, the winners didn't really earn a lasting or clear-cut victory. For instance, a generation after the fighting ended, Vietnam, the nominal "winner" against the United States, remains a poor and devastated country. Even with the death of well over 100,000 people and the devastation of the Iraqi population, Saddam Hussein remains in power a decade after the Gulf War ended. Meanwhile, none of the issues that led to war, other than the occupation of Kuwait, have been settled. And now, global wars are being fought between well-armed, wealthy states and loosely organized, international bands of terrorists who seem willing to do anything in support of their cause—including killing themselves.

Of the countries considered in this book, Iraq has suffered the most from war and other forms of political violence in recent years. Few of the others, though, have been spared.

Meanwhile, vital social needs have gone unmet. The countries that gave rise to most of the terrorists in the al-Qaeda network share the poverty that is so widespread in the third world and that is in such sharp contrast to the power and wealth symbolized by the Pentagon and World Trade Center respectively.

Overall, the governments of the world spend approximately \$2 million *per minute* on defense. During that same minute, sixty children die somewhere on the planet for lack of food or affordable medication.

Similarly, the nations of the world spend more than \$1 trillion on the military each year. Although his figures are now outdated, Harry G. Schaffer once eloquently summed up how we could use that trillion dollars to meet social needs in this country. I leave it to you to figure out how that sum of money could be used elsewhere, where the needs are even greater:

**With that amount of money, we could build a \$75,000 house, place it on \$5,000 worth of land, furnish it with \$10,000 worth of furniture, put a \$10,000 car in the garage—and give all this to each and every family in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Arkansas. After having done this, we would still have enough out of our trillion dollars to build a \$10 million library for each of 250 cities and towns throughout the six-state region. After having done all that, we would still have enough money left out of our trillion to put aside, at 10 percent annual interest, a sum of money that would pay a salary of \$25,000 per year for an army of 10,000 nurses, the same for an army of 10,000 teachers, and an annual cash allowance of \$5,000 for each and every family throughout that six-state region—not just for one year but forever.<sup>1</sup>**

### *Environmental Abuse*

In the past few years, attention has been drawn to a second set of human actions that could also lead to an equally devastating, if more gradual, catastrophe—the abuse of the environment. There's nothing new to the assault on our physical surroundings. At least since the beginning of the industrial revolution, people have been worried about the consequences of our actions. Read a novel like Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, and you'll see that even in Victorian England people were aware of the harm the soot from thousands of coal furnaces was doing. America's first environmental movement during the progressive years of the early twentieth century was in large part a response to the wretched conditions in the cities that the aptly named muckraking journalists wrote about. But it is only in the past few years that the destruction of the environment has reached dangerous proportions.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were only 1.6 billion people on the planet. Now there are

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<sup>1</sup>Harry G. Schaffer, "What a Trillion Dollars Would Buy," *Republic Airlines Magazine*, Oct. 1986, 24.

nearly 6 billion of us, and that number will reach 9 billion or more before population growth could even begin to level off in the middle of the century.

What's more, we wield technological powers that take a far greater toll on our surroundings than anything the muckrakers of Teddy Roosevelt's day could have imagined. Back then, people had little impact on the whole ecosystem. They could largely ignore the by-products of material progress. They could cut down trees, deplete the soil, pollute the rivers, and poison the air. People paid a price for those actions, but the system as a whole was able to replenish itself.

Now, there are far more of us, and our lifestyles have changed. We produce more and waste more, and we are taking a far greater toll on the environment. Since the late 1960s, some often rather dire warnings have drawn people's attention to a host of environmental concerns, some of which are global in scope. For our purposes, a brief consideration of two of them should be enough.

First is the depletion of the **ozone layer** in the stratosphere. Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) molecules escape from a number of everyday products and rise until they reach the ozone layer, where their chlorine is released. The chlorine begins destroying the ozone, which, in turn, means that more harmful ultraviolet rays reach the earth. These rays not only cause skin cancer but also kill the single-celled organisms that live at the top of the oceans and that are essential to the entire food chain.

CFCs have destroyed an average of 0.5 percent of the available ozone each year since the late 1970s. There is already a substantial hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica, and periodically one appears above the Arctic and the northern United States as well. The major industrial nations of the world agreed to reduce rates of CFC emissions by at least half before the end of the twentieth century. But this can only slow down the damage, because CFC molecules already up there will continue destroying the ozone for the next century.

The dangers are just as clear in the second environmental issue, which is receiving a lot of attention now—**global warming**, also known as the greenhouse effect. As long as there have been animals, they have released lots of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere and oceans as one of their waste products. Until this current lifetime, nature's natural mechanisms were able to regulate the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> and other potentially toxic compounds within limits that would continue sustaining plant and animal life indefinitely.

Now, however, that balance is in jeopardy. The industrial and other activities humans engage in put almost about as much CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere as all those natural processes combined. CO<sub>2</sub> is a by-product

of the burning of fossil fuels and the cutting down of trees in tropical rain forests, which removes CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Then we magnify the damage by burning the trees, thereby creating even more CO<sub>2</sub> for the atmosphere to absorb.

As the CO<sub>2</sub> and other gases, such as methane, rise, they begin to act much like the glass walls of a greenhouse. They let the sun's rays in but don't let much heat out.

The surface of the planet is gradually heating up. Scientists are not sure how much of this warming is due to the greenhouse effect, nor do they agree about how much hotter it is going to get. Nonetheless, average global temperatures have already increased by one to two degrees Fahrenheit over the past century, more than they had changed over the previous 10 million years.

If we continue emitting CO<sub>2</sub> at our current rate (and even if the Kyoto Protocol goes into effect, there will not be much of a reduction), average temperatures could rise by somewhere between three and thirteen degrees by the middle of the twenty-first century.

No one knows exactly what will happen. Polar ice packs could melt, and the oceans could rise by as much as seven feet. Coastal areas along the U.S. Atlantic seaboard could be permanently flooded. The Great Plains might be too hot and dusty for people to inhabit, and they might flock to the Yukon and Siberia looking for jobs and a hospitable climate. As in the great ice ages, global warming could so disrupt things that untold numbers of species disappear, including many plants and animals that we depend on.

The greenhouse effect and the depletion of the ozone layer are only the most visible examples of how human actions are destroying the fragile life support system that not only people but all of life depends on. We are still gobbling up the fossil fuels that make the Middle East (so much a part of 9/11) so politically important, as well as other nonrenewable resources. Emissions from industrial plants are being carried by winds and then reappearing as acid rains that are permanently killing fish in Canadian lakes, destroying the Black Forest in Germany, and damaging medieval buildings in Poland—all hundreds of miles from the source of the pollution. Improper storage of toxic wastes and other industrial activities are leaving an ever-growing number of people without drinkable water everywhere from the Love Canal in Buffalo, New York, to much of Africa. Radiation from Chernobyl contaminated the reindeer herds the Lapps depend on for their food and income. The air in Mexico City is so filthy that it may never be healthy to breathe it again. No one yet knows what to do with nuclear and other hazardous wastes or how we are going to replace petroleum and other nonrenewable resources when they run out.



AP Photo/Janduari Simoes

Burning the rain forest in the Amazon basin.

The ecologists and atmospheric scientists who have been studying these phenomena have discovered that our planet is remarkably resilient. It has been able to absorb all kinds of changes over the millennia and still manages to sustain life. But, they worry, it can only “bend” so far. Sooner or later, they fear, we will take the earth beyond the point at which a sustainable environment, and hence much if not all of life, is possible. We do not know for sure where that point lies. But we do know that we are approaching it faster and faster each day.

### *The Perilous Global Economy*

Of all these trends, the most difficult to understand, and perhaps the most important for the medium term, is the growing **interdependence** of the world’s economy. To see just how much the rest of the world is part of our daily lives, look around your home. Identify where your clothes, electronic gear, athletic equipment, and everything else come from, and you’ll undoubtedly end up with a long list of countries.

The **international political economy**, as academics call it, involves, of course, much more than the consumer goods you have in your house or apartment or dorm room. In fact, unlike traditional international political and diplomatic relations, it is all but impossible to put our fingers on it in any kind of readily describable way. Still, the trends political scientists and economists have been following, particularly since the **OPEC oil em-**

**bargo** of 1973, are as ominous as those regarding war or the environment. To be sure, not all the signs are negative. There is more wealth and more people lead better lives than at any previous point in human history. At the same time, the disparities between most rich and poor nations and between the rich and poor within most nations are growing. What’s more, the global economy seems increasingly unpredictable and resistant to control or manipulation.

As we saw throughout part 4, the most important of these global economic trends is the growing gap between the rich nations, mostly located in the Northern Hemisphere, and the poorer ones, mostly located to the south. Whatever indicator of economic performance we choose—GNP, quality of life for average people, debt—we find tremendous imbalance. There is nothing new to the internationalization of economic life. It was in part his opposition to the subsidies the government was paying to the British East India and other trading companies that led Adam Smith to write *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776. “Gold” joined “guns” and “glory” as the three “g’s” that sparked the colonization of much of Africa and Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Now, however, for the first time, international economic forces may be on the verge of outstripping domestic ones. It is not easy for the United States, still the richest nation on earth, to address any of its pressing economic problems. After their first victory at the polls in 1981, French Socialists set out to, as they put it,

“reconquer the domestic market.” But they failed miserably, graphically demonstrating that even the fourth-strongest capitalist economy could not successfully adopt policies sharply at odds with dominant global trends. Even Japan is referred to as a “fragile superpower” because its prosperity depends on the maintenance of existing markets, trading patterns, and energy supplies, any of which could be easily disrupted.

It is not just Japan but the entire international economic order that is fragile. The “ups” and the more frequent “downs” since the OPEC oil embargo have shown just how vulnerable all countries are to global economic forces that seem beyond anyone’s control.

And, again, the attack on the World Trade Center provides a powerful symbol of that integration. The dead were not all Americans. In fact, people from companies in over forty countries were working in the building and were killed when the towers collapsed. What’s more, the attacks led to a worsening of the recession that was already taking hold in the United States and Europe, because of sharp drop in business confidence and consumer spending in the weeks that followed 9/11.

### *Lives Without Dignity*

The current international political economy is difficult to understand because its workings seem so abstract, filled with technically complex measures of growth or debt and open to many different interpretations.

But it is not merely an abstraction. The difficulties and uncertainties of the past decade or two, coupled with the military spending and environmental decay, have taken their toll on the way people live. Put bluntly, a surprising—and to most observers, an unacceptable—number of people lead lives without dignity.

Even the most powerful nations are not free from life’s indignities. Over the past few years, we have seen news reports of a drop of ten years in Russian life expectancy. Americans have grown painfully aware of the millions who are homeless, lack health insurance, or form part of an urban underclass that has no reasonable chance of escaping a generations-long cycle of poverty.

We do not yet know what the human costs of our environmental wastes are, let alone what they will be, because we have yet to begin keeping records of what are often subtle effects that only become clear after a period of years. Nonetheless, we do know that deforestation in Africa leaves an ever-growing number of families without wood to cook their food and contributes to the drought that covers a growing part of the continent. We know that it is unhealthy to breathe the air in Mexico City and Los Angeles, drink the water in Moscow and

St. Petersburg, or eat produce grown near the nuclear power plants that have had accidents in the United States and the former Soviet Union.

This all boils down to a simple fact: A huge proportion of the world’s people—in some areas as much as 40 percent—go through life without their basic human needs being met, however we define that concept.

Many of my students told me during the fall 2001 semester that the first pictures of the third world they had ever seen came from the post-9/11 coverage in Pakistan and Afghanistan. These students came to class and talked about how shocked they were both by the poverty the people there endure and by the combination of hopelessness and anger they saw in so many of those people’s expressions.

And this takes us back to where we began this section on the “danger” side of the global crisis, because it seems only reasonable to assume that such deprivation will spawn more and more conflict and will continue the cycle of war and violence. It may be that clerics in the religious schools along the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan are teaching a generation of Muslims to hate the West. It may be, too, that it is easy for them to do so because of indignities these young people have to put up with every day.

### **The Wheel of Fortune**

**A**s we saw in the first sixteen chapters, these are the issues politicians and average citizens around the world are grappling with. So far, however, they have not had much success, prompting Richard Feinberg’s statement at the beginning of the chapter likening policy making to some kind of depressing real-world equivalent of the popular television show *Wheel of Fortune*. (If you still need to be convinced that the world is shrinking and that life is increasingly interdependent, King Features, the producer of *Wheel*, has been syndicating the rights to the show around the world. Now, about thirty countries have their own, locally produced versions of the show, their own equivalents of Pat and Vanna, and their own contestants shrieking “big money” in their own language as the wheel spins and simplistic phrases are gradually revealed on the board.)

There is no shortage of plausible solutions to some of these problems. In 1988, for instance, Lester Brown and Edward Wolf of the Worldwatch Institute concluded their annual *State of the World* volume with a detailed proposal for creating a sustainable environment and a thriving economy for the planet as a whole by the end of the century. The price tag was remarkably low. It would

have cost under \$200 billion a year for the rest of the twentieth century, though that figure would be somewhat higher today.<sup>2</sup> This may seem to be a lot of money, but it isn't much more than a drop in the global bucket. It is a bit more than half of what the United States spends on defense each year.

Take another example. Students of the late Buckminster Fuller have developed something called the World Game. On a gymnasium floor, they unroll a map of the earth that is about seventy feet long and forty feet across. The "players" who come are distributed around the world according to population. (Thus, if one hundred people show up, about twenty will be Chinese, another twenty will be from the Indian subcontinent, and so on.) The organizers then give the players from each region its share of such global resources as food, energy, money, and weapons. During the course of an afternoon or evening session, the players try to improve their region's lot by trading these resources back and forth. In the process, they come to see that there are many alternatives to the current distribution of the resources, some of which seem a lot better. You can now also play a version of the game on the Internet ([www.worldgame.org](http://www.worldgame.org)).

I am not trying to suggest that the Brown-Wolf plan would work or that solving the global crisis is no more complicated than playing a board game. Rather, I am simply pointing out that there is no shortage of policy alternatives for people and their governments to adopt.

What gets in the way is politics—the process of actually making decisions about the allocation of power and resources. In this sense, politics has always been the problem, as we have seen throughout this book. And, because both power and resources are in short supply, politics engenders conflict and all the difficulties that come with it.

In some respects, the political difficulties stem from the newness of many of the issues we face. I spent much of late 2001 working with colleagues in the academic, NGO, and foreign-policy-making worlds. Whatever our intellectual and political differences, we all struggled to make sense of what happened on 9/11 and to determine what we should do about it.

That said, there are two other common denominators hindering our ability to make progress in confronting the broader issues raised in this chapter, as well as those emanating out of 9/11, that will be the focus of the rest of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup>Lester Brown and Edward C. Wolf, eds., *The State of the World 1988* (New York: Norton, 1988), 170–188.

## USEFUL WEB SITES

There are hundreds of web sites on globalization. Few, however, get far from the polemical. Two that do are Globalization 101, from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Ruud Lubbers, former prime minister of the Netherlands and currently United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

[www.globalization101.org](http://www.globalization101.org)  
[globalize.kub.nl](http://globalize.kub.nl)

There are a number of good sites on conflict and conflict resolution, including September 11 and related issues. CRInfo is an Internet portal for the field. The Swiss-based International Security Network does an excellent job with conflict, especially regarding ethnicity.

[www.crinfo.org](http://www.crinfo.org)  
[www.isn.ethz.ch](http://www.isn.ethz.ch)

Finally, this chapter draws heavily on my past work with the Foundation for Global Community and my current work with Search for Common Ground.

[www.globalcommunity.org](http://www.globalcommunity.org)  
[www.sfcg.org](http://www.sfcg.org)

## Constraints on States and Citizens

**M**y reading of the evidence is that the first of these common denominators is expressed in the subtitle of this book. Increasingly, the problems we face are global in nature, yet most of the time, most of us still try to find national solutions to them.

International issues have always been important in determining a nation's politics and policies. In some countries and under some circumstances, they may have more of an impact than domestic ones, although political scientists and economists have not yet developed sufficiently sophisticated research tools to determine whether this is true.

Nonetheless, the impact of international forces on domestic political life clearly is increasing all the time. Rather than repeating much of what you have already seen to drive this point home, let me concentrate on one example from each of the three types of countries we have been focusing on.

There is no better example of the everyday impact of international forces on national politics than the

European Union (EU). In the half-century since the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, member states have ceded more and more of their sovereignty to European institutions. As we saw in chapter 7, these bodies now have an impact on everything from national taxation policy, to the way sports leagues are run, and even to the content of chocolate bars and liqueurs. Although national governments may slow down the pace of integration over the next few years, Brussels undoubtedly will remain a source of political power in Europe that will rival that of any national capital.

Most of the issues regarding European integration are highly technical and complex, but the larger implications of all this can be illustrated in a single, seemingly simple example: government procurement. Governments buy as much as a third of everything that is sold in some countries: computers, paper, telecommunications equipment, sand and salt for snowy roads, and so on. And they almost always buy goods produced by companies based in their own countries. For example, virtually all American police cars are made by one of the big-three auto companies in Michigan. Similarly, the various planes that have served as Air Force One were built by Boeing. By contrast, French president Chirac and German chancellor Schroeder always fly on Airbus planes, which are built by a consortium of European firms.

Governments buy from their own companies for a number of reasons, including patriotic ones that sometimes have real national security implications. More often, however, they do so to protect domestic industries from foreign competition by giving them what amounts to a guaranteed market. Thus, the French government kept part of its computer industry alive that would not have survived had it been forced to compete in an open market. Now, however, EU governments are losing much of their ability to bypass foreign firms. Chirac is unlikely to be chauffeured in a Mercedes, or Schroeder in a Citroën. Still, more and more of the 10 percent or so of GNP that these governments spend on goods and services will go to firms based in other countries.

For what used to be the communist world, consider the end of the cold war and then the collapse of the Soviet Union. It will be quite a while before we fully understand why the cold war ended. To some degree, it reflected the realization on the part of Americans and Soviets—leaders and average citizens alike—that the cold war had gotten out of hand and that the risks of a thermonuclear holocaust were no longer worth running. To some degree, too, it reflected external pressures that the Soviet Union could no longer face. Late in the Carter administration, the United States began a massive arms buildup, which President Reagan took even further. In

all, the U.S. government added something like a trillion dollars to what it would have spent on defense had the buildup not occurred, which prompted Harry Schaffer to make the calculations cited earlier. It introduced a whole new generation of technologically sophisticated weapons: MX and cruise missiles, Stealth bombers and fighters, the “smart” bombs used against Iraq and Afghanistan, and more. The increased military expenditures took their toll on the U.S. government budget, contributing to drastic reductions in some social service programs and a spiraling federal deficit.

The impact was far greater in the Soviet Union. The Soviets spent at least as much as the United States did on defense, but they did so in an economy that was no more than half and probably more like a seventh the size. Although there were many reasons for the Soviet economic decline of the 1980s, military expenditures obviously drained a growing share of the country’s scarce resources from civilian production. Similarly, as the United States began building its new generation of high-tech weapons, the Soviets suffered because of the technological gap that existed between the two countries in particular and between the first and second world in general.

Finally, for the third world, consider once again the political and economic changes that have occurred in India since Rajiv Gandhi came to power in 1984. At that point, India was trying to pursue an autarkic economic policy through which it would rely on its own resources and chart its own economic development. Like most of the other countries that followed that line, India developed very slowly. As we saw in chapters 12 and 13, in the 1950s India and South Korea were at roughly the same level of development. Currently, South Korea is at least four times wealthier than India.

No one held a gun to the Indian government’s head, saying, in essence, “change your economic policies or else.” Rather, by the time Rajiv Gandhi replaced his mother, it had become clear to many younger Indian politicians that the self-reliant and often prosocialist policy was not getting the country very far very fast. First Gandhi and later P. V. Narasimha Rao forged a new set of policies that encourage more foreign investment and, with it, more foreign control over the economy. The point here is not to be critical of the Indian and other third world governments that have opened their doors to more foreign investment or to rehash the debates over whether this constitutes a new form of imperialism. Instead, I simply want you to see that, as countries such as India make the decision to seek more outside investment, the control the government and the people have over their economic destinies becomes increasingly limited—whatever the impact on the economy itself.

## Opportunity: A Change in the Way We Think

The second common denominator is far more controversial. It is also where my interpretation diverges the most from the conventional wisdom about politics in the new millennium.

To begin with, think about a famous sentence of Albert Einstein's that at first glance may seem to have little to do with the subject matter we've been exploring all term:

**The unleashed power of the atom  
has changed everything  
save our modes of thinking,  
and we thus drift  
toward unparalleled catastrophe.**

When I first encountered this sentence, the people leading the seminar broke it up the same way I have here, which led us to a pair of key insights. The first is that everything had changed, not just war or relations between the superpowers. The second is that everything has changed except for our mode or **way of thinking** about political issues. In Einstein's view, there is a huge gap between the problems of the nuclear age and the political mechanisms we use in dealing with them, as depicted in figure 17.1. He concluded that as a result we are drifting, all but out of control, toward the "unparalleled catastrophe" of a nuclear war.

After I thought about the sentence for a while, I began to realize that it spoke to a broader range of political issues. What is unusual about the deployment of nuclear weapons is that it occurred and changed the nature of international relations so quickly. There are plenty of other cases in which the change came more gradually but led to the same kind of gap depicted in figure 17.2, the same kind of situation in which "business as usual" no longer seems to work.

We saw an obvious example of this with the Soviet Union. The USSR established its party state in the aftermath of the 1917 revolution and kept its basic institu-

tions and practices intact until the Gorbachev era. However, the Soviet society and economy, not to mention the country's international environment, changed dramatically, if gradually. Within a few months of taking power, Gorbachev and his colleagues realized that there was no way the country's problems could be solved with piecemeal reforms.

One way of thinking about the material presented so far in this chapter is to recognize that much of the world is in, or perhaps is entering into, one of those periods today. No state is having much success in defining and meeting policy goals, especially in those areas that reflect the world's growing interdependence.

If this is the case (and it is a big "if"), then there must be some underlying theme to politics in such a wide variety of countries that leaves governments as rich as the United States or as poor as Afghanistan in such difficulty. If I'm right (another big "if"), this common denominator lies in the underlying way of thinking that shapes how we act politically.

To help students see this, I often have them do a simple but revealing exercise. I first have them discuss why some divisive political issue—such as U.S.-Soviet relations at the height of the cold war or the factors that gave rise to al-Qaeda and the Taliban—proved impossible to resolve. Then I have them discuss some interpersonal relationship they were involved in that fell apart.

I write what they say about each issue in two columns on the board. On the left side, I put the objective differences that gave rise to the conflict in the first place. Typically, I have a list of different histories or cultures for the political issues and different tastes and interests for the interpersonal ones. More interesting and important, however, are the themes that go in the right-hand column. There, I put the more subjective and controllable part of the problem: fear, miscommunication, anger, hatred, worries about losing a conflict that matters a lot. What's remarkable is that I get virtually the same list in the right-hand column for both the political and the interpersonal example.

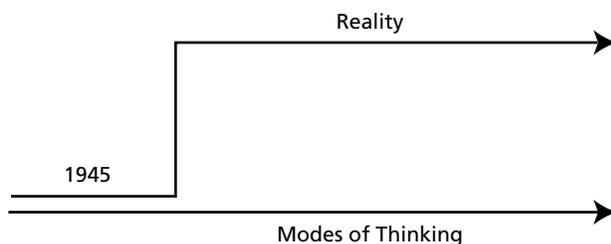


FIGURE 17.1 Einstein: A Literal View

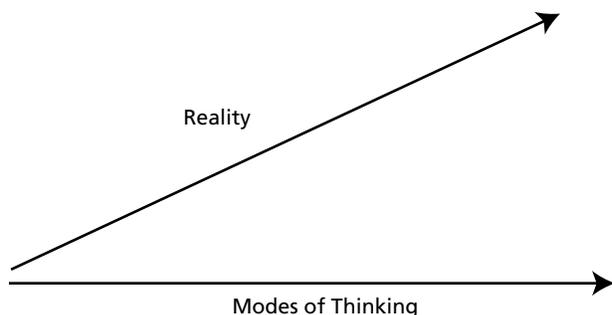


FIGURE 17.2 Einstein: An Expanded View

**TABLE 17.1** Contrasting Values and Ways of Thinking

CURRENT VALUES	NEW THINKING
Scarce resources	Scarce resources
Separate	Interdependent
Short term	Long term
Self-interest = “me” first	Self-interest = good of the whole
We versus they, or enemy thinking	We with they
Power over	Power with
Power = force and violence	Power = cooperation, working together
Conflict is bad	Conflict can be good

These results are not surprising. A significant body of research on conflict and its resolution stresses the similarities in the way we approach these kinds of problems at all levels, from the international to the interpersonal.

Scholars who work in this area focus on the often unspoken values and assumptions we use in analyzing the political world and then in determining how we act. (See table 17.1.) At the core of this value system is the belief that politics revolves around the allocation of scarce resources. The actors who take part in this political process—individuals, groups, classes, nations, and so on—are viewed as separate and autonomous. They are also thought to be pursuing their self-interest, which normally involves getting as much for themselves as possible in the short run.

Not surprisingly, if all participants are out to get as much as they can of scarce resources, it is hard to keep the competition civilized, especially if the conflict or controversy intensifies. Because I know you want what I want and we both can't have it, I have to be wary of your actions and intentions.

It is thus all but impossible to avoid thinking in adversarial, “we” versus “they” terms, which psychologists call the “image of the enemy.” “We” are good; “they” are dangerous. We turn the people or groups or nations we disagree with into objects of fear and hatred, and thus into caricatures of themselves (read what Osama bin Laden had to say about President Bush, and vice versa). It is hard not to blow those differences far out of proportion. Effective dialogue becomes all but impossible.

We also view the political process in largely zero-sum or win-lose terms. We expect politics to be more or less like an athletic event, with clear winners and losers. And, given the attitudes discussed in the preceding paragraphs, it should come as no surprise that we never want to lose. This way of thinking also leads to the assumption that the resolution of conflict will involve the use of **power**, which political scientists normally define as my

ability to get you to do something you otherwise wouldn't do. That is, power is something I have to exert over you. In one form or another, power involves the use of force. For instance, I do not have to use physical force to get my students to hand in papers on time. But I do use a kind of force when I threaten to deduct points for each day a paper is late.

Violence remains the ultimate recourse we know we can—and may have to—turn to. If intense political struggles can have only one winner and one loser, and if we know that this will happen only if one side can force the other to go along, we know that violence is something we will have to employ from time to time. It is because we know that only one of us can win a struggle that we each consider to be of a life-and-death nature that we read the worst into each other's intentions. It is because we know we are competing for the same scarce resources that we assume power comes through strength. Violence is not an inevitable outcome. But, as the all-too-apt cliché puts it, when push comes to shove, force and violence are a frequent outcome.

Given all this, most of us view conflict as dangerous, something to be avoided if possible. We are not evil or uncaring people, and it seems only natural that we would try to avoid situations that we assume will only make things worse. But by putting conflict on the back burner rather than facing it, we actually are making matters worse. The anger, fears, and antagonisms do not disappear. Instead, they intensify; the chasms widen, and the costs we think we will incur by losing grow. So, when we finally do confront the problem, the stakes are higher and we are further apart than ever. And, in the most tragic incidents, the anger and frustration produce events like those of 9/11.

My reading of the evidence presented in this book, and all the other research and teaching I've done, suggests that these are the values and assumptions that shape the way people and their governments act. They also are the ones that leave us relatively ill equipped to deal with the problems we face in this new century and millennium.

If you think back to the four issues I used to illustrate the dangers of the global crisis, you will see that they have one common characteristic. They do not seem amenable to “power-over” kinds of solutions. Instead, they seem to require some sort of cooperative approach.

To be sure, there was probably no way to destroy al-Qaeda and the people who made its operations possible without force. However, virtually everyone understands that terrorism will end only if the root causes that give

rise to it are addressed and that this will require international cooperation. Similarly, there is probably no way of ending the destruction of the Brazilian rain forests without the rich countries of the north providing substantial aid to allow Brazil to develop without harming the global environment.

Today's problems may require cooperation across national borders and other lines of division, yet this is not how we normally go about dealing with them. Therefore, we will have to radically redefine the way we approach conflict. The research on conflict resolution suggests that the values and assumptions in the first column of table 17.1 can be changed. Indeed, these researchers have gathered a lot of evidence that conflict can be handled differently—and better—if we approach it with a set of values and assumptions more in keeping with the reality of life today.

These alternative values and assumptions are listed in the second column of the table. Like the traditional way of thinking, the new one is rooted in the fact that there are not enough resources to go around. However, the proper response to our difficulties rests on a different starting point: We are a single, interdependent people living on a single, interdependent planet.

If this is the case, everything we do directly or indirectly affects everything and everyone else (go back and look at the model of the system developed in figure 1.1). In other words, we really are not separate or autonomous actors. This, in turn, means that we have to rethink what we mean by self-interest. If, as another cliché has it, what goes around comes around, I am, in fact, not maximizing my self-interest beyond the short term if doing so comes at your expense. If I grade you unfairly or treat you shabbily when you come to my office, it is going to come back to haunt me. You'll write me a bad course evaluation, gossip with your friends, drop the course, or complain to the chair of my department.

In this way of thinking, my self-interest and yours are the same, at least over the long haul. It is in both of our self-interests to work together on the paper I gave you a bad grade on. You'll do better next time, I'll become a better teacher because I can describe my expectations more clearly, and we'll both end up a lot happier.

This is also the dilemma the United States and its allies faced in the aftermath of 9/11. There seemed to be no way of bringing bin Laden and his colleagues to justice without the use of force. However, the bombing and the rest of the war also planted the seeds for more terrorism or other forms of violence later on. As everyone from President Bush to his harshest critics understood, a strategy will have to be found for turning victory in the

shooting war into a very different kind of victory—one over the problems that leads thousands if not millions of Muslims to hate the West.

Recognizing our shared interests does not mean that conflict disappears. Far from it. If anything, there will be more, not less, conflict in the future. What could be different is the way we handle it. From this perspective, win-lose outcomes will always be counterproductive because they sow more animosity in the minds of the losers and so cause even more problems in the future.

Achieving our shared interests requires finding solutions we are both happy with, which are known as **positive-sum** or **win-win outcomes**. There are, in fact, relatively few instances in which political struggles have to result in winners and losers, as, for instance, may be the case with the debate over a woman's right to have an abortion.

In almost every other case, however, we can envision a solution that all parties benefit from beyond the short run. If you and I realize that we share a long-term common interest, we look at our differences differently. It makes absolutely no sense for me to treat you as an enemy (or vice versa), because this makes finding these win-win solutions all but impossible. Rather, our challenge is to find a way to overcome our differences in a mutually acceptable way.

But this cannot happen if violence or force of any kind is used. Power, from this perspective, is my ability to get you and me to do something that works for both of us. Power becomes something one exerts not "over" others but "with" them in trying to settle disagreements and reach win-win outcomes. In this sense, the very nature of conflict changes. It is no longer something to be feared, but a welcome opportunity to learn and improve the world we live in.

The use of these kinds of approaches in political life is in its infancy. We saw elements of it, however, in the remarkable changes in South Africa in the first half of the 1990s. After years of repression and struggle, the leaders of the National Party and the African National Congress realized they had to live together. Otherwise, the country would slide into deeper difficulties and, perhaps, fall apart. At that point, then president F.W. de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, and their colleagues began the negotiations that led to power sharing, the transition to democratic rule, the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and a whole series of less visible bridges between the white and black communities.

Curiously, Afghanistan provides us with one of the few political institutions that promote cooperative problem solving and conflict resolution. For centuries, Afghans

have ended periods of turmoil by convening a *loya jirga*, in which tribal and other leaders come together and talk until they reach a consensus on what should happen next. Grassroots organizations such as the Foundation for Global Community ([www.globalcommunity.org/grt/index.html](http://www.globalcommunity.org/grt/index.html)) and the Afghan Center ([www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-101401exhile.story](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-101401exhile.story)), as well as a number of leaders in Afghanistan, were calling for one as these lines were being written.

I am not, by any stretch of the imagination, trying to suggest that such an approach to politics will become the norm anytime soon. There are few such institutions in any government. Thus, only ten states in the United States have consensus councils that make public policy by bringing all stakeholders together, helping them reach a win-win agreement, and then sending it to the state legislature for enactment. Some of the corporatist arrangements we saw in Europe and Japan promote cooperation between representatives of interest groups and the state.

However, such institutions and practices are by far the exception, not the norm. There is, thus, every reason to think that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to build a world in which cooperative problem solving for the long term becomes the norm.

Nonetheless, two conclusions seem warranted.

First, whatever the difficulties and impracticalities of basing politics on the values and assumptions in the right-hand column of table 17.1, it does make intellectual sense. The traditional ideologies and mechanisms based on the values and assumptions in the left-hand column lead us in directions that are not terribly beneficial because they are at odds with the dominant defining characteristic of the world we live in: its interdependence.

Second, and more importantly, although the values and assumptions in the right-hand column may not represent the best or most viable approach to things, we should not live with the illusion that things cannot change. My colleagues who call themselves “realists” are convinced that we have no choice but to base our actions on the values and assumptions in the left-hand column, as we currently do. It is, they argue, how things are and how they have to be.

But, as we saw in the “evolution” sections in the preceding fifteen chapters, conventional wisdom can be changed and, indeed, must be changed when it outlives its utility. Throughout history, whenever a crisis became so overwhelming that it threatened what people held dear, they found a way to overcome it. This response never came easily. It always involved shedding ways of thinking and acting that were so deeply ingrained that many people were not even aware they existed. There always were doubters, but the fact of the matter is that,

time and time again, people changed, and in so doing, they changed the institutions that governed them.

I had reached this conclusion long before September 11. Indeed, the preceding paragraph is one of the few that has remain unchanged from the first edition of this book to the fourth. However, the events of that horrible day drove home for me the importance of making this kind of political paradigm shift more powerfully than anything else in my quarter-century of teaching and writing.

## Conclusion: Student and Citizen

I always have a hard time figuring out how to end a book. I struggle to find the right thing to say that will both sum up what I have covered and inspire readers to dig more deeply into political life.

This time, writing the conclusion was more difficult than ever given the political uncertainties following the events of 9/11. Like most of my colleagues, students, and friends, I had struggled all fall not to lapse into despair and lose sight of the opportunities in this, the most recent crisis.

Then, the night before I had to send the last chapters to my editor, I went to the annual awards ceremony at Search for Common Ground, where I serve as director of policy and research. Awards were given to two of the most remarkable couples I’ve ever met. Both had suffered through what must be the worst trauma a person can endure—the murder of a child.

As we saw in the introduction to chapter 15, Amy Biehl had been murdered in an act of random violence in South Africa in 1993. That same year, fifteen-year-old Louis D. Brown had been gunned down in Boston. Both apparently were remarkable young people. Biehl had gone to South Africa to help in the transition from apartheid to democratic rule. Brown had planned to be the first Black and the youngest person to be president of the United States.

Actually, it wasn’t their ambitions or their talents or even their murders that struck me as compelling. It was their parents’ reaction.

As we saw in chapter 15, the Biehls first made headlines by supporting the amnesty petition of the four young men who murdered their daughter. But this was just the beginning. They have since devoted all their time and effort to the Amy Biehl Foundation ([www.amybiehl.org](http://www.amybiehl.org)), which is continuing the work she started in South Africa. Even more remarkably, they have helped two of the young men complete their educations; the two now work for the foundation.



Brown's parents, Joseph and Clementina Cherry, founded the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute ([www.institute4peace.org](http://www.institute4peace.org)). In conjunction with Harvard's School of Public Health, it has created a peace curriculum aimed at reducing the violence that takes an average of fourteen teenagers' lives a day in the United States. They also have set up a program to support other survivors of that kind of violence.

When I put on my professor's hat and discuss the Biehls in class, and when I show parts of the film *Long Night's Journey into Day*, which features them, some students are shocked that they are helping their daughter's murderers. Some disagree with that part of the foundation's work altogether. They ask me whether I would do what the Biehls or Cherrys are doing if I were in their shoes; I tell them I don't know, but I doubt it.

But, as the discussion goes on, virtually all of them end up agreeing that the work these four remarkable parents are doing is one powerful response to the issues discussed in this chapter and the sixteen before it. They also see that the Biehls and Cherrys were a lot like themselves before the murders of their children. This helps them recognize that average people like their parents can make a huge difference.

And, because it is also the last class of the semester, I show them the coffee mug that I use at the office. My step-daughter gave it to me when I was struggling to write the conclusion for the first edition of this book.

Its caption, and the inspiration provided by the Biehls and the Cherrys, is the lesson I want to leave my own students and you with. Whatever our differences, I also think it is one we can all agree on. The mug shows a picture of a cat holding up a globe over the words "fragile, handle with care."



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## Key Terms

### Concepts

Crisis	Ozone layer
Global warming	Positive-sum outcomes
Globalization	Power
Interdependence	Way of thinking
International political economy	Win-win outcomes
OPEC oil embargo	Zero-sum game

## Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Much has changed since this book was finished in early 2002. Does the analysis of the global crisis presented here still make sense? Why (not)?
2. Public opinion pollsters routinely ask questions about whether people think their country is heading in the "right direction" or is on the "wrong track." If you were asked such a question about the world as a whole, how would you answer? Why did you reach this conclusion?
3. Do you agree that the end of the cold war will be as important a turning point as suggested in this chapter? Why (not)?
4. What do the terms *new world order*, *globalization*, and *interdependence* mean to you? How much might things change for the better or for the worse in the next few years?
5. Do you think "ways of thinking" are as important as suggested here? If so, do you think they can be changed?

## Further Reading

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- Friedman, Thomas. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999. The most popular, optimistic, and, perhaps, best book on globalization.
- Hauss, Charles. *Beyond Confrontation: Transforming the New World Order*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996. An attempt (which this author obviously likes) to consider the possibilities for change in the post-cold war era.
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- Horsman, Matthew, and Andrew Marshall. *Beyond the Nation-State*. London: HarperCollins, 1995. The most thorough analysis of the way global forces are altering and reducing the role of the state.

Kaplan, Robert. *The Coming Anarchy*. New York: Random House, 2000. The best criticism of globalization from a realist, right-of-center perspective.

Kidder, Rushworth. *How Good People Make Tough Choices*. New York: Morrow, 1995. An attempt by an ex-academic and ex-journalist who is now head of the Institute for Global Ethics to show the benefits of acting ethically and the costs of not doing so at everything from the interpersonal to the international level.

Klare, Michael, and Yogesh Chandrani, eds. *World Security: Challenges for a New Century*. New York: St Martin's, 1998. A collection of essays on various aspects of security above and beyond merely military ones.

Stone, Robert D. *The Nature of Development*. New York: Knopf, 1992. A wonderful book that traces the link between the environment and development mostly through the lives of individuals in the third world.

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# Glossary

## Acronyms

- ANC** African National Congress.
- BDA** Federation Association of German Employers.
- BDI** Federation of German Industry.
- BJP** Bhatriya Janata Party, India's fundamentalist party, in power from 1998 to 1999.
- BMS** Bharatiya Mozdoon Sangh (Indian Union).
- CAC** CCP Central Advisory Committee.
- CAP** Common Agricultural Policy of the EU.
- CBI** Confederation of British Industry.
- CCP** Chinese Communist Party.
- CDU** Germany's Christian Democratic Union.
- CFC** Chlorofluorocarbon.
- CFDT** General Confederation of French Labor.
- CFE** Former (and corrupt) Mexican electoral commission.
- CFSP** Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU.
- CGT** French General Confederation of Labor.
- CITU** Congress of Indian Trade Unions.
- CJD** Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease.
- CODESA** Conference on a Democratic South Africa, constitution-drafting body after Mandela's release.
- COREPER** EU Council of Permanent Representatives.
- COSATU** Council of South African Trade Unions, affiliated with the ANC.
- CPSA** Communist Party of South Africa.
- CPSU** Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
- CSU** German Christian Social Union Party.
- CTM** The Confederation of Mexican Workers, Mexico's leading trade union.
- DDP** German Protestant and Liberal People's Party under the Weimer Republic.
- DDR** German Democratic Republic, the old East Germany.
- DGB** Federation of German workers, its largest trade union body.
- DIHT** German Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- DNVP** German National People's Party.
- DSP** Japan's Democratic Socialist Party.
- EAGGF** European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund.
- EC** European Community, now the EU.
- ECJ** European Court of Justice.
- ECSC** European Coal and Steel Community, precursor of the EU.
- EEC** European Economic Community, first official title of today's EU.
- EMS** European Monetary System.
- EMU** European Monetary Union, including the central bank and the euro.
- ENA** National School of Administration, *grande école* for training France's bureaucratic elite.
- EP** European Parliament.
- ERM** European Rate Mechanism.
- EU** European Union.
- Euratom** European Atomic Energy Commission.
- EZLN** Zapatista guerrilla movement in Chiapas, Mexico.
- FDP** Germany's Free Democrat (or liberal) Party.
- FN** France's racist and right-wing National Front party.
- FY** Fiscal year.
- GATT** General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.
- GDP** Gross domestic product.
- GEAR** Growth, Employment, and Redistribution program in South Africa.
- GNP** Gross national product.
- HDI** Human Development Index.
- IAS** Indian Administrative Service.
- IFE** Current and more autonomous electoral commission in Mexico.
- IFP** Inkatha Freedom Party; opposition to the ANC, headed by Mangosuthu Buthelezi.
- IMF** International Monetary Fund.
- INC** Indian National Congress; Iraqi National Congress.
- IPE** International political economy.
- IRDP** India's Integrated Rural Development Program.
- JCP** Japanese Communist Party.
- KDP** Kurdish Democratic Party.
- KGB** Soviet secret police.
- KMT** Chinese Nationalist Party; overthrown on mainland China by CCP; in power on Taiwan.
- KPD** German Communist Party.
- LDP** Japan's Liberal Democratic Party.
- MAC** China's Military Affairs Committee.
- MITI** Japan's Ministry for International Trade and Industry, now the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry.
- MNC** Multinational corporation.
- MOF** Japan's Ministry of Finance.
- MP** Member of Parliament.
- NAFTA** North American Free Trade Agreement, linking Mexico, Canada, and the United States.
- NBI** National Business Initiative in South Africa.
- NEDC** Great Britain's National Economic Development Council.
- NEP** New Economic Policy in USSR.
- NGO** Nongovernmental organization.
- NHS** Great Britain's National Health Service.
- NIC** Newly industrializing country.
- NIMBY** Not in my backyard.
- NNP** New National Party in South Africa
- NP** National Party in South Africa; dominated the apartheid years.
- NPD** Germany's neo-Nazi National Democratic Party of the 1960s.
- NSDAP** Germany's Nazi Party.
- OECD** Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- OEEC** Organization for European Economic Cooperation.
- OPEC** Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.
- PAN** National Action Party, the leading right-of-center opposition party in Mexico.

**PCF** French Communist Party.  
**PDS** Germany's Party of Democratic Socialism, successor to East German communists.  
**PEMEX** Mexico's nationalized petrochemical industry.  
**PLA** People's Liberation Army in China.  
**PR** French Republican Party; proportional representation.  
**PRC** People's Republic of China.  
**PRD** Party of the Democratic Revolution, Mexico's main left-of-center opposition party.  
**PRI** Institutional Revolutionary Party, which ruled Mexico from 1927 to 2000.  
**PS** French Socialist Party.  
**PUK** One of the Kurdish opposition groups in Iraq and elsewhere.  
**QUANGO** Quasi-autonomous nongovernmental organization.  
**RCC** Revolutionary Command Council of the ruling Baath Party in Iraq.  
**RDP** South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Program.  
**RI** France's Independent Republican Party.  
**RISA** Reinvest in South Africa.  
**RPR** Most recent incarnation of the French Gaullist party.  
**RSFSR** Official title of the Russian federation of the old Soviet Union.  
**RSS** India's Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh Party.  
**SACP** South African Communist Party.  
**SCAP** Supreme commander for the Allied powers in occupied Japan, Douglas MacArthur.  
**SDF** Japan's Self-Defense Force.  
**SDI** South Africa's Special Development Initiative.  
**SDLP** Catholic Social Democratic Labour Party.  
**SDP** Britain's former Social Democratic Party.  
**SDPJ** Japan's leading Socialist Party.  
**SEA** The Single European Act.  
**SED** Socialist Unity Party of former East Germany.  
**SEZ** Special economic zones in China.  
**SFIO** French Socialist Party, until 1969.  
**SNP** Scottish National Party.  
**SPD** Germany's Social Democratic Party.  
**TANU** Tanzanian African National Union.  
**TUC** Trades Union Council in Great Britain; United Democratic Front in South Africa.  
**UDF** Union of French Democrats Party in France; Union of Democratic Forces in South Africa.  
**U.K.** United Kingdom  
**UNSCOM** United Nations Special Commission inspecting Iraqi compliance with UN arms limits.  
**VHP** Vishwa Hindu Parishad, India's Worldwide Hindu Brotherhood.  
**WMD** Weapons of mass destruction (Iraq).  
**WTO** World Trade Organization.

### *Concepts*

**Acquis communautaires** The body of laws and regulations new members of the EU must accept before gaining admission.  
**Afrikaner** The portion of the South African white population with roots in Dutch culture. Primary architects and supporters of apartheid.

**Amakudari** Literally, "descent from heaven"; the Japanese practice of bureaucrats retiring at about fifty and taking prominent positions in the LDP or big business.  
**Anticlerical** The belief that there should be no link between church and state.  
**Apartheid** South African policy of racial separation from 1948 to 1994.  
**Autogestion** A version of self-managed socialism popular in France in the 1970s and 1980s.  
**Backbenchers** Members of a parliament who are not in the government or shadow cabinet.  
**Base** Marxist term to describe the class and other economic relations that define the "means of production" and the distribution of wealth and power.  
**Basic Law** The German constitution.  
**Bloc vote** French practice that requires a vote on an entire bill without amendments.  
**Bourgeoisie** Among other things, a Marxist term to describe the capitalist class.  
**Broadening** Support for expanding EU membership.  
**Bubble economy** The Japanese economic boom that collapsed in the early 1990s.  
**Bureaucracy** The part of the government composed of technical experts and others who remain from administration to administration.  
**Cabinet responsibility** Principle that requires a prime minister and government to retain the support of a parliamentary majority.  
**Cadre** Term used to define the permanent, professional members of a party, especially in the communist world.  
**Camarilla** In Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America, a politician's personal following in a patron-client relationship.  
**Campaign** In China (and to a lesser degree the former Soviet Union), policies in which the party seeks to reach its goals by mobilizing people.  
**Capitalist roader** Derogatory term used to label moderate CCP leaders during the Cultural Revolution.  
**Carrying capacity** The amount of development an ecosystem can bear.  
**Caste** Groups into which Hindu society is divided, each with its own distinctive rules for all areas of social behavior.  
**Catch-all** Term devised in the 1960s to describe a new type of political party that plays down ideology in favor of slogans, telegenic candidates, and the like.  
**Chancellor democracy** Germany's informal system of political domination by the prime minister.  
**Checks and balances** In the United States, the informal designation of separation of powers.  
**Christian Democratic parties** Political parties inspired by Catholic thought and ideals.  
**Civic culture** Culture characterized by trust, legitimacy, and limited involvement, which some theorists believe is most conducive to democracy.  
**Civil society** The web of membership in social and political groups that some analysts believe is needed to sustain democracy.  
**Class** The divisions of a society into groups according to their economic role and status.  
**Cleavage** Deep and long-lasting political divisions.  
**Cohabitation** In France, periods in which one party or coalition controls the Parliament and the other has the presidency.

- Cold war** Rivalry between the superpowers from the end of World War II to the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- Collective responsibility** The doctrine that all cabinet members must agree with all decisions.
- Collectivist consensus** Cross-party British support for the welfare state that lasted until the late 1970s.
- Command economy** In the former Soviet Union and other communist countries, the fact that the economy was centrally planned and controlled.
- Communal group** Racial, ethnic, or linguistic groups that are often the source of political violence today.
- Communism** Theory developed by Marx and Engels that was adapted and used in such countries as China and the former Soviet Union.
- Communist Party** Political parties inspired by Marxism-Leninism, usually as developed in the former Soviet Union.
- Compromise** Decision-making procedure in which all sides make concessions in order to reach an agreement.
- Concerted action** Cooperation involving the government, business, and labor in Germany.
- Conditionality** The imposition of stipulations before the granting of loans by the IMF, World Bank, and other international financial institutions.
- Confucianism** Chinese philosophical and religious tradition stressing, among other things, order and hierarchy.
- Consensus policy making** Decision-making procedures that emphasize win/win outcomes.
- Constitution** A basic political document that lays out the institutions and procedures a country follows.
- Constructive vote of no confidence** In Germany, means that a chancellor can only be removed in a vote of confidence if the Bundestag also agrees on a replacement.
- Contradictions** Marxist notion that all societies based on inequality have built-in flaws that will eventually lead to their destruction.
- Corporatism** In Europe, arrangements through which government, business, and labor leaders cooperatively set micro-economic or macroeconomic policy, normally outside of the regular electoral legislative process. In Mexico and elsewhere in the third world, another term to describe the way people are integrated into the system via patron-client relations.
- Crisis** A critical turning point.
- Cult of personality** In communist and other systems, the excessive adulation of a single leader.
- Dalit** Term to describe untouchables in India.
- Debt crisis** The massive accumulation of loans taken out by third world countries and owed to northern banks and governments from the 1970s onward.
- Debt trap** The inability of third world countries to pay back their loans to northern creditors.
- Decision making** The way governments (or other bodies) make policies.
- Deep ecology** Green belief that all social, economic, political, and environmental issues are connected to each other.
- Deepening** Expansion of the EU's powers.
- Demand** Inputs through which people and interest groups put pressure on the state for change.
- Democratic centralism** The Leninist organizational structure that concentrates power in the hands of the party elite.
- Democratic deficit** The lack of democratic procedures in the EU.
- Democratization** The process of developing democratic states.
- Dependency** A radical critique of mainstream economic theory that stresses the continued power the north has over the third world.
- Devolution** The process of decentralizing power from national governments that stops short of federalism.
- Dialectic** The belief that change occurs in dramatic bursts from one type of society to another.
- Dirigisme** French belief in a centrally planned and managed economy.
- Division of powers** U.S. notion that the levels of government have different responsibilities and power.
- Electoral alchemy** The way Mexican governments have used fraud to rig elections.
- Electoral system** Mechanisms through which votes are cast and tallied, and seats in the legislature are allotted.
- Emergency Rule** A provision in some constitutions that allows cabinets to rule in an all but dictatorial way for a brief period, as in India from 1975 to 1977.
- Environment** In systems theory, everything lying outside the political system.
- Euroskeptic** People opposed to expansion of the EU's power.
- Extraterritoriality** Portions of China, Japan, and Korea where European law operated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Faction** An organized group on ideological or other lines operating inside a political party.
- Failed state** Systems in which the government loses the ability to provide even the most basic services.
- Fascism** Right-wing regimes, often drawing on racist philosophies in such countries as Germany and Japan between the two world wars.
- Faulted society** Germany from the late nineteenth century to the rise of Hitler, reflecting the unevenness of its social, economic, and political development.
- Federalism** Constitutional practice in which subnational units are granted considerable power.
- Feedback** How events today are communicated to and shape what people do later on.
- First past the post** Electoral system based on single-member districts in which the candidate who receives the most votes wins.
- Foreign aid** Money or goods provided by richer countries to help poorer ones develop.
- Four modernizations** A policy first introduced by Zhou Enlai and championed by Deng Xiaoping, focusing on developing industry, the military, agriculture, and science in China.
- Führer** German term for "leader," used by Hitler.
- Fundamentalism** Religious beliefs of a literal nature that often lead to right-wing political views.
- Glasnost** Under Gorbachev, Soviet policies that opened up the political system and allowed for freedom of expression.
- Global warming** The well-supported theory that the earth is getting warmer due to the trapping of certain gases in the atmosphere.
- Globalization** Popular term used to describe how international economic, social, cultural, and technological forces are affecting events inside individual countries.
- Government** Either a generic term to describe the formal part of the state or the administration of the day.

- Gradualism** The belief that change should occur slowly or incrementally.
- Grand coalition** A cabinet that includes all the major parties, not just a bare majority.
- Grandeur** Gaullist goal for France.
- Green Revolution** In India and elsewhere, the technological improvements that drastically improved agricultural production and eliminated widespread starvation.
- Greens** Political parties that emphasize environmental and other “new” issues, and radical change.
- Gridlock** Term used in the United States and elsewhere to describe the paralysis of the legislative and executive branches.
- Gross national product** The total value of the goods and services produced in a society.
- Groupism** Japanese tendency for people to identify and base their behavior on group memberships rather than on individualism and personal preference.
- Hard currency** Currencies that can be traded openly on international markets.
- Historical materialism** Marxist belief that the class divisions of a society determine everything else that matters.
- Homelands** Policy of the apartheid government in South Africa that created sham states for Africans.
- Human Development Index** The UN’s best indicator of social development.
- Hurting stalemate** Theory that conflict resolution truly begins when both sides realize that they cannot win and that the costs of fighting have risen too high.
- Imperialism** The policy of colonizing other countries—literally, establishing empires.
- Import substitution** Development strategy that uses tariffs and other barriers to imports, and therefore stimulates domestic industries.
- Incompatibility clause** French constitutional provision that bars people from holding a seat both in the National Assembly and in a cabinet.
- Incremental** Used to describe policies that make limited, marginal, or minor changes in existing practices.
- Indirect rule** British and other colonial procedures through which “natives” were used to carry out colonial rule.
- Individualism** The belief that emphasizes the role of the individual voter or consumer, typically associated with the rise of democracy in the West.
- Industrialized democracy** The richest countries with advanced economies and liberal states.
- Input** Support or demand from people to the state.
- Integrated elite** In Japan, France, and Germany, refers to cooperation among government, business, and other interest groups.
- Interdependence** The theory that all life is interconnected and that we are not independent or autonomous actors.
- Interest group** An organization formed to work for the views of a relatively narrow group of people, such as a trade union or business association.
- International political economy** The network of economic activity that transcends national boundaries.
- Interventionist state** Governments in industrialized democracies that pursue an active economic policy.
- Iron triangle** A variety of close relationships between business leaders, politicians, and civil servants.
- Jati** In India, a subcaste with its own rules, customs, and so forth.
- Judicial review** Power held by courts in some countries that allows them to rule on the constitutional merits of laws and other policies.
- Keiretsu** Japanese business conglomerates, often with political clout.
- Koenkai** Support organizations for Japanese politicians.
- Kurds** Minority ethnic group in Iraq and other countries in the region.
- Laissez-faire** Economic policy that stresses a limited government role.
- Land (laender)** German states.
- Left** Political groups favoring change, often of an egalitarian nature.
- Legitimacy** A key concept stressing the degree to which people accept and endorse their regime.
- Manifesto** In Britain and other parliamentary systems, another term for a party’s platform in an election campaign.
- Maquiladora** Factories in Mexico (initially on the U.S. border, now anywhere) that operated tax-free in manufacturing goods for export.
- Marxism-Leninism** The philosophy adopted by ruling communist parties, which combined Marxist analysis with Leninist organizational structures and tactics.
- Mass line** Chinese Communist principle that stressed “learning from the masses.”
- Means of production** Marxist term designating the dominant way goods are created in a given society.
- Member of Parliament** Elected members of the British or other parliament.
- Mestizo** Term used to describe Mexicans of mixed racial origin.
- Microcredit** Lending and development strategy that stresses small loans for new businesses, developed by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.
- Modell Deutschland** Term used to describe the political approach to German economic growth after World War II.
- Money politics** In Japan, an expression used to describe—and criticize—the high cost of running elections and the corruption it induces.
- Multimember constituency** Electoral district that elects more than one member of parliament.
- Nation** As used by political scientists, primarily a psychological term to describe attachment or identity rather than a geopolitical unit such as the state.
- Nationalization** Philosophies or attitudes that stress the importance of extending the power or support for a nation; government takeover of private business.
- Nation building** A process in which people develop a strong sense of identification with their country.
- Near abroad** Russian term to describe the other fourteen republics of the former Soviet Union.
- New left** Radicals from the 1960s.
- New right** Conservative political movements in industrialized democracies that have arisen since the 1960s and stress “traditional values,” often with a racist overtone.
- Newly industrializing countries** The handful of countries such as South Korea that have developed a strong industrial base and grown faster than most of the third world.
- No fly zone** Regions in northern and southern Iraq where government airplanes are not allowed to fly.

- Nomenklatura** The Soviet system of lists that facilitated the CPSU's appointment of trusted people to key positions. Adopted by other communist regimes.
- Nongovernmental organization** Private groups that are playing an increasingly important role in determining developmental and environmental policies.
- Nonreelection** Principle in Mexican political life that bars politicians from holding office for two consecutive terms.
- Oligarch** Business and political leaders with, what some think, is undue influence in Russia.
- OPEC oil embargo** The refusal by oil-producing countries to sell petroleum to Israel's allies in the aftermath of the 1973 war, which had sweeping ramifications for the global economy.
- Output** Public policy in systems theory.
- Oyabun-kobun** The Japanese system of patron-client relations.
- Ozone layer** Thin layer in the upper atmosphere that is being eroded by CFCs and that may have devastating environmental consequences.
- Pantouflage** The French practice of leaving the bureaucracy to take positions in big business or politics.
- Parastatal** Companies owned or controlled by the state in the third world.
- Parliamentary party** The members of parliament from a single party.
- Party state** The notion that the CPSU and other ruling communist parties dominated their entire political systems.
- Patron-client relations** Neofeudal relations in which "patrons" gain the support of "clients" through the mutual exchange of benefits and obligations.
- Pendulum effect** The notion that policies can shift from left to right as the balance of partisan power changes. In Mexico, reflects the fact that the PRI can move from one side to another on its own as circumstances warrant.
- Perestroika** Ill-fated program to reform the Soviet economy in the late 1980s.
- Permit raj** In India, the system of government rules and regulations that required state approval of most enterprises.
- Political culture** Basic values and assumptions that people have toward authority, the political system, and other overarching themes in political life.
- Political party** Organization that contests elections or otherwise contends for power.
- Politics** The process through which a community, state, or organization organizes and governs itself.
- Positive-sum outcome** Conflict resolution in which all parties benefit. Also known as win/win.
- Postindustrial society** Society in which the dominant industries are in the service and high-tech sectors.
- Postmaterialism** Theory that young middle-class voters are likely to support environmentalism, feminism, and other "new" issues.
- Power** As conventionally defined, the ability to get someone to do something he or she otherwise would not do.
- Power ministries** The most important departments in the Russian government.
- Prefect** Until 1981, the central government appointee who really ran France's departments.
- Presidential Rule** In India, the government's power to remove elected state officials and replace them with appointees from Delhi.
- Privatization** The selling off of state-owned companies.
- Proletariat** Marxist term for the working class.
- Proportional representation** Electoral system in which parties receive a number of seats in parliament proportionate to their share of the vote.
- Public policy** The decisions made by a state that define what it will do.
- Purge** The systematic removal of people from party, state, or other office; especially common in communist systems.
- Qualified majority voting** The EU voting system in which the Council of Ministers does not need to reach unanimity on most issues.
- Radical** French party that was radical by nineteenth-century standards, which is to say it favored democracy, capitalism, and anticlericalism.
- Realignment** A shift in the basic electoral balance of power in which substantial groups in a society change their long-term party identification.
- Red Guard** Radical students and other young supporters of Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution.
- Regime** The institutions and practices that endure from government to government, such as the constitutional order in a democracy.
- Reparations** Payments demanded of defeated powers in a war, especially important in Germany after World War I.
- Restorative justice** In South Africa and elsewhere, the attempt to forge reconciliation rather than seek revenge after the end of a conflict.
- Right** Political forces favoring the status quo or a return to earlier policies and values.
- Rule of law** In a democracy, the principle that legal rules rather than arbitrary and personal decisions determine what happens.
- Safe haven** Regions in northern Iraq where the United States and its allies guaranteed the safety of Kurds in the aftermath of the Gulf War.
- Satellites** The countries in eastern and central Europe that came under communist rule after World War II.
- Securocrat** Derogatory term used to describe the secret police and others in charge of enforcing apartheid laws in South Africa.
- Separation of powers** Formal term for checks and balances in a system like that of the United States.
- Sexenio** The six-year term of a Mexican president.
- Shadow cabinet** In systems like Britain's, the official leadership of the opposition party that "shadows" the cabinet.
- Shiite** Minority Muslim sect, usually seen as more militant than the Sunnis.
- Shock therapy** Policies in formerly communist countries that envisage as rapid a shift to a market economy as possible.
- Single-member district** Electoral system in which only one representative is chosen from each constituency.
- Single-member-district, two-ballot system** In France, the electoral system in which a second, runoff ballot is held to determine the winner if no candidate gets a majority in the first round.
- Social democracy** Philosophy that rejects revolution and prefers moderate socialistic and other egalitarian reforms enacted through the parliamentary process.
- Socialism** A variety of beliefs in the public ownership of the means of production and an egalitarian distribution of wealth and income.

**State** All individuals and institutions that make public policy, whether they are in the government or not.

**Strong state** One with the capacity and the political will to make and implement effective public policy.

**Structural adjustment** Development strategy that stresses integration into global markets, privatization, and so on. Supported by the World Bank, IMF, and other major northern financial institutions.

**Subsidiarity** In the EU, policy that devolves decision making to the lowest appropriate level.

**Subsistence economy** One in which peasants predominate and grow food and other crops primarily for domestic consumption.

**Sunni** Majority Muslim sect, usually seen as more moderate than the Shiites.

**Superstructure** Marxist term for the government, religion, and other institutions whose primary role is to help support the dominance of the ruling class.

**Support** In systems analysis, popular input that tends to endorse the current leadership and its policies.

**Supranational** Authority that transcends national borders.

**Swaraj** The Indian movement for independence and self-rule.

**Systems theory** A model for understanding political life.

**Taisho democracy** The period after World War I in Japan in which it developed a liberal democratic regime similar to those in Europe at the time.

**Third way** A term used to describe the new and more central left-wing parties of the 1990s, most notably Britain's "New Labour."

**Third world** Informal term for the poorest countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

**Three-line whip** In a parliamentary system, statements to MPs that they must vote according to the party's wishes.

**Three pillars** Informal term denoting the main areas that the EU works in since the Maastricht Treaty.

**Totalitarian** Regime in which the state has all but total power.

**Tutelle** In France, central government control over local authorities.

**Two-party system** Countries in which only two parties seriously compete for power.

**Unanimity principle** Formerly required for all decisions in the EU, now only for major new policies.

**Unit** The basic body assuring work, housing, and welfare to which most urban Chinese were assigned before economic reforms took hold.

**Unitary state** Regimes in which subnational units have little or no power.

**Untouchable** Indians outside of and "below" the caste system; abolished legally with independence.

**Vote of confidence** In a parliamentary system, a vote in which the members express their support for (or opposition to) the government's policies. If it loses, the government must resign.

**Warlord** Prerevolutionary Chinese leaders who controlled a region or other relatively small part of the country.

**Way of thinking** The values or assumptions that shape the way people act.

**Weak state** One without the capacity and the political will to make and implement effective public policy.

**Weapons of mass destruction** Biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons.

**White paper** In Britain and elsewhere, a government statement that outlines proposed legislation; the last stage before the submission of a formal bill.

**Win/win outcome** Conflict resolution in which all parties benefit; also known as positive-sum game.

**Zero-sum game** Political outcome in which one side wins and the other loses.

## People

**Adenauer, Konrad** First chancellor of the German Federal Republic (West Germany).

**Al-Bakr, Ahmed Hassan** First Baath president of Iraq, replaced by Saddam Hussein in 1979.

**Bhindranwale, Jarnail Singh** Radical Sikh leader killed during the attack on the Golden Temple in 1984.

**Biehl, Amy** American student murdered during the transition to democracy in South Africa.

**Biko, Steve** Most important leader of South Africa's Black Consciousness movement, killed by the authorities while in prison in 1977.

**Bismarck, Otto von** Chancellor and most important founder of unified Germany in the last half of the nineteenth century.

**Blair, Tony** British prime minister since 1997 and architect of "New Labour."

**Brandt, Willy** First Socialist chancellor of the German Federal Republic.

**Brezhnev, Leonid** General secretary of the CPSU from 1964 until 1982. Largely responsible for the stagnation of the USSR.

**Cárdenas, Cuauhtémoc** Son of Lazaro Cárdenas, founder of the PRD, and first elected mayor of Mexico City.

**Cárdenas, Lazaro** President of Mexico, 1934–40. The last radical reformer to hold the office.

**Castro, Fidel** President of Cuba since 1959.

**Chen Duxiu** Founder of the Chinese Communist Party.

**Chernomyrdin, Viktor** Prime minister of Russia, 1993–98.

**Chiang Kai-shek** Nationalist president of China before 1949 and later of the government in exile on Taiwan.

**Chirac, Jacques** Career French politician, president since 1995.

**De Gaulle, Charles** Hero of the French resistance against German occupation, founder and first president of the Fifth Republic.

**De Klerk, F.W.** The last president of South Africa under apartheid.

**De la Madrid, Miguel** President of Mexico, 1982–88, introduced structural adjustment reforms.

**Debré, Michel** Primary architect of the constitution of France's Fifth Republic; also its first prime minister, from 1958 to 1962.

**Delors, Jacques** Prominent French Socialist politician, who was president of the European Commission, 1985–95.

**Deng Xiaoping** De facto ruler of China from the late 1970s to 1997.

**Desai, Morarji** First non-Congress prime minister of India.

**Diaz, Porfirio** Introduced the principle of nonreelection into Mexican politics; ironically de facto dictator of the country for a quarter-century in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

- Duncan-Smith, Iain** Current leader of the Conservative Party in Britain.
- Engels, Friedrich** With Karl Marx, the creator of communist theory.
- Faisal I** British-imposed king of newly independent Iraq after World War I.
- Fang Lizhi** Physicist and leading Chinese dissident, now living in exile in the United States.
- Fischer, Joska** Green member of parliament, foreign minister in the Schroeder government in Germany.
- Fox, Vicente.** First non-PRI president of Mexico, elected in 2000.
- Gaidar, Yegor** Reformist politician and acting prime minister of Russia in 1993.
- Gandhi, Indira** Prime minister of India, 1966–75 and 1979–84, daughter of Nehru, mother of Rajiv Gandhi; assassinated in 1984.
- Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand** Leader of the Indian National Congress in the twenty years before independence.
- Gandhi, Rajiv** Prime minister of India, 1984–89, assassinated in 1991; son of Indira and grandson of Nehru.
- Giscard d'Estaing, Valery** Moderate president of France, 1974–81.
- Gorbachev, Mikhail** Head of the CPSU and last president of the Soviet Union.
- Hashimoto Ryutaro** Prime minister of Japan, 1995–98.
- Hirohito** Emperor of Japan during and after World War II.
- Hitler, Adolf** Nazi leader of the Third Reich, 1933–45.
- Hobbes, Thomas** British social theorist of the seventeenth century who emphasized a strong state.
- Hussein, Qusay** Younger son of Saddam Hussein, probably the second-most-powerful person in Iraq today.
- Hussein, Saddam** President of Iraq since 1979.
- Hussein, Uday** Eldest son of Saddam Hussein, thought of as the heir apparent until he was seriously wounded in a 1996 assassination attempt.
- Jiang Qing** Fourth (and last) wife of Mao Zedong and one of the leaders of the Gang of Four, a radical faction in the CCP during the Cultural Revolution.
- Jiang Zemin** President of China and successor to Deng Xiaoping.
- Jospin, Lionel** Socialist prime minister of France since 1997.
- Khrushchev, Nikita** Successor of Josef Stalin as head of CPSU and Soviet Union from 1953 until he was ousted in 1964.
- Kohl, Helmut** Longest-serving (1982–98) chancellor of Germany; oversaw unification.
- Koizumi, Junichiro** Prime minister of Japan, selected in 2001.
- Le Pen, Jean-Marie** Founder and main leader of France's racist National Front.
- Lenin, V. I.** Architect of the Bolshevik revolution and first leader of the Soviet Union.
- Lin Biao** Head of the PLA and designated successor to Mao Zedong; died in mysterious circumstances after a failed coup attempt in 1972.
- Liu Shaoqi** Moderate CCP politician and designated successor to Mao Zedong; died during the Cultural Revolution.
- Locke, John** Leading democratic and liberal theorist who stressed "life, liberty, and the pursuit of property."
- MacArthur, Douglas** U.S. army general who was SCAP in occupied Japan after World War II.
- Madikizela-Mandela, Winnie** Former wife of Nelson Mandela and an important, controversial leader of the ANC in her own right.
- Malan, Daniel** First National Party prime minister of South Africa after World War II; primary architect of apartheid.
- Mandela, Nelson** President of South Africa 1994–99, and de facto leader of the ANC while in prison from 1964 to 1991.
- Mao Zedong** Chair of the CCP and head of the PRC from 1949 until his death in 1976.
- Marx, Karl** With Friedrich Engels, the leading nineteenth-century communist theorist.
- Mbeki, Thabo** President of South Africa since 1999.
- Merkel, Angela** Succeeded Helmut Kohl as head of the CDU, first woman to head a major party in Germany.
- Mitterrand, François** Resuscitated the French Socialist Party, president, 1981–95.
- Miyazawa Kiichi** First LDP prime minister to lose a vote of confidence, in 1993.
- Monnet, Jean** Primary architect of the EU and the French planning system.
- Narasimha Rao, P. V.** Prime minister of India, 1991–96.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal** Indian leader before independence, and prime minister, 1949–64.
- Ozawa Ichiro** Chief kingmaker in Japanese politics in the 1990s.
- Pompidou, Georges** Second president of Fifth Republic of France, from 1969 until his death in 1974.
- Prodi, Romano** President of the European Commission since 2001.
- Putin, Vladimir** President of Russia since 2000.
- Salinas, Carlos de Gortari** President of Mexico, 1988–94; continued structural adjustment reforms, currently living in exile because of his family's involvement in scandals.
- Santa Anna, Antonio López de** Nineteenth-century general and dictator responsible for Mexico's losing more than a third of its territory to the United States.
- Schmidt, Helmut** Chancellor of West Germany, 1974–92.
- Schroeder, Gerhard** SPD chancellor of Germany since 1998.
- Slovo, Joe** Head of the South African Communist Party, one of the most important leaders of the movement against apartheid.
- Spaak, Paul-Henri** Belgian politician who was one of the leading architects of the early Common Market.
- Stalin, Joseph** Leader of the CPSU and Soviet Union, 1924–53.
- Sun Yat-sen** President of China after the 1911 revolution.
- Suzman, Helen** Liberal opponent of apartheid, often the only such opponent with a seat in the South African parliament during apartheid.
- Takeshita Noboru** Leading LDP politician and prime minister in the late 1980s.
- Tanaka Kakuei** Leading (and corrupt) LDP kingmaker in Japan in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Thatcher, Margaret** Conservative and first woman prime minister of Great Britain, 1979–90.
- Trotsky, Leon** Leading left-wing Bolshevik, purged in the 1920s and assassinated by Stalin's agents in 1940.
- Tutu, Desmond** Former Anglican archbishop of South Africa, leading opponent of apartheid, Nobel Peace Prize winner, and head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Vajpayee, Atal Bihari** BJP prime minister of India, 1998–1999.
- Verwoerd, Hendrik** Leading creator of apartheid.
- Walesa, Lech** Most important leader of Solidarity and then president of Poland.

**Wei Jingsheng** Major Chinese dissident, now in exile in the United States.

**Yeltsin, Boris** Former reformist communist leader and president of Russia, 1991–2000.

**Zedillo, Ernesto** President of Mexico, 1994–2000.

**Zhirinovskiy, Vladimir** Leader of the right-wing and racist Liberal Democratic Party in Russia.

**Zhou Enlai** Number two to Mao Zedong in China from 1949 until his death in 1975.

**Zhu Rongji** Currently prime minister of China.

**Zyuganov, Gennady** Head of the Russian Communist Party.

### *Organizations, Places, and Events*

**African National Congress** Leading organization in the opposition to apartheid, now in power in South Africa.

**Akali Dal** The Sikh-based party in Punjab, India.

**Alliance** Coalition of British Liberals and Social Democrats in the 1980s that became the Liberal Democrats of today.

**Article 9** The peace clause of the Japanese constitution that bans it from having an army for anything other than self-defense.

**Ayodhya** Site of a disputed mosque/temple that sparked communal violence in India for much of the 1990s.

**Baath Party** Party in control of Iraq since the late 1960s.

**Beveridge Report** Published in the 1940s and set the stage for the British welfare state.

**Bharatiya Janata Party** The Hindu party that won the 1998 election, often referred to as fundamentalist.

**Black Consciousness movement** An important, spontaneous group opposing apartheid in the 1970s, led by the late Steve Biko.

**Blood River, Battle of** During the Great Trek, battle in which the Boers defeated the Africans, reinforcing their sense of being a chosen people.

**Bolsheviks** Lenin's faction of the Russian Social Democratic Party; later came to mean anyone who followed his views and/or organization.

**British East India Company** Private company that colonized India until the 1850s.

**Broederbond** Secret Afrikaner organization, including many National Party and other supporters of apartheid.

**Bundesbank** Germany's central bank, replaced by European Central Bank in 1999.

**Bundesrat** The upper house of the German parliament.

**Bundestag** The lower house of the German parliament.

**Central Advisory Committee** Informal group of senior Chinese Communist leaders in the 1980s.

**Central Committee** Supposedly the most important body in a communist party; its influence declined as it grew in size and the party needed daily leadership.

**Cheka** The Soviet Union's first secret police.

**Chinese Communist Party (CCP)** The only legal party in China, which has run the country since 1949.

**Christian Democratic Party (CDU)** Germany's leading right-of-center party; similar parties exist elsewhere where there is a large Catholic population.

**Comintern** The interwar coalition of communist parties directed from Moscow.

**Commission, European** The executive of the European Union.

**Committee of Permanent Representatives** European Union civil servants who are sent by and work for the member states rather than the EU itself.

**Common Agricultural Policy** The EU's agricultural policy, blamed for many of its economic troubles and likely to be changed as it adds new members.

**Common Foreign and Security Policy** EU goal of creating a single foreign policy for its fifteen member states; one of the three pillars.

**Common Market** Colloquial name used to describe the European Union, especially in its early years.

**Communism** Has many meanings, but usually used to describe people, policies, and institutions derived from the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

**Communist Party (PCF)** French Communist Party.

**Communist Party of the Russian Federation** The new incarnation of the CPSU for Russia.

**Communist Party of the Soviet Union** The party that ran the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991.

**Confederation of British Industry (CBI)** The leading British business interest group.

**Confederation of Mexican Workers** The official trade union affiliated with the PRI.

**Conference on a Democratic South Africa (CODESA)** The constitution-writing body after 1991.

**Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)** The most important trade union federation, affiliated with the ANC.

**Conservative Party** Britain's most important right-of-center party, in power more often than not for two centuries.

**Constitutional Court** In Germany, the court with powers roughly equivalent to the U.S. Supreme Court.

**Council of Ministers** A generic term used to describe the cabinet in many countries.

**Cultural Revolution** The period of upheaval in China from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s.

**Daimyo** Japanese feudal lords in the pre-Meiji period.

**Democracy Movement** Protests by Chinese students and others that culminated in the Tiananmen Square disaster of 1989 in Beijing.

**Democracy Wall** Literally, a wall on which Chinese dissidents wrote "big-character posters" in the late 1970s.

**Democratic Socialist Party** Japan's Social Democratic Party.

**De-Stalinization** The shift away from Stalinist policies and practices beginning with Khrushchev's secret speech in 1956.

**Diet** Japan's parliament.

**Emergency Rule** Provisions in the Indian constitution that allows a prime minister to rule by decree. Used by Indira Gandhi from 1975 to 1977.

**ENArques** Graduates of France's National School of Administration, many of whom become business and political leaders.

**Euro** The new European currency, introduced in 1999.

**European Coal and Steel Community** One of the precursors of the European Union, formed in 1951.

**European Communities** The formal name of what became the EU in the 1970s and 1980s.

**European Court of Justice** The EU's judicial body, with sweeping powers.

**European Economic Community** The precursor of the EU.

**European Monetary System** The first attempt to link the EU member states' currencies.

- European Monetary Union** Created in 1998, includes a central bank and the euro.
- European Parliament** The EU's legislature.
- European Union** The current name of the "Common Market."
- Events of May 1968** French protest movements that almost toppled the Gaullist government.
- Falun Gong** Chinese spiritual movement suppressed by the government since the late 1990s.
- Fatherland–All Russia** One of the leading opposition parties in Russia in the 1999 Duma elections.
- Federal Election Commission** The old (and corrupt) body that supervised elections in Mexico.
- Federal Electoral Institute** Created before the 1997 election to provide more honest management of elections in Mexico than its predecessor, the Federal Election Commission.
- Federal Republic of Germany** Formal name of the former West Germany and, now, the unified state.
- Federalist Papers** Key documents written in support of the U.S. Constitution during the debate on ratification in the 1780s.
- Federation Council** The largely powerless upper house of the Russian parliament.
- Federation of German Labour (DGB)** The leading German trade union.
- Fifth Republic** French regime since 1958.
- Five-year plan** In the former Soviet Union and other communist countries, the period for which Gosplan developed goals and quotas.
- Force ouvrière** Workers' Force, France's second largest and most dynamic trade union federation.
- Fourth Republic** French regime from 1946 to 1958.
- Free Democratic Party (FDP)** Germany's Liberal party.
- Freedom Charter** The ANC's proposals from the 1950s that led to its banning.
- Gang of Four** Radical leaders in China during the Cultural Revolution, led by Jiang Ching, Mao's wife.
- Gaullists** General term used to describe supporters of General Charles de Gaulle and the parties created to back his vision for the Fifth Republic.
- General Intelligence Apparatus** One of Iraq's main intelligence agencies.
- General secretary** General term used to denote the head of a communist party.
- General Security Directorate** One of Iraq's main intelligence agencies.
- Genro** The small group of nobles who dominated Japanese politics after the Meiji Restoration.
- German Democratic Republic (DDR)** Formal name of the former East Germany.
- Gobernación** The ministry in charge of administration in Mexico; until recently, a post often held by politicians before becoming president.
- Good Friday Agreement** A practical peace agreement reached by the major parties in Northern Ireland with the British and Irish governments, not surprisingly, on Good Friday 1998.
- Gosplan** The Soviet central planning agency.
- Government of India Act** The 1858 law that turned most of India into a formal British colony.
- Grandes écoles** Highly selective French universities that train top civil servants and, hence, much of the elite.
- Great Leap Forward** Failed Chinese campaign of the late 1950s to speed up development.
- Great Reform Act** Law passed in 1832 that expanded the suffrage and is widely seen as a key step toward democracy in Britain.
- Great Trek** Massive expedition by Boers to what is now the northeastern part of South Africa; symbolically important as a sign of Afrikaner power.
- Green revolution** The introduction of new seed varieties that helped reduce hunger dramatically in India.
- Greens** In Germany, the first major environmentally oriented party; now a junior partner in government.
- Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Program (GEAR)** South Africa's development strategy.
- Guerrero** A poor province (though it includes Acapulco) in which rebels are fighting the Mexican government.
- Gulf War** The war between the UN coalition and Iraq following the latter's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.
- House of Commons** The all-important lower house of the British Parliament.
- House of Councillors** The upper house of the Japanese Diet.
- House of Lords** The weaker upper house of the British Parliament, slated for reform or abolition.
- House of Representatives** The lower house in the U.S., Mexican, and Japanese legislatures.
- Hundred Flowers Campaign** Reformist Chinese campaign in the mid-1950s.
- Immigration Reform and Control Act** U.S. law, passed in 1986, that limits the rights of immigrants, especially those from Mexico.
- Indian Administrative Service** The bureaucratic elite today.
- Indian Civil Service** The bureaucratic elite during colonial rule.
- Indian National Congress** The leader of the struggle for India's independence and the dominant party since then.
- Inkatha Freedom Party** The leading African-based opposition party in South Africa.
- Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)** The party that governed Mexico from 1927 to 2000.
- International Monetary Fund** International agency that provides loans and other forms of assistance to countries with fiscal problems.
- Iraqi National Congress** The leading exile-based opposition group to Baath rule.
- Janata (Dal)** Loose coalitions that unseated Congress in the late 1970s and 1980s in India.
- Japan Communist Party (JCP)** The most left-wing major party in Japan, and one of the most successful of the remaining communist parties in the industrialized world.
- Komeito** The Clean Government Party in Japan.
- Kuomintang** The Chinese Nationalist Party, which was nominally in power from 1911 to 1949; now in charge on Taiwan.
- Kurdish Democratic Party** The largest opposition group among Iraqi Kurds.
- Labour Party** The leading left-wing party in Britain, in power since 1997.
- Law for Promoting Stability and Growth in the Economy** Passed in 1967, a key provision in Germany's economic consensus.
- Liberal Democratic Party** In Britain, the number-three party and in some ways the most radical; in Japan, the dominant party since the 1950s; in Russia, the neofascist and racist opposition party led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

- Lok Sabha** The all-important lower house of the Indian parliament.
- Long March** Retreat by the CCP in the mid-1930s, which turned into one of its strengths in recruiting support.
- Maastricht Treaty** Created the EU and EMU; signed in 1992.
- Marshall Plan** U.S. funds provided for reconstruction of Europe after World War II.
- May Fourth Movement** Chinese protest movement triggered by opposition to the Treaty of Versailles; a major step in the path leading to the creation and victory of CCP.
- Meiji Restoration** Political reform in Japan following the arrival of the West.
- Mensheviks** The smaller and more moderate faction of the Russian Social Democratic Party before World War I.
- Military Affairs Committee** One of the leading groups of the CCP under Deng Xiaoping.
- Military Intelligence** One of the leading intelligence agencies in Iraq.
- Ministry of International Trade and Industry** Japanese ministry that coordinates economic policy.
- Mughals** The Muslims who invaded and dominated India beginning in the sixteenth century.
- Multinational corporation** Company operating across national boundaries.
- National Action Party (PAN)** The leading right-of-center opposition party in Mexico.
- National Assembly** In France and South Africa, the lower house of parliament.
- National Democratic Party** Germany's most powerful neo-Nazi party since the end of World War II.
- National Front** France's racist right-wing party.
- Nationalist Party** The Kuomintang, the ruling party in China before the CCP victory; in power on Taiwan.
- National Party** The architect of apartheid in South Africa, in power from 1948 to 1994.
- National Socialist Democratic Workers Party (NSDAP)** Political party of Hitler in Germany.
- Nazis** Hitler's party that ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945.
- Newly industrializing countries** Countries in the third world that have made major strides toward industrialization.
- New National Party** Successor to the apartheid-era National Party in South Africa.
- Nongovernmental organization** Nonprofit organizations which exert political influence around the world.
- North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)** Agreement linking the economies of Canada, Mexico, and the United States.
- Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** Cartel of oil-producing countries, responsible for the 1973–74 embargo.
- Ottoman Empire** Islamic empire based in present-day Turkey; collapsed with World War I.
- Our Home Is Russia** New political party chaired by former prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.
- Parity Law** Recent French legislation guaranteeing seats in the parliament for women.
- Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS)** The successor to East Germany's Communist Party.
- Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)** The leading left-of-center opposition party in Mexico.
- Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)** One of the leading Kurdish opposition groups in Iraq and beyond.
- Peace Clause** Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, which denies it an offensive army.
- People's Liberation Army** China's military.
- People's Republic of China** Official name of the Chinese state.
- Politburo** Generic term used to describe the leadership of communist parties.
- Popular Army** The non-elite force in the Iraqi military.
- Provisional government** Generic term used to describe temporary governments until a new constitution is written; also the government in Russia between the two 1917 revolutions.
- Radicals** People to the left of center; in France, the liberals who were radical only in nineteenth-century terms.
- Rally for the Republic (RPR)** The current name of the Gaullist Party in France.
- Raja Sabha** The weaker upper house of the Indian parliament.
- Rashtriya Swayamsevah Sangh (RSS)** A fundamentalist Hindu group and a precursor of the BJP.
- Red Guard** Students and others who supported Mao during the Cultural Revolution.
- Red versus expert** Debate in China pitting ideologues against supporters of economic development.
- Republican Guard** The elite military units in Iraq.
- Revolution from above** In Germany and Japan, elite-driven modernization efforts in the late nineteenth century.
- Revolutionary Command Council** The leadership of the ruling Baath Party in Iraq.
- Russian Federation** Formal name of Russia.
- Secret speech** Given by Khrushchev in 1957, seen as the start of the "thaw."
- Secretariat** Generic term used to describe the bureaucratic leaders of a communist party.
- Senate** Upper house of the legislature in the United States, France, Mexico, and South Africa.
- Sharpeville Massacre** Incident in 1966 in which nearly a hundred protesters were killed in South Africa.
- Shinshinto** The leading opposition party in Japan for a brief period in the late 1990s.
- Shogun** The de facto ruler of Japan before the Meiji Restoration.
- Single European Act** Act that created the truly common market in 1992.
- Sino-Soviet split** Tensions between the USSR and China that rocked the communist world.
- Social Democratic Party (SDP)** Germany's left-of-center party, in power since 1997.
- Social Democratic Party of Japan** The more important of Japan's two Socialist parties.
- Socialist Party (PS)** France's new Socialist Party, created in 1971.
- Solidarity** The anticommunist union formed in Poland in the 1980s.
- South African Communist Party** Allied with the ANC during the apartheid years and part of the government now.
- Soweto** The slum/township outside Johannesburg that served as a key organizing point for protest against apartheid.
- Special Economic Zone** Cities and regions in China in which foreigners are allowed to invest.
- Special Security** One of the leading intelligence agencies in Iraq.
- Standing Committee** The subcommittee that runs the Politburo in China.

**State Duma** The lower house of the Russian parliament.

**State Security Council** The leading ministers of the Russian government; the coordinating body for secret police and other organs of repression in the later years of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

**Supreme commander of the Allied powers (SCAP)** General Douglas MacArthur, who ran the occupation of Japan following World War II.

**Syndicate** Indian Congress leaders who ended up opposing Indira Gandhi.

**Third International** Moscow-dominated organization of communist parties around the world between the two world wars.

**Tiananmen Square** Symbolic heart of Chinese politics; site in Beijing of protests and massacre in 1989.

**Tokugawa shogunate** The regime of mostly figurehead leaders who nominally ruled Japan from the beginning of the seventeenth century until the Meiji Restoration.

**Tories** Informal name for Britain's Conservative Party.

**Trades Union Conference (TUC)** Britain's leading trade union confederation.

**Treaty of Amsterdam** Minor 1998 agreement that added some limited powers to the EU.

**Treaty of Rome** Created the EEC in 1957.

**Treuhand** The agency responsible for selling off formerly state-owned East German companies.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission** Official South African body looking into human rights violations under apartheid.

**Twentieth Party Congress** Occasion of Khrushchev's "secret speech" launching de-Stalinization.

**Union for French Democracy** The number-two right-of-center party in France.

**Umkhonto we Sizwe** Spear of the Nation; the ANC's revolutionary wing in South Africa.

**United Democratic Front** Above-ground unit created by the ANC in South Africa in 1983.

**United States–Japan Security Treaty** Controversial pact that tied the two countries together.

**UNSCOM** United Nations Special Commission that formerly conducted arms inspections in Iraq.

**Warsaw Pact** Alliance that was the communist world's equivalent of NATO.

**Weimar Republic** Germany's first and failed attempt at democracy.

**World Bank** A major international lending agency for development projects based in Washington.

**World Trade Organization** International organization with wide jurisdiction over trade issues, replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

**Yaboloko** One of the leading reformist parties in Russia.

**Zapatista** Informal name for Mexican revolutionaries in Chiapas.

# Key Charts and Data

## Factors Affecting the Development of States

	INTERNATIONAL	DOMESTIC
Historical	Imperialism	State and nation building
Contemporary	Globalization and the end of the cold war	Pressures from below

## Basic Data

COUNTRY	POPULATION (MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN 1999)	AVERAGE POPULATION GROWTH 1990-99 (PERCENTAGE)	GNP PER CAPITA (U.S. \$)	RANK IN GNP PER CAPITA	GROWTH IN GNP 1990-2000 (PERCENTAGE)	INFANT MORTALITY (PER 1,000 BIRTHS)	AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY
China	1,250	1.1	780	142	10.7	36	72
France	59	0.5	23,480	21	1.7	5	79
Germany	82	0.4	25,350	13	1.5	6	77
India	998	1.8	450	162	6.1	83	45
Japan	127	0.6	32,730	6	1.4	5	77
Mexico	97	1.8	4,400	71	2.7	35	72
Russia	149	-0.1	2,720	98	-6.1	20	65
South Africa	42	2.0	3,160	86	1.9	83	63
United Kingdom	59	0.3	22,640	22	2.2	7	77
United States	273	1.0	30,600	8	3.4	7	77
High-income	891	0.8	25,730	NA	2.4	8	77
Low-income	2,417	2.0	410	NA	2.4	107	60

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report*. [www.worldbank.org/poverty/wdrpoverty/report/index.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/wdrpoverty/report/index.htm). Accessed 26 December 2001. Iraq not included because data are incomplete.

## The Impact of Global and Domestic Forces on the State

