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COURSE CODE	BIRD 311
COURSE NAME	COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Comparative politics is **the comparative study of other countries, citizens, different political units either in whole or in part, and analyzes the similarities and differences between those political units.**

Political system

In political science, a **political system** means the type of political organization that can be recognized, observed or otherwise declared by a state.

It defines the process for making official government decisions. It usually comprizes the governmental legal and economic system, social and cultural system, and other state and government specific systems. However, this is a very simplified view of a much more complex system of categories involving the questions of who should have authority and what the government influence on its people and economy should be.

Definition

According to David Easton, "A political system can be designated as the interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society".

Sociological and socioanthropological classification

Social anthropologists generally recognize four kinds of political systems, two of which are uncentralized and two of which are centralized.

- Uncentralized systems
 - Band society
 - Small family group, no larger than an extended family or clan; it has been defined as consisting of no more than 30 to 50 individuals.
 - A band can cease to exist if only a small group walks out.
 - Tribe
 - Generally larger, consisting of many families. Tribes have more social institutions, such as a chief or elders.
 - More permanent than bands. Many tribes are sub-divided into bands.
- Centralized governments
 - Chiefdom
 - More complex than a tribe or a band society, and less complex than a state or a civilization
 - Characterized by pervasive inequality and centralization of authority.

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- A single lineage/family of the elite class becomes the ruling elite of the chiefdom
- Complex chiefdoms have two or even three tiers of political hierarchy.
- "An autonomous political unit comprising a number of villages or communities under the permanent control of a paramount chief"
- Sovereign state
 - A sovereign state is a state with a permanent population, a defined territory, a government and the capacity to enter into relations with other sovereign states.
- Supranational political systems
 - Supranational political systems are created by independent nations to reach a common goal or gain strength from forming an alliance.
- Empires
 - Empires are widespread states or communities under a single rule. They are characterized by the ruler's desire for unanimous religious affiliation or posing as a threat to other empires in times of war. Empires - such as the Romans, or British - often made considerable progress in ways of democratic structures, creating and building city infrastructures, and maintaining civility within the diverse communities. Because of the intricate organization of the empires, they were often able to hold a large majority of power on a universal level.
- Leagues
 - Leagues are international organizations composed of states coming together for a single common purpose. In this way leagues are different from empires, as they only seek to fulfill a single goal. Often leagues are formed on the brink of a military or economic downfall. Meetings and hearings are conducted in a neutral location with representatives of all involved nations present.

Social political science

The sociological interest in political systems is figuring out who holds power within the relationship of the government and its people and how the government's power is used. There are three types of political systems that sociologists consider:

- Authoritarianism
 - In authoritarian governments, the people have no power or representation and it is characterized by absolute or blind obedience to formal authority, as against individual freedom and related to the expectation of unquestioning obedience. The elite leaders handle all economic, military, and foreign relations. A prime example of authoritarianism is a dictatorship.
 - Totalitarianism is the most extreme form of authoritarianism because it controls all aspects of life including the communication between citizens, media censorship, and threatens by the means of terror.
- Monarchy
 - A monarchy is a government controlled by a king or queen determined by a predisposed line of sovereignty. In other words, it can be seen as an undivided rule or absolute sovereignty by a single person. In the modern world there are two

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types of monarchies, absolute monarchies and constitutional monarchies. An absolute monarchy works like a dictatorship in that the king has complete rule over his country. A constitutional monarchy gives the royal family limited powers and usually works in accordance with an elected body of officials. Social revolutions of the 18th, 19th, and 20th century overthrew the majority^[citation needed] of existing monarchies in favor of more democratic governments and a rising middle class, as well as of authoritarian regimes like the Soviet Union.

- Democracy
 - A democracy is a form of government in which the citizens create and vote for laws directly, or indirectly via representatives (democratic republic). The idea of democracy stems back from ancient Greece and the profound works of ancient academics.

POLITICAL STRUCTURES

Political structure is a commonly used term in political science. In a general sense, it refers to institutions or even groups and their relations to each other, their patterns of interaction within political systems and to political regulations, laws and the norms present in political systems in such a way that they constitute the political landscape. also of the political entity. In the social domain, its counterpart is social structure. Political structure also refers to the way in which a government is run.

Polity

A **polity** is an identifiable **political entity** – a group of people with a collective identity, who are organized by some form of institutionalized social relations, and have a capacity to mobilize resources. A polity can be any other group of people organized for governance (such as a corporate board), the government of a country, or of a country subdivision. A polity may be a republic administered by an elected representative, or the realm of a hereditary monarch.

In geopolitics, a polity can be manifested in different forms such as a state, an empire, an international organization, a political organization and other identifiable, resource-manipulating organizational structures. A polity like a state does not need to be a sovereign unit. The most preeminent polities today are Westphalian states and nation-states, commonly referred to as countries and also incorrectly referred to by the term nations.

A polity encapsulates a vast multitude of organizations, many of which form the fundamental apparatus of contemporary states such as their subordinate civil and local government authorities. Polities do not need to be in control of any geographic areas, as not all political entities and governments have controlled the resources of one fixed geographic area. The historical Steppe Empires originating from the Eurasian Steppe are the most prominent example of non-sedentary polities. These polities differ from states because of their lack of a fixed, defined territory. Empires also differ from states in that their territories are not statically defined or permanently fixed and consequently that their body politic was also dynamic and fluid. It is useful then to think of a polity as a political community.

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A polity can also be defined either as a faction within a larger (usually state) entity or at different times as the entity itself. For example, Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan are parts of their own separate and distinct polity. However, they are also members of the sovereign state of Iraq which is itself a polity, albeit one which is much less specific and as a result much less cohesive. Therefore, it is possible for an individual to belong to more than one polity at a time.

Thomas Hobbes was a highly significant figure in the conceptualisation of polities, in particular of states. Hobbes considered notions of the state and the body politic in *Leviathan*, his most notable work.

Polities do not necessarily need to be governments. A corporation, for instance, is capable of marshalling resources, has a governance structure, legal rights and exclusive jurisdiction over internal decision making. An ethnic community within a country or subnational entity may be a polity if they have sufficient organization and cohesive interests that can be furthered by such organization.

Systems theory in political science

Systems theory in political science is a highly abstract, partly holistic view of politics, influenced by cybernetics. The adaptation of system theory to political science was conceived by David Easton in 1953.

In simple terms, Easton's behavioral approach to politics, proposed that a political system could be seen as a delimited (i.e. all political systems have precise boundaries) and fluid (changing) system of steps in decision making. Greatly simplifying his model: Influence of computers on the discipline of political science and the political system work within an environment. The environment generates different demands from different section of society such as reservation system in the matter of a certain group, demand for better transportation etc.

- Step 1. changes in the social or physical environment surrounding a political system produce "demands" and "supports" for action or the status quo directed as "inputs" towards the political system, through political behavior.
- Step 2, these demands and supporting groups stimulate competition in a political system, leading to decisions or "outputs" directed at some aspect of the surrounding social or physical environment.
- Step 3, after a decision or output is made (e.g., a specific policy), it interacts with its environment, and if it produces change in the environment, there are "outcomes."
- Step 4, when a new policy interacts with its environment, outcomes may generate new demands or supports and groups in support or against the policy ("feedback") or a new policy on some related matter.
- Step 5, feedback, leads back to Step 1, forming a never-ending cycle.

Political analysis

Easton aspired to make politics a science, that is, working with highly abstract models that described the regularities of patterns and processes in political life in general. In his view, the

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highest level of abstraction could make scientific generalizations about politics possible. In sum, politics should be seen as a whole, not as a collection of different problems to be solved.

His main model was driven by an organic view of politics, as if it were a living object. His theory is a statement of what makes political systems adapt and survive. He describes politics in a constant flux, thereby rejecting the idea of "equilibrium", so prevalent in some other political theories (see institutionalism). Moreover, he rejects the idea that politics could be examined by looking at different levels of analysis. His abstractions could account for any group and demand at any given time. That is, interest group theory and elite theory can be subsumed in political systems analysis. His theory was and is highly influential in the pluralist tradition in political science. (see Harold Lasswell and Robert Dahl)

Tractatus Politicus

Tractatus politicus (TP) or *Political Treatise* was the last treatise written by Baruch Spinoza. It was written in 1675–76 and published posthumously in 1677. This paper has the subtitle, "*In quo demonstratur, quomodo Societas, ubi Imperium Monarchicum locum habet, sicut et ea, ubi Optimi imperant, debet institui, ne in Tyrannidem labatur, et ut Pax, Libertasque civium inviolata maneat.*" ("In which it is demonstrated how a society, may it be a monarchy or an aristocracy, can be best governed, and not fall into tyranny, and how the peace and liberty of the citizens must not be violated").

As in Aristotle's *Politics*, Spinoza analyzes each form of government: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy without affirming which of these is the best. Unlike Aristotle, Spinoza argued in the last chapter that democracy is not "rule of majority", but freedom for all by the natural law. Although he affirms that women are not equal to men in ability, and addresses the danger of Amazons, he suggests the commonwealth could possibly be governed by both sexes.

The treatise also characterises the notion of peace in Chapter V, section 4, affirming that "Peace is not mere absence of war, but is a virtue that springs from force of character." In the same Chapter, section 7 Niccolò Machiavelli is referred to as stating that the prince should establish and maintain dominion, though why Machiavelli did this is not clear, with the suggestion that Machiavelli is showing how imprudent it is to try to remove a tyrant if one is unable to remove the causes of his being a tyrant. Indeed, it has been suggested that the Political Treatise is an extended response to the authoritarian rule of William of Orange following the invasion of the Netherlands by France in 1672 and which continued as Spinoza was writing the text.^[1]

Electoral system

An **electoral system** or **voting system** is a set of rules that determine how elections and referendums are conducted and how their results are determined. Political electoral systems are organized by governments, while non-political elections may take place in business, non-profit organisations and informal organisations. These rules govern all aspects of the voting process: when elections occur, who is allowed to vote, who can stand as a candidate, how ballots are marked and cast, how the ballots are counted, how votes translate into the election outcome, limits on campaign spending, and other factors that can affect the result. Political electoral

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systems are defined by constitutions and electoral laws, are typically conducted by election commissions, and can use multiple types of elections for different offices.

Some electoral systems elect a single winner to a unique position, such as prime minister, president or governor, while others elect multiple winners, such as members of parliament or boards of directors. When electing a legislature, voters may be divided into constituencies with one or more representatives, and may vote directly for individual candidates or for a list of candidates put forward by a political party or alliance. There are many variations in electoral systems, with the most common systems being first-past-the-post voting, block voting, the two-round (runoff) system, proportional representation and ranked voting. Some electoral systems, such as mixed systems, attempt to combine the benefits of non-proportional and proportional systems.

The study of formally defined electoral methods is called social choice theory or voting theory, and this study can take place within the field of political science, economics, or mathematics, and specifically within the subfields of game theory and mechanism design. Impossibility proofs such as Arrow's impossibility theorem demonstrate that when voters have three or more alternatives, no preferential voting system can guarantee the race between two candidates remains unaffected when an irrelevant candidate participates or drops out of the election.

Types of electoral systems

Plurality systems

Plurality voting is a system in which the candidate(s) with the highest number of votes wins, with no requirement to get a majority of votes. In cases where there is a single position to be filled, it is known as first-past-the-post; this is the second most common electoral system for national legislatures, with 58 countries using it to elect their legislatures, the vast majority of which are current or former British or American colonies or territories. It is also the second most common system used for presidential elections, being used in 19 countries.

In cases where there are multiple positions to be filled, most commonly in cases of multi-member constituencies, plurality voting is referred to as block voting, multiple non-transferable vote or plurality-at-large. This takes two main forms: in one form voters have as many votes as there are seats and can vote for any candidate, regardless of party – this is used in eight countries. There are variations on this system such as limited voting, where voters are given fewer votes than there are seats to be filled (Gibraltar is the only territory where this system is in use) and single non-transferable vote (SNTV), in which voters can vote for only one candidate in a multi-member constituency, with the candidates receiving the most votes declared the winners; this system is used in Kuwait, the Pitcairn Islands and Vanuatu. In the other main form of block voting, also known as party block voting, voters can only vote for the multiple candidates of a single party. This is used in five countries as part of mixed systems.

The Dowdall system, a multi-member constituency variation on the Borda count, is used in Nauru for parliamentary elections and sees voters rank the candidates depending on how many seats there are in their constituency. First preference votes are counted as whole numbers; the

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second preference votes divided by two, third preferences by three; this continues to the lowest possible ranking. The totals achieved by each candidate determine the winners.

Majoritarian systems

Majoritarian voting is a system in which candidates must receive a majority of votes to be elected, either in a runoff election or final round of voting (although in some cases only a plurality is required in the last round of voting if no candidate can achieve a majority). There are two main forms of majoritarian systems, one conducted in a single election using ranked voting and the other using multiple elections, to successively narrow the field of candidates. Both are primarily used for single-member constituencies.

Majoritarian voting can be achieved in a single election using instant-runoff voting (IRV), whereby voters rank candidates in order of preference; this system is used for parliamentary elections in Australia and Papua New Guinea. If no candidate receives a majority of the vote in the first round, the second preferences of the lowest-ranked candidate are then added to the totals. This is repeated until a candidate achieves over 50% of the number of valid votes. If not all voters use all their preference votes, then the count may continue until two candidates remain, at which point the winner is the one with the most votes. A modified form of IRV is the contingent vote where voters do not rank all candidates, but have a limited number of preference votes. If no candidate has a majority in the first round, all candidates are excluded except the top two, with the highest remaining preference votes from the votes for the excluded candidates then added to the totals to determine the winner. This system is used in Sri Lankan presidential elections, with voters allowed to give three preferences.

The other main form of majoritarian system is the two-round system, which is the most common system used for presidential elections around the world, being used in 88 countries. It is also used in 20 countries for electing the legislature. If no candidate achieves a majority of votes in the first round of voting, a second round is held to determine the winner. In most cases the second round is limited to the top two candidates from the first round, although in some elections more than two candidates may choose to contest the second round; in these cases the second round is decided by plurality voting. Some countries use a modified form of the two-round system, such as Ecuador where a candidate in the presidential election is declared the winner if they receive 40% of the vote and are 10% ahead of their nearest rival,^[5] or Argentina (45% plus 10% ahead), where the system is known as ballotage.

An exhaustive ballot is not limited to two rounds, but sees the last-placed candidate eliminated in each round of voting. Due to the potentially large number of rounds, this system is not used in any major popular elections, but is used to elect the Speakers of parliament in several countries and members of the Swiss Federal Council. In some formats there may be multiple rounds held without any candidates being eliminated until a candidate achieves a majority, a system used in the United States Electoral College.

Proportional systems

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Proportional representation is the most widely used electoral system for national legislatures, with the parliaments of over eighty countries elected by various forms of the system.

Party-list proportional representation is the single most common electoral system and is used by 80 countries, and involves voters voting for a list of candidates proposed by a party. In closed list systems voters do not have any influence over the candidates put forward by the party, but in open list systems voters are able to both vote for the party list and influence the order in which candidates will be assigned seats. In some countries, notably Israel and the Netherlands, elections are carried out using 'pure' proportional representation, with the votes tallied on a national level before assigning seats to parties. However, in most cases several multi-member constituencies are used rather than a single nationwide constituency, giving an element of geographical representation; but this can result in the distribution of seats not reflecting the national vote totals. As a result, some countries have leveling seats to award to parties whose seat totals are lower than their proportion of the national vote.

In addition to the electoral threshold (the minimum percentage of the vote that a party must obtain to win seats), there are several different ways to allocate seats in proportional systems. There are two main types of systems: highest average and largest remainder. Highest average systems involve dividing the votes received by each party by a series of divisors, producing figures that determine seat allocation; for example the D'Hondt method (of which there are variants including Hagenbach-Bischoff) and the Webster/Sainte-Laguë method. Under largest remainder systems, parties' vote shares are divided by the quota (obtained by dividing the total number of votes by the number of seats available). This usually leaves some seats unallocated, which are awarded to parties based on the largest fractions of seats that they have remaining. Examples of largest remainder systems include the Hare quota, Droop quota, the Imperiali quota and the Hagenbach-Bischoff quota.

Single transferable vote (STV) is another form of proportional representation; in STV, voters rank candidates in a multi-member constituency rather than voting for a party list; it is used in Malta and the Republic of Ireland. To be elected, candidates must pass a quota (the Droop quota being the most common). Candidates that pass the quota on the first count are elected. Votes are then reallocated from the least successful candidates, as well as surplus votes from successful candidates, until all seats have been filled by candidates who have passed the quota.

Mixed systems

In several countries, mixed systems are used to elect the legislature. These include parallel voting (also known as mixed-member majoritarian) and mixed-member proportional representation.

In non-compensatory, parallel voting systems, which are used in 20 countries,^[1] there are two methods by which members of a legislature are elected; part of the membership is elected by a plurality or majority vote in single-member constituencies and the other part by proportional representation. The results of the constituency vote have no effect on the outcome of the proportional vote.

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In compensatory mixed-member representation the results of the proportional vote are adjusted to balance the seats won in the constituency vote. In mixed-member proportional systems, in use in eight countries, there is enough compensation in order to ensure that parties have a number of seats proportional to their vote share.

Other systems may be insufficiently compensatory, and this may result in overhang seats, where parties win more seats in the constituency system than they would be entitled to based on their vote share. Variations of this include the Additional Member System, and Alternative Vote Plus, in which voters cast votes for both single-member constituencies and multi-member constituencies; the allocation of seats in the multi-member constituencies is adjusted to achieve an overall seat total proportional to parties' vote share by taking into account the number of seats won by parties in the single-member constituencies.

Mixed single vote systems are also compensatory, however they usually use a vote transfer mechanism unlike the seat linkage (top-up) method of MMP and may or may not be able to achieve proportional representation. An unusual form of mixed-member compensatory representation using negative vote transfer, Scorporo, was used in Italy from 1993 until 2006.

Additional features

Some electoral systems feature a majority bonus system to either ensure one party or coalition gains a majority in the legislature, or to give the party receiving the most votes a clear advantage in terms of the number of seats. San Marino has a modified two-round system, which sees a second round of voting featuring the top two parties or coalitions if there is no majority in the first round. The winner of the second round is guaranteed 35 seats in the 60-seat Grand and General Council. In Greece the party receiving the most votes was given an additional 50 seats, a system which was abolished following the 2019 elections.

In Uruguay, the President and members of the General Assembly are elected by on a single ballot, known as the double simultaneous vote. Voters cast a single vote, voting for the presidential, Senatorial and Chamber of Deputies candidates of that party. This system was also previously used in Bolivia and the Dominican Republic.

Primary elections

Primary elections are a feature of some electoral systems, either as a formal part of the electoral system or informally by choice of individual political parties as a method of selecting candidates, as is the case in Italy. Primary elections limit the risk of vote splitting by ensuring a single party candidate. In Argentina they are a formal part of the electoral system and take place two months before the main elections; any party receiving less than 1.5% of the vote is not permitted to contest the main elections. In the United States, there are both partisan and non-partisan primary elections.

Indirect elections

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Some elections feature an indirect electoral system, whereby there is either no popular vote, or the popular vote is only one stage of the election; in these systems the final vote is usually taken by an electoral college. In several countries, such as Mauritius or Trinidad and Tobago, the post of President is elected by the legislature. In others like India, the vote is taken by an electoral college consisting of the national legislature and state legislatures. In the United States, the president is indirectly elected using a two-stage process; a popular vote in each state elects members to the electoral college that in turn elects the President. This can result in a situation where a candidate who receives the most votes nationwide does not win the electoral college vote, as most recently happened in 2000 and 2016.

Systems used outside politics

In addition to the various electoral systems in use in the political sphere, there are numerous others, some of which are proposals and some of which have been adopted for usage in business (such as electing corporate board members) or for organisations but not for public elections.

Ranked systems include Bucklin voting, the various Condorcet methods (Copeland's, Dodgson's, Kemeny-Young, Maximal lotteries, Minimax, Nanson's, Ranked pairs, Schulze), the Coombs' method and positional voting. There are also several variants of single transferable vote, including CPO-STV, Schulze STV and the Wright system. Dual-member proportional representation is a proposed system with two candidates elected in each constituency, one with the most votes and one to ensure proportionality of the combined results. Biproportional apportionment is a system whereby the total number of votes is used to calculate the number of seats each party is due, followed by a calculation of the constituencies in which the seats should be awarded in order to achieve the total due to them.

Cardinal electoral systems allow voters to evaluate candidates independently. The complexity ranges from approval voting where voters simply state whether they approve of a candidate or not to range voting, where a candidate is scored from a set range of numbers. Other cardinal systems include proportional approval voting, sequential proportional approval voting, satisfaction approval voting, highest median rules (including the majority judgment), and the D21 – Janeček method where voters can cast positive and negative votes.

Historically, weighted voting systems were used in some countries. These allocated a greater weight to the votes of some voters than others, either indirectly by allocating more seats to certain groups (such as the Prussian three-class franchise), or by weighting the results of the vote. The latter system was used in colonial Rhodesia for the 1962 and 1965 elections. The elections featured two voter rolls (the 'A' roll being largely European and the 'B' roll largely African); the seats of the House Assembly were divided into 50 constituency seats and 15 district seats. Although all voters could vote for both types of seats, 'A' roll votes were given greater weight for the constituency seats and 'B' roll votes greater weight for the district seats. Weighted systems are still used in corporate elections, with votes weighted to reflect stock ownership.

Rules and regulations

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In addition to the specific method of electing candidates, electoral systems are also characterised by their wider rules and regulations, which are usually set out in a country's constitution or electoral law. Participatory rules determine candidate nomination and voter registration, in addition to the location of polling places and the availability of online voting, postal voting, and absentee voting. Other regulations include the selection of voting devices such as paper ballots, machine voting or open ballot systems, and consequently the type of vote counting systems, verification and auditing used.

Electoral rules place limits on suffrage and candidacy. Most countries's electorates are characterised by universal suffrage, but there are differences on the age at which people are allowed to vote, with the youngest being 16 and the oldest 21. People may be disenfranchised for a range of reasons, such as being a serving prisoner, being declared bankrupt, having committed certain crimes or being a serving member of the armed forces. Similar limits are placed on candidacy (also known as passive suffrage), and in many cases the age limit for candidates is higher than the voting age. A total of 21 countries have compulsory voting, although in some there is an upper age limit on enforcement of the law.^[8] Many countries also have the none of the above option on their ballot papers.

In systems that use constituencies, apportionment or districting defines the area covered by each constituency. Where constituency boundaries are drawn has a strong influence on the likely outcome of elections in the constituency due to the geographic distribution of voters. Political parties may seek to gain an advantage during redistricting by ensuring their voter base has a majority in as many constituencies as possible, a process known as gerrymandering. Historically rotten and pocket boroughs, constituencies with unusually small populations, were used by wealthy families to gain parliamentary representation.

Some countries have minimum turnout requirements for elections to be valid. In Serbia this rule caused multiple re-runs of presidential elections, with the 1997 election re-run once and the 2002 elections re-run three times due insufficient turnout in the first, second and third attempts to run the election. The turnout requirement was scrapped prior to the fourth vote in 2004.^[9] Similar problems in Belarus led to the 1995 parliamentary elections going to a fourth round of voting before enough parliamentarians were elected to make a quorum.^[10]

Reserved seats are used in many countries to ensure representation for ethnic minorities, women, young people or the disabled. These seats are separate from general seats, and may be elected separately (such as in Morocco where a separate ballot is used to elect the 60 seats reserved for women and 30 seats reserved for young people in the House of Representatives), or be allocated to parties based on the results of the election; in Jordan the reserved seats for women are given to the female candidates who failed to win constituency seats but with the highest number of votes, whilst in Kenya the Senate seats reserved for women, young people and the disabled are allocated to parties based on how many seats they won in the general vote. Some countries achieve minority representation by other means, including requirements for a certain proportion of candidates to be women, or by exempting minority parties from the electoral threshold, as is done in Poland,^[11] Romania and Serbia.^[12]

History

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Pre-democratic

In ancient Greece and Italy, the institution of suffrage already existed in a rudimentary form at the outset of the historical period. In the early monarchies it was customary for the king to invite pronouncements of his people on matters in which it was prudent to secure its assent beforehand. In these assemblies the people recorded their opinion by clamouring (a method which survived in Sparta as late as the 4th century BCE), or by the clashing of spears on shields.

Early democracy

Voting has been used as a feature of democracy since the 6th century BC, when democracy was introduced by the Athenian democracy. However, in Athenian democracy, voting was seen as the least democratic among methods used for selecting public officials, and was little used, because elections were believed to inherently favor the wealthy and well-known over average citizens. Viewed as more democratic were assemblies open to all citizens, and selection by lot, as well as rotation of office.

Generally, the taking of votes was effected in the form of a poll. The practice of the Athenians, which is shown by inscriptions to have been widely followed in the other states of Greece, was to hold a show of hands, except on questions affecting the status of individuals: these latter, which included all lawsuits and proposals of ostracism, in which voters chose the citizen they most wanted to exile for ten years, were determined by secret ballot (one of the earliest recorded elections in Athens was a plurality vote that it was undesirable to win, namely an ostracism vote). At Rome the method which prevailed up to the 2nd century BCE was that of division (*discessio*). But the system became subject to intimidation and corruption. Hence a series of laws enacted between 139 and 107 BCE prescribed the use of the ballot (*tabella*), a slip of wood coated with wax, for all business done in the assemblies of the people. For the purpose of carrying resolutions a simple majority of votes was deemed sufficient. As a general rule equal value was made to attach to each vote; but in the popular assemblies at Rome a system of voting by groups was in force until the middle of the 3rd century BCE by which the richer classes secured a decisive preponderance.

Most elections in the early history of democracy were held using plurality voting or some variant, but as an exception, the state of Venice in the 13th century adopted approval voting to elect their Great Council. The Venetians' method for electing the Doge was a particularly convoluted process, consisting of five rounds of drawing lots (sortition) and five rounds of approval voting. By drawing lots, a body of 30 electors was chosen, which was further reduced to nine electors by drawing lots again. An electoral college of nine members elected 40 people by approval voting; those 40 were reduced to form a second electoral college of 12 members by drawing lots again. The second electoral college elected 25 people by approval voting, which were reduced to form a third electoral college of nine members by drawing lots. The third electoral college elected 45 people, which were reduced to form a fourth electoral college of 11 by drawing lots. They in turn elected a final electoral body of 41 members, who ultimately elected the Doge. Despite its complexity, the method had certain desirable properties such as being hard to game and ensuring that the winner reflected the opinions of both majority and

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minority factions. This process, with slight modifications, was central to the politics of the Republic of Venice throughout its remarkable lifespan of over 500 years, from 1268 to 1797.

Development of new systems

Jean-Charles de Borda proposed the Borda count in 1770 as a method for electing members to the French Academy of Sciences. His method was opposed by the Marquis de Condorcet, who proposed instead the method of pairwise comparison that he had devised. Implementations of this method are known as Condorcet methods. He also wrote about the Condorcet paradox, which he called the *intransitivity of majority preferences*. However, recent research has shown that the philosopher Ramon Llull devised both the Borda count and a pairwise method that satisfied the Condorcet criterion in the 13th century. The manuscripts in which he described these methods had been lost to history until they were rediscovered in 2001.

Later in the 18th century, apportionment methods came to prominence due to the United States Constitution, which mandated that seats in the United States House of Representatives had to be allocated among the states proportionally to their population, but did not specify how to do so. A variety of methods were proposed by statesmen such as Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and Daniel Webster. Some of the apportionment methods devised in the United States were in a sense rediscovered in Europe in the 19th century, as seat allocation methods for the newly proposed method of party-list proportional representation. The result is that many apportionment methods have two names; *Jefferson's method* is equivalent to the D'Hondt method, as is *Webster's method* to the Sainte-Laguë method, while *Hamilton's method* is identical to the Hare largest remainder method.

The single transferable vote (STV) method was devised by Carl Andræ in Denmark in 1855 and in the United Kingdom by Thomas Hare in 1857. STV elections were first held in Denmark in 1856, and in Tasmania in 1896 after its use was promoted by Andrew Inglis Clark. Party-list proportional representation began to be used to elect European legislatures in the early 20th century, with Belgium the first to implement it for its 1900 general elections. Since then, proportional and semi-proportional methods have come to be used in almost all democratic countries, with most exceptions being former British and French colonies.

Single-winner revival

Perhaps influenced by the rapid development of multiple-winner electoral systems, theorists began to publish new findings about single-winner methods in the late 19th century. This began around 1870, when William Robert Ware proposed applying STV to single-winner elections, yielding instant-runoff voting (IRV). Soon, mathematicians began to revisit Condorcet's ideas and invent new methods for Condorcet completion; Edward J. Nanson combined the newly described instant runoff voting with the Borda count to yield a new Condorcet method called Nanson's method. Charles Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, proposed the straightforward Condorcet method known as Dodgson's method. He also proposed a proportional representation system based on multi-member districts, quotas as minimum requirements to take seats, and votes transferable by candidates through proxy voting.

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Ranked voting electoral systems eventually gathered enough support to be adopted for use in government elections. In Australia, IRV was first adopted in 1893, and continues to be used along with STV today. In the United States in the early-20th-century progressive era, some municipalities began to use Bucklin voting, although this is no longer used in any government elections, and has even been declared unconstitutional in Minnesota.

Recent developments

The use of game theory to analyze electoral systems led to discoveries about the effects of certain methods. Earlier developments such as Arrow's impossibility theorem had already shown the issues with Ranked voting systems. Research led Steven Brams and Peter Fishburn to formally define and promote the use of approval voting in 1977. Political scientists of the 20th century published many studies on the effects that the electoral systems have on voters' choices and political parties, and on political stability. A few scholars also studied which effects caused a nation to switch to a particular electoral system.^{[28][29][30][31][32]}

The study of electoral systems influenced a new push for electoral reform beginning around the 1990s, when proposals were made to replace plurality voting in governmental elections with other methods. New Zealand adopted mixed-member proportional representation for the 1993 general elections and STV for some local elections in 2004. After plurality voting was a key factor in the contested results of the 2000 presidential elections in the United States, various municipalities in the United States began to adopt instant-runoff voting, although some of them subsequently returned to their prior method. However, attempts at introducing more proportional systems were not always successful; in Canada there were two referendums in British Columbia in 2005 and 2009 on adopting an STV method, both of which failed. In the United Kingdom, a 2011 referendum on adopting IRV saw the proposal rejected.

In other countries there were calls for the restoration of plurality or majoritarian systems or their establishment where they have never been used; a referendum was held in Ecuador in 1994 on the adoption the two round system, but the idea was rejected. In Romania a proposal to switch to a two-round system for parliamentary elections failed only because voter turnout in the referendum was too low. Attempts to reintroduce single-member constituencies in Poland (2015) and two-round system in Bulgaria (2016) via referendums both also failed due to low turnout.

Comparison of electoral systems

Main article: Comparison of electoral systems

Electoral systems can be compared by different means. Attitudes towards systems are highly influenced by the systems' impact on groups that one supports or opposes, which can make the objective comparison of voting systems difficult. There are several ways to address this problem:

One approach is to define criteria mathematically, such that any electoral system either passes or fails. This gives perfectly objective results, but their practical relevance is still arguable.

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Another approach is to define ideal criteria that no electoral system passes perfectly, and then see how often or how close to passing various methods are over a large sample of simulated elections. This gives results which are practically relevant, but the method of generating the sample of simulated elections can still be arguably biased.

A final approach is to create imprecisely defined criteria, and then assign a neutral body to evaluate each method according to these criteria. This approach can look at aspects of electoral systems which the other two approaches miss, but both the definitions of these criteria and the evaluations of the methods are still inevitably subjective.

Arrow's theorem and the Gibbard–Satterthwaite theorem prove that no system using ranked voting can meet all such criteria simultaneously, while Gibbard's theorem proves the same for all deterministic voting methods. Instead of debating the importance of different criteria, another method is to simulate many elections with different electoral systems, and estimate the typical overall happiness of the population with the results, their vulnerability to strategic voting, their likelihood of electing the candidate closest to the average voter, etc.

According to a 2006 survey of electoral system experts, their preferred electoral systems were in order of preference:

1. Mixed member proportional
2. Single transferable vote
3. Open list proportional
4. Alternative vote
5. Closed list proportional
6. Single member plurality
7. Runoffs
8. Mixed member majoritarian
9. Single non-transferable vote

Comparative politics

Comparative politics is a field in political science characterized either by the use of the *comparative method* or other empirical methods to explore politics both within and between countries. Substantively, this can include questions relating to political institutions, political behavior, conflict, and the causes and consequences of economic development. When applied to specific fields of study, comparative politics may be referred to by other names, such as **comparative government** (the comparative study of forms of government).

Definition

Comparative politics is the systematic study and comparison of the diverse political systems in the world. It is comparative in searching to explain why different political systems have similarities or differences and how developmental changes came to be between them. It is

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systematic in that it looks for trends, patterns, and regularities among these political systems. The research field takes into account political systems throughout the globe, focusing on themes such as democratization, globalization, and integration. New theories and approaches have been used in political science in the last 40 years thanks to comparative politics. Some of these focus on political culture, dependency theory, developmentalism, corporatism, indigenous theories of change, comparative political economy, state-society relations, and new institutionalism. Some examples of comparative politics are studying the differences between presidential and parliamentary systems, democracies and dictatorships, parliamentary systems in different countries, multi-party systems such as Canada and two-party systems such as the United States. Comparative politics must be conducted at a specific point in time, usually the present. A researcher cannot compare systems from different periods of time; it must be static.

While historically the discipline explored broad questions in political science through between-country comparisons, contemporary comparative political science primarily uses subnational comparisons. More recently, there has been a significant increase in the interest of subnational comparisons and the benefit it has on comparative politics. We would know far less about major credible issues within political science if it weren't for subnational research. Subnational research contributes important methodological, theoretical, and substantive ideas to the study of politics. Important developments often obscured by a national-level focus are easier to decipher through subnational research. An example could be regions inside countries where the presence of state institutions have been reduced in effect or value.

The name **comparative politics** refers to the discipline's historical association with the comparative method, described in detail below. Arend Lijphart argues that comparative politics does not have a *substantive* focus in itself, but rather a *methodological* one: it focuses on "the *how* but does not specify the *what* of the analysis." Peter Mair and Richard Rose advance a slightly different definition, arguing that comparative politics is defined by a combination of a *substantive* focus on the study of countries' political systems and a *method* of identifying and explaining similarities and differences between these countries using common concepts.

Sometimes, especially in the United States, the term "comparative politics" is used to refer to "the politics of foreign countries." This usage of the term is disputed.

Comparative politics is significant because it helps people understand the nature and working of political frameworks around the world. There are many types of political systems worldwide according to the authentic, social, ethnic, racial, and social history. Indeed, even comparative constructions of political association shift starting with one country then onto the next. For instance, India and the United States are majority-rule nations; nonetheless, the U.S. has a liberal vote-based presidential system contrasted with the parliamentary system used in India. Even the political decision measure is more diverse in the United States when found in light of the Indian popular government. The United States has a president as their leader, while India has a prime minister. Relative legislative issues encourage us to comprehend these central contracts and how the two nations are altogether different regardless of being majority rule. This field of study is critical for the fields of international relations and conflict resolution. Near politics encourages international relations to clarify worldwide legislative issues and the present winning conditions worldwide. Although both are subfields of political science, comparative politics examines the

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causes of international strategy and the effect of worldwide approaches and frameworks on homegrown political conduct and working.

History of the field

Harry H. Eckstein traces the history of the field of comparative politics back to Aristotle, and sees a string of thinkers from Machiavelli and Montesquieu, to Gaetano Mosca and Max Weber, Vilfredo Pareto and Robert Michels, on to James Bryce - with his *Modern Democracies* (1921) - and Carl Joachim Friedrich - with his *Constitutional Government and Democracy* (1937) - contributing to its history.^[9]

Two traditions reaching back to Aristotle and Plato

Philippe C. Schmitter argues that the "family tree" of comparative politics has two main traditions: one, invented by Aristotle, that he calls "sociological constitutionalism"; a second, that he traced back to Plato, that he calls "legal constitutionalism".^[10]

Periodization as a field of political science

Gerardo L. Munck offers the following periodization for the evolution of modern comparative politics, as a field of political science - understood as an academic discipline - in the United States.^[13]

- 1. The Constitution of Political Science as a Discipline, 1880–1920
- 2. The Behavioral Revolution, 1921–66
- 3. The Post-Behavioral Period, 1967–88
- 4. The Second Scientific Revolution 1989–2005

Contemporary patterns, 2000-present

Since the turn of the century, several trends in the field can be detected.

- End of the pretense of rational choice theory to hegemonize the field
- Lack of a unifying metatheory
- Greater attention to causal inference, and increased use of experimental methods.
- Continued use of observation methods, including qualitative methods.
- New concern with a "hegemony of methods" as theorizing is not given as much attention.

Substantive areas of research

By some definitions, comparative politics can be traced back to Greek philosophy, as Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *The Politics*.

As a modern sub-discipline, comparative politics is constituted by research across a range of substantive areas, including the study of:

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- Politics of democratic states
- Politics of authoritarian states
- Public goods provision and distributive politics
- Political violence
- Political identity, including ethnic and religious politics
- Democratization and regime change
- Elections and electoral and party systems
- Political economy of development
- Collective action
- Voting behavior
- Origins of the state
- Comparative political institutions
- Methodologies for comparative political research

While many researchers, research regimes, and research institutions are identified according to the above categories or foci, it is not uncommon to claim geographic or country specialization as the differentiating category.

The division between comparative politics and international relations is artificial, as processes within nations shape international processes, and international processes shape processes within states. Some scholars have called for an integration of the fields. Comparative politics does not have similar "isms" as international relations scholarship.

Methodology

While the name of the subfield suggests one methodological approach (*the comparative method*), political scientists in comparative politics use the same diversity of social scientific methods as scientists elsewhere in the field, including experiments, comparative historical analysis, case studies, survey methodology, and ethnography. Researchers choose a methodological approach in comparative politics driven by two concerns: ontological orientation and the type of question or phenomenon of interest.

(Mill's) comparative method

- Most Similar Systems Design/Mill's Method of Difference: This method consists in comparing very similar cases which only differ in the *dependent variable*, on the assumption that this would make it easier to find those *independent variables* which explain the presence/absence of the dependent variable.
- Most Different Systems Design/Mill's Method of Similarity: This method consists in comparing very different cases, all of which however have in common the same *dependent variable*, so that any other circumstance which is present in all the cases can be regarded as the *independent variable*.

Subnational comparative analysis

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Since the turn of the century, many students of comparative politics have compared units within a country. Relatedly, there has been a growing discussion of what Richard O. Snyder calls the "subnational comparative method."

Comparative law

Comparative law is the study of differences and similarities between the law (legal systems) of different countries. More specifically, it involves the study of the different legal "systems" (or "families") in existence in the world, including the common law, the civil law, socialist law, Canon law, Jewish Law, Islamic law, Hindu law, and Chinese law. It includes the description and analysis of foreign legal systems, even where no explicit comparison is undertaken. The importance of comparative law has increased enormously in the present age of internationalism, economic globalization, and democratization.

History

The origins of modern Comparative Law can be traced back to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in 1667 in his Latin-language book *Nova Methodus Discendae Docendaeque Iurisprudentiae* (New Methods of Studying and Teaching Jurisprudence).^[1] Chapter 7 (Presentation of Law as the Project for all Nations, Lands and Times) introduces the idea of classifying Legal Systems into several families. Notably, a few years later, Leibniz introduced an idea of Language families.^[2]

Although every Legal System is unique, Comparative Law through studies of their similarities and differences allows for classification of Legal Systems, wherein Law Families is the basic level of the classification. The main differences between Law Families are found in the source(s) of Law, the role of court precedents, the origin and development of the Legal System. Montesquieu is generally regarded as an early founding figure of comparative law. His comparative approach is obvious in the following excerpt from Chapter III of Book I of his masterpiece, *De l'esprit des lois* (1748; first translated by Thomas Nugent, 1750):^[3]

[T]he political and civil laws of each nation ... should be adapted in such a manner to the people for whom they are framed that it should be a great chance if those of one nation suit another.

They should be in relation to the nature and principle of each government: whether they form it, as may be said of politic laws; or whether they support it, as in the case of civil institutions.

They should be in relation to the climate of each country, to the quality of its soil, to its situation and extent, to the principal occupation of the natives, whether husbandmen, huntsmen, or shepherds: they should have relation to the degree of liberty which the constitution will bear; to the religion of the inhabitants, to their inclinations, riches, numbers, commerce, manners, and customs.

Also, in Chapter XI (entitled 'How to compare two different Systems of Laws') of Book XXIX, discussing the French and English systems for punishment of false witnesses, he advises that "to determine which of those systems is most agreeable to reason, we must take them each as a

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whole and compare them in their entirety." Yet another place where Montesquieu's comparative approach is evident is the following, from Chapter XIII of Book XXIX:

As the civil laws depend on the political institutions, because they are made for the same society, whenever there is a design of adopting the civil law of another nation, it would be proper to examine beforehand whether they have both the same institutions and the same political law.

The modern founding figure of comparative and anthropological jurisprudence was Sir Henry Maine, a British jurist and legal historian. In his 1861 work *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society, and Its Relation to Modern Ideas*, he set out his views on the development of legal institutions in primitive societies and engaged in a comparative discussion of Eastern and Western legal traditions. This work placed comparative law in its historical context and was widely read and influential.

The first university course on the subject was established at the University of Oxford in 1869, with Maine taking up the position of professor.

Comparative law in the US was brought by a legal scholar fleeing persecution in Germany, Rudolf Schlesinger. Schlesinger eventually became professor of comparative law at Cornell Law School helping to spread the discipline throughout the US.

Purpose

Comparative law is an academic discipline that involves the study of legal systems, including their constitutive elements and how they differ, and how their elements combine into a system.

Several disciplines have developed as separate branches of comparative law, including comparative constitutional law, comparative administrative law, comparative civil law (in the sense of the law of torts, contracts, property and obligations), comparative commercial law (in the sense of business organisations and trade), and comparative criminal law. Studies of these specific areas may be viewed as micro- or macro-comparative legal analysis, i.e. detailed comparisons of two countries, or broad-ranging studies of several countries. Comparative civil law studies, for instance, show how the law of private relations is organised, interpreted and used in different systems or countries. The purposes of comparative law are:

- To attain a deeper knowledge of the legal systems in effect
- To perfect the legal systems in effect
- Possibly, to contribute to a unification of legal systems, of a smaller or larger scale (cf. for instance, the UNIDROIT initiative)

Relationship with other legal subjects

Comparative law is different from general jurisprudence (i.e. legal theory) and from public and private international law. However, it helps inform all of these areas of normativity.

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For example, comparative law can help international legal institutions, such as those of the United Nations System, in analyzing the laws of different countries regarding their treaty obligations. Comparative law would be applicable to private international law when developing an approach to interpretation in a conflicts analysis. Comparative law may contribute to legal theory by creating categories and concepts of general application. Comparative law may also provide insights into the question of legal transplants, i.e. the transplanting of law and legal institutions from one system to another. The notion of legal transplants was coined by Alan Watson, one of the world's renowned legal scholars specializing in comparative law.

Also, the usefulness of comparative law for sociology of law and law and economics (and vice versa) is very large. The comparative study of the various legal systems may show how different legal regulations for the same problem function in practice. Conversely, sociology of law and law & economics may help comparative law answer questions, such as:

- How do regulations in different legal systems really function in the respective societies?
- Are legal rules comparable?
- How do the similarities and differences between legal systems get explained?

Classifications of legal systems

David

René David proposed the classification of legal systems, according to the different ideology inspiring each one, into five groups or families:

- Western laws, a group subdivided into the:
 - Civil law subgroup (whose jurisprudence is based on post-classical Roman Law)
 - Common law subgroup (originating in English law)
- Soviet Law
- Muslim Law
- Hindu Law
- Chinese Law
- Jewish Law

Especially with respect to the aggregating by David of the Civil and Common laws into a single family, David argued that the antithesis between the Common law and Civil law systems, is of a technical rather than of an ideological nature. Of a different kind is, for instance, the antithesis between, say, Italian and American laws, and of a different kind than between the Soviet, Muslim, Hindu, or Chinese laws. According to David, the Civil law legal systems included those countries where legal science was formulated according to Roman law, whereas Common law countries are those dominated by judge-made law. The characteristics that he believed uniquely differentiate the Western legal family from the other four are:

- liberal democracy
- capitalist economy
- Christian religion

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Arminjon, Nolde, and Wolff

Arminjon, Nolde, and Wolff believed that, for purposes of classifying the (then) contemporary legal systems of the world, it was required that those systems *per se* get studied, irrespective of external factors, such as geographical ones. They proposed the classification of legal system into seven groups, or so-called 'families', in particular the:

- French group, under which they also included the countries that codified their law either in 19th or in the first half of the 20th century, using the Napoleonic *code civil* of year 1804 as a model; this includes countries and jurisdictions such as Italy, Portugal, Spain, Romania, Louisiana, various South American states such as Brazil, Quebec, Saint Lucia, the Ionian Islands, Egypt, and Lebanon
- German group
- Scandinavian group, comprising the laws of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland
- English group, including, *inter alia*, England, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand
- Russian group
- Islamic group (used in the Muslim world)
- Hindu group

Zweigert and Kötz

Konrad Zweigert and Hein Kötz propose a different, multidimensional methodology for categorizing laws, i.e. for ordering families of laws. They maintain that, to determine such families, five criteria should be taken into account, in particular: the historical background, the characteristic way of thought, the different institutions, the recognized sources of law, and the dominant ideology. Using the aforementioned criteria, they classify the legal systems of the world into six families:

- Roman family
- German family
- Common law family
- Nordic family
- Family of the laws of the Far East (China and Japan)
- Religious family (Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu law)

Up to the second German edition of their introduction to comparative law, Zweigert and Kötz also used to mention Soviet or socialist law as another family of laws.^[13]

Historical institutionalism

Historical institutionalism (HI) is a new institutionalist social science approach that emphasizes how timing, sequences and path dependence affect institutions, and shape social, political, economic behavior and change. Unlike functionalist theories and some rational choice approaches, historical institutionalism tends to emphasize that many outcomes are possible,

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small events and flukes can have large consequences, actions are hard to reverse once they take place, and that outcomes may be inefficient. A critical juncture may set in motion events that are hard to reverse, because of issues related to path dependency. Historical institutionalists tend to focus on history (longer temporal horizons) to understand why specific events happen.

The term "Historical Institutionalism" began appearing in publications in the early 1990s, although it had been used in the late 1980s. The most widely cited historical institutionalist scholars are Peter Hall, Paul Pierson, Theda Skocpol, Douglass North, and Kathleen Thelen. Prominent works of historical institutionalist scholarship have used both sociological and rationalist methods. Due to a focus on events involving causal complexity (equifinality, complex interaction effects and path dependency), historical institutionalist works tend to employ detailed comparative case studies.

Old and new institutionalism

Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo contrast New Institutionalism with "Old Institutionalism", which was overwhelmingly focused on detailed narratives of institutions, with little focus on comparative analyses. Thus, the Old Institutionalism was unhelpful for comparative research and explanatory theory. This "Old Institutionalism" began to be undermined when scholars increasingly highlighted how the formal rules and administrative structures of institutions were not accurately describing the behavior of actors and policy outcomes.

Works, such as Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*, Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions*, Philippe Schmitter's *Still a Century of Corporatism?*, Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, and Evans, Ruschemeyer and Skocpol's *Bringing the State Back In* have been characterized as precursors to Historical Institutionalism, spawning a new research program.

Historical institutionalism is a predominant approach in research on the welfare state.^{[20][21]} In the field of International Relations, John Ikenberry's *After Victory* and Abraham Newman's *Protectors of Privacy* are prominent works of historical institutionalist scholarship.^[17]

The treatment of history

Unlike most western scholars who preceded them, including classical liberals, classical Marxists, empiricists, dialectical thinkers and positivists, historical institutionalists do not accept that history necessarily develops in a straightforward, linear fashion. Instead, they examine the conditions under which a particular trajectory was followed and not others, a phenomenon that Gabriel Almond refers to as the "historical cure". As a consequence, specifying why particular paths were *not* taken is as important as specifying the actual trajectory of history.

As opposed to the old institutionalists, they postulate that history will not necessarily lead to a "happy" outcome (i.e. "fascism or democracy as the end of history").

Historical institutionalist works tend to reject functionalist accounts of institutions. Therefore, they are suspicious of explanations for the emergence of institutions that work backwards from

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the functions of institutions to their origins. Historical institutionalists tend to see origins behind the creation of institutions as the result of conflict and contestation, which then gets locked in and persists, even if the circumstances that resulted in the institution change.

Mechanisms of institutional stability

The concept of path dependence is essential to historical institutionalist analyses. Due to path dependence, institutions may have considerable stability and "stickiness", even in situations when the institutional leads to suboptimal arrangements. For Paul Pierson, path dependence entails that "outcomes at a 'critical juncture' trigger feedback mechanisms [negative or positive] that reinforce the recurrence of a particular pattern into the future." Thus, path dependence makes it harder to reverse once a certain path has been taken, because there are increased costs to switching from the path. These paths may lead to outcomes are inefficient, but nonetheless persist, because of the costs involved in making substantial overhauls. An example of this is the QWERTY keyboard layout, which was efficient for typewriters to prevent jams in the 19th century and was implemented in computer keyboards in the 20th century. However, the QWERTY keyboard is arguably not as efficient as a computer keyboard could be, but the keyboard layout has persisted over time due to the costs involved in overhauling computer keyboards. Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson argue that other approaches to institutions may fall guilty of treating politics as if it were the film *Groundhog Day* where each day the participants just start over; in reality, past politics and policy legacies shape the interests, incentives, power and organizational abilities of political actors.

According to Paul Pierson, the following factors contribute to institutional stability:

- **Large setup costs:** actors may stick with existing institutions because there are large setup costs associated with creating new ones
- **Learning effects:** actors may stick with existing institutions because it is costly to learn about procedures and processes in new institutions
- **Coordination effects:** actors may stick with existing institutions because it is too complex to coordinate multiple actors into creating new institutions
- **Adaptive expectations:** actors may expend resources on an institution over another because it is likely to stay or become the dominant institution

These factors entail that actors have devoted resources into developing certain institution-specific skills and are unlikely to expend resources on alternative institutions.^[30]

A related crux of historical institutionalism is that temporal sequences matter: outcomes depend upon the timing of exogenous factors (such as inter-state competition or economic crisis) in relation to particular institutional configurations (such as the level of bureaucratic professionalism or degree of state autonomy from class forces). For example, Theda Skocpol suggests that the democratic outcome of the English Civil War was a result of the fact that the comparatively weak English Crown lacked the military capacity to fight the landed upper-class. In contrast, the rise of rapid industrialization and fascism in Prussia when faced with international security threats was because the Prussian state was a "highly bureaucratic and centralized agrarian state" composed by "men closely ties to landed notables".^[31] Thomas

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Ertman, in his account of state building in medieval and early modern Europe, argues that variations in the type of regime built in Europe during this period can be traced to one macro-international factor and two historical institutional factors. At the macro-structural level, the “timing of the onset of sustained geopolitical competition” created an atmosphere of insecurity that appeared best addressed by consolidating state power. The timing of the onset of competition is critical for Ertman's explanation. States that faced competitive pressures early had to consolidate through patrimonial structures, since the development of modern bureaucratic techniques had not yet arrived. States faced with competitive pressures later on the other hand, could take advantage of advancements in training and knowledge to promote a more technically oriented civil service.^{[32][33]}

An important element to historical institutionalism is that it may cement certain distributions of power or increase asymmetries of power through policy feedbacks, "lock in" effects and stickiness.^[2] For example, France has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council because of its power and status at the end of World War II, yet it would likely not get a permanent seat if the UN Security Council were re-designed decades later.

Mechanisms of institutional change

Historical institutionalists have identified major shocks, such as wars and revolutions, as important factors that lead to institutional change because those shocks create "critical junctures" whereby certain path dependencies get created. One prominent account in this vein is John Ikenberry's work on international orders which argues that after major wars, the dominant powers set up world orders that are favorable to their interests.

Aside from shocks, historical institutionalists have also identified numerous factors that subtly lead to institutional change. These include:

- **Layering:** grafting new rules onto old rules
- **Displacement:** when relevant actors leave existing institutions and go to new or alternative institutions
- **Conversion:** old rules are reinterpreted and redirected to apply to new goals, functions and purposes
- **Drift:** old rules fail to apply to situations that they were intended for because of changing social conditions
- **Exhaustion:** an institution overextends itself to the point that it does not have the capacity to fulfill its purposes and ultimately breaks down

As part of these subtle changes, there may be widespread noncompliance with the formal rules of an institution, prompting change. There may also be shifts in the balance of power between the social coalitions that comprise the institution.

Reception

Historical institutionalism is not a unified intellectual enterprise (see also new institutionalism). Some scholars are oriented towards treating history as the outcome of rational and purposeful

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behavior based on the idea of equilibrium (see rational choice). They rely heavily on quantitative approaches and formal theory. Others, more qualitative oriented scholars, reject the idea of rationality and instead emphasize the idea that randomness and accidents matter in political and social outcomes. There are unsolvable epistemological differences between both approaches. However given the historicity of both approaches, and given their focus on institutions, both can fall under "historical institutionalism".

Munck argues that work that emphasizes critical junctures as causes has two problems: (i) the problem of infinite regress (the notion that the cause of events can constantly be pushed back further in time), and (ii) the problem of distal non-recurring causes (convincingly arguing that a distant non-recurring event caused a much later event).

Avner Greif and David Laitin have criticized the notion of increased returns.

Sociological institutionalists and ideational scholars have criticized versions of Historical Institutionalism that adopt materialist and rationalist ontologies. Scholars who use ideational approaches argue that institutional change occurs during episodes when institutions are perceived be failing (such as during economic crises) or during episodes of uncertainty, as this creates room for an exchange of ideas and a receptivity for institutional change. Political scientists such as Henry Farrell, Martha Finnemore, Mark Blyth, Oddny Helgadóttir, and William Kring argue that Historical Institutionalism has over time tended to engage more with rational choice institutionalism than with sociological institutionalism. Vincent Pouliot similarly writes that "soft rational choice... informs most versions of [Historical Institutionalism]." According to Michael Zurn, Historical institutionalism "lacks a theory of action."

In *Paradigms and Sand Castles*, an influential book on research design in comparative politics, Barbara Geddes argues that there are methodological limits to the kind of path-dependent arguments that is often found in Historical Institutional research. She argues that it is hard to rule out rival explanations for a proposed outcome and to precisely identify one purported critical juncture or another.^[53]

Critical juncture theory

Critical juncture theory focuses on critical junctures, i.e., large, rapid, discontinuous changes,^[1] and the long-term causal effect or historical legacy of these changes.^[2] Critical junctures are turning points that alter the course of evolution of some entity (e.g., a species, a society). Critical juncture theory seeks to explain both (1) the historical origin and maintenance of social order, and (2) the occurrence of social change through sudden, big leaps.

Critical juncture theory is not a general theory of social order and change. It emphasizes one kind of cause (involving a big, discontinuous change) and kind of effect (a persistent effect). Yet, it challenges some common assumptions in many approaches and theories in the social sciences. The idea that some changes are discontinuous sets it up as an alternative to (1) "continuist" or "synechist" theories that assume that change is always gradual or that *natura non facit saltus* – Latin for "nature does not make jumps." The idea that such discontinuous changes have a long-

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term impact stands in counterposition to (2) "presentist" explanations that only consider the possible causal effect of temporally proximate factors.

Theorizing about critical junctures began in the social sciences in the 1960s. Since then, it has been central to a body of research in the social sciences that is historically informed. Research on critical junctures in the social sciences is part of the broader tradition of comparative historical analysis and historical institutionalism. It is a tradition that spans political science, sociology and economics. Within economics, it shares an interest in historically oriented research with the new economic history or cliometrics. Research on critical junctures is also part of the broader "historical turn" in the social sciences.

Origins in the 1960s and early 1970s

The idea of episodes of discontinuous change, followed by periods of relative stability, was introduced in various fields of knowledge in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Kuhn's paradigm shifts

Philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn's landmark work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962)^[11] introduced and popularized the idea of discontinuous change and the long-term effects of discontinuous change. Kuhn argued that progress in knowledge occurs at times through sudden jumps, which he called paradigm shifts. After paradigm shifts, scholars do normal science within paradigms, which endure until a new revolution came about.

Kuhn challenged the conventional view in the philosophy of science at the time that knowledge growth could be understood entirely as a process of gradual, cumulative growth. Stephen Jay Gould writes that "Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions" was "the most overt and influential" scholarly work to make a "general critique of gradualism" in the twentieth century.

Gellner's neo-episodic model of change

Anthropologist Ernest Gellner proposed a neo-episodic model of change in 1964 that highlights the "step-like nature of history" and the "remarkable discontinuity" between different historical periods. Gellner contrasts the neo-episodic model of change to an evolutionary model that portrays "the pattern of Western history" as a process of "continuous and sustained and mainly endogenous upward growth."^[14]

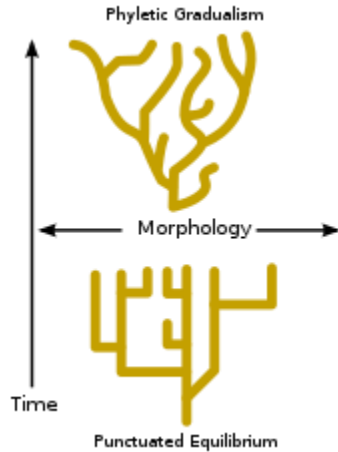
Sociologist Michael Mann adapted Gellner's idea of "'episodes' of major structural transformation" and called such episodes "power jumps."^[15]

Lipset and Rokkan's critical junctures

Sociologist Seymour Lipset and political scientist Stein Rokkan introduced the idea of critical junctures and their long-term impact in the social sciences in 1967.^[16] The ideas presented in the coauthored 1967 work were elaborated by Rokkan in *Citizens, Elections, and Parties* (1970).^[17]

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Gellner had introduced a similar idea in the social sciences. However, Lipset and Rokkan offered a more elaborate model and an extensive application of their model to Europe (see below). Although Gellner influenced some sociologists, the impact of Lipset and Rokkan on the social sciences was greater.



Gould's model of sudden, punctuated change (bottom image) contrasts with the view that change is always gradual (top image).

Gould's punctuated equilibrium model

Kuhn's ideas influenced paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, who introduced the idea of punctuated equilibrium in the field of evolutionary biology in 1972. Gould's initial work on punctuated equilibrium was coauthored with Niles Eldredge.

Gould's model of punctuated equilibrium drew attention to episodic bursts of evolutionary change followed by periods of morphological stability. He challenged the conventional model of gradual, continuous change - called phyletic gradualism.

The critical juncture theoretical framework in the social sciences

Since its launching in 1967, research on critical junctures has focused in part on developing a theoretical framework, which has evolved over time.^[22]

In studies of society, some scholars use the term "punctuated equilibrium" model,^[23] and others the term "neo-episodic" model.^[24] Studies of knowledge continue to use the term "paradigm shift".^[25] However, these terms can be treated as synonyms for critical juncture.

Developments in the late 1960s–early 1970s

Key ideas in critical junctures research were initially introduced in the 1960s and early 1970s by Seymour Lipset, Stein Rokkan, and Arthur Stinchcombe.

Critical junctures and legacies

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Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967) and Rokkan (1970) introduced the idea that big discontinuous changes, such as the reformation, the building of nations, and the industrial revolution, reflected conflicts organized around social cleavages, such as the center-periphery, state-church, land-industry, and owner-worker cleavages. In turn, these big discontinuous changes could be seen as critical junctures because they generated social outcomes that subsequently remained "frozen" for extensive periods of time.

In more general terms, Lipset and Rokkan's model has three components:

- (1) Cleavage. Strong and enduring conflicts that polarize a political system. Four such cleavages were identified:
 - The center–periphery cleavage, a conflict between a central nation-building culture and ethnically linguistically distinct subject populations in the peripheries.
 - The state–church cleavage, a conflict between the aspirations of a nation-state and the church.
 - The land–industry cleavage, a conflict between landed interests and commercial/industrial entrepreneurs.
 - The worker–employer cleavage, a conflict between owners and workers.
- (2) Critical juncture. Radical changes regarding these cleavages happen at certain moments.
- (3) Legacy. Once these changes occur, their effect endures for some time afterwards.

Rokkan (1970) added two points to these ideas. Critical junctures could set countries on divergent or convergent paths. Critical junctures could be "sequential," such that a new critical junctures does not totally erase the legacies of a previous critical juncture but rather modifies that previous legacy.

The reproduction of legacies through self-replicating causal loops

Arthur Stinchcombe (1968) filled a key gap in Lipset and Rokkan's model. Lipset and Rokkan argued that critical junctures produced legacies, but did not explain how the effect of a critical juncture could endure over a long period.

Stinchcombe elaborated the idea of historical causes (such as critical junctures) as a distinct kind of cause that generates a "self-replicating causal loop." Stinchcombe explained that the distinctive feature of such a loop is that "an effect created by causes at some previous period becomes a cause of that same effect in succeeding periods." This loop was represented graphically by Stinchcombe as follows:

$$X_{t1} \longrightarrow Y_{t2} \longrightarrow D_{t3} \longrightarrow Y_{t4} \longrightarrow D_{t5} \longrightarrow Y_{t6}$$

Stinchcombe argued that the cause (X) that explains the initial adoption of some social feature (Y) was not the same one that explains the persistence of this feature. Persistence is explained by the repeated effect of Y on D and of D on Y.

Developments in the early 1980s–early 1990s

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Additional contributions were made in the 1980s and early 1990s by various political scientists and economists.

Punctuated equilibrium, path dependence, and institutions

Paul A. David and W. Brian Arthur, two economists, introduced and elaborated the concept of path dependence, the idea that past events and decisions affect present options and that some outcomes can persist due to the operation of a self-reinforcing feedback loop. This idea of a self-reinforcing feedback loop resembles that of a self-replicating causal loop introduced earlier by Stinchcombe. However, it resonated with economists and led to a growing recognition in economics that "history matters."

The work by Stephen Krasner in political science incorporated the idea of punctuated equilibrium into the social sciences. Krasner also drew on the work by Arthur and connected the idea of path dependence to the study of political institutions.

Douglass North, an economist and Nobel laureate, applied the idea of path dependence to institutions, which he defined as "the rules of the game in a society," and drew attention to the persistence of institutions.

A synthesis

Political scientists Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, in *Shaping the Political Arena* (1991), provided a synthesis of many ideas introduced from the 1960s to 1990, in the form of the following "five-step template":

Antecedent Conditions → Cleavage or Shock → *Critical Juncture*
→ Aftermath → *Legacy*

These key concepts have been defined as follows:

- (1) "*Antecedent conditions* are diverse socioeconomic and political conditions prior to the onset of the critical juncture that constitute the baseline for subsequent change."
- (2) "*Cleavages, shocks, or crises* are triggers of critical junctures."
- (3) "*Critical junctures* are major episodes of institutional change or innovation."
- (4) "The *aftermath* is the period during which the legacy takes shape."
- (5) "The *legacy* is an enduring, self-reinforcing institutional inheritance of the critical juncture that stays in place and is stable for a considerable period."

Debates in the 2000s–2010s

Following a period of consolidation of critical junctures framework, few new developments occurred in the 1990s. However, since around 2000, several new ideas were proposed and many aspects of the critical junctures framework are the subject of debate.

Critical junctures and incremental change

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An important new issue in the study of change is the relative role of critical junctures and incremental change. On the one hand, the two kinds of change are sometimes starkly counterposed. Kathleen Thelen emphasizes more gradual, cumulative patterns of institutional evolution and holds that "the conceptual apparatus of path dependence may not always offer a realistic image of development."^[38] On the other hand, path dependence, as conceptualized by Paul David is not deterministic and leaves room for policy shifts and institutional innovation.

Critical junctures and contingency

Einar Berntzen notes another debate: "Some scholars emphasize the historical contingency of the choices made by political actors during the critical juncture." For example, Michael Bernhard writes that critical junctures "are periods in which the constraints of structure have weakened and political actors have enhanced autonomy to restructure, overturn, and replace critical systems or sub-systems."

However, Berntzen holds that "other scholars have criticized the focus on agency and contingency as key causal factors of institutional path selection during critical junctures" and "argue that a focus on antecedent conditions of critical junctures is analytically more useful." For example, Dan Slater and Erica Simmons place a heavy emphasis on antecedent conditions.

Legacies and path dependence

The use of the concept of path dependence in the study of critical junctures has been a source of some debate. On the one hand, James Mahoney argues that "path dependence characterizes specifically those historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties" and that there are two types of path dependence: "self-reinforcing sequences" and "reactive sequences." On the other hand, Kathleen Thelen and other criticize the idea of path dependence determinism, and Jörg Sydow, Georg Schreyögg, and Jochen Koch question the idea of reactive sequences as a kind of path dependence.

Institutional and behavioral path dependence

The study of critical junctures has commonly been seen as involving a change in institutions. However, many works extend the scope of research of critical junctures by focusing on changes in culture. Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen state that the persistence of a legacy can be "reinforced both by formal institutions, such as Jim Crow laws (a process known as *institutional path dependence*), and also by informal institutions, such as family socialization and community norms (a process we call *behavioral path dependence*)."

Substantive applications in the social sciences

Topics and processes

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A critical juncture approach has been used in the study of many fields of research: state formation, political regimes, regime change and democracy, party system, public policy, government performance, and economic development.

In addition, many processes and events have been identified as critical junctures.



The domestication of animals is commonly treated as a turning point in world history. The image depicts an Egyptian hieroglyphic painting showing an early instance of a domesticated animal.

Pre-1760 power jumps

Michael Mann, in *The Sources of Social Power* (1986), relies on Gellner's neo-episodic model of change and identifies a series of "power jumps" in world history prior to 1760 - the idea of power jumps is similar to that of a critical juncture. Some of the examples of power jumps identified by Mann are:

- The domestication of animals and the development of agriculture
- Law codes in written form
- The military revolution
- The use of Hoplites and phalanxes in war.
- The creation of the polis
- The diffusion of literacy
- The formation of modern states

Modern era critical junctures

Some of the processes in the modern era that are commonly seen as critical junctures in the social sciences are:

- State formation.
- The Industrial Revolution.
- Political and social revolutions, such as the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the French Revolution of 1789, and the Russian Revolution of 1917.
- Wars, such as World War I and World War II^[57]
- Colonialism and decolonization.
- The end of slavery.
- Transitions to mass politics.
- Transitions to democracy.
- The *Trente Glorieuses* - the 30 years from 1945 to 1975 in Europe.

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- The transition to neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s.
- The end of the Cold War in 1989.

Considerable discussion has focused on the possibility that the COVID-19 pandemic will be a critical juncture.

Examples of research

Barrington Moore Jr.'s *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (1966) argues that revolutions (the critical junctures) occurred in different ways (bourgeois revolutions, revolutions from above, and revolutions from below) and this difference led to contrasting political regimes in the long term (the legacy)—democracy, fascism, and communism, respectively.^[67] In contrast to the unilinear view of evolution common in the 1960s, Moore showed that countries followed multiple paths to modernity.

Collier and Collier's *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and the Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (1991) compares "eight Latin American countries to argue that labor-incorporation periods were critical junctures that set the countries on distinct paths of development that had major consequences for the crystallization of certain parties and party systems in the electoral arena. The way in which state actors incorporated labor movements was conditioned by the political strength of the oligarchy, the antecedent condition in their analysis. Different policies towards labor led to four specific types of labor incorporation: state incorporation (Brazil and Chile), radical populism (Mexico and Venezuela), labor populism (Peru and Argentina), and electoral mobilization by a traditional party (Uruguay and Colombia). These different patterns triggered contrasting reactions and counter reactions in the aftermath of labor incorporation. Eventually, through a complex set of intermediate steps, relatively enduring party system regimes were established in all eight countries: multiparty polarizing systems (Brazil and Chile), integrative party systems (Mexico and Venezuela), stalemated party systems (Peru and Argentina), and systems marked by electoral stability and social conflict (Uruguay and Colombia)."^[68]

John Ikenberry's *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (2001) compares post-war settlements after major wars – following the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the world wars in 1919 and 1945, and the end of the Cold War in 1989. It argues that "international order has come and gone, risen and fallen across historical eras" and that the "great moments of order building come after major wars – 1648, 1713, 1815, 1919, 1945, and 1989." In essence, peace conferences and settlement agreements put in place "institutions and arrangements for postwar order." Ikenberry also shows that "the actual character of international order has varied across eras and order building moments" and that "variations have been manifest along multiple dimensions: geographic scope, organizational logic, rules and institutions, hierarchy and leadership, and the manner in and degree to which coercion and consent undergird the resulting order."

Seymour Martin Lipset, in *The Democratic Century* (2004), addresses the question why North America developed stable democracies and Latin America did not. He holds that the reason is that the initial patterns of colonization, the subsequent process of economic incorporation of the

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new colonies, and the wars of independence varies. The divergent histories of Britain and Iberia are seen as creating different cultural legacies that affected the prospects of democracy.

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson's *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (2012) draws on the idea of critical junctures. A key thesis of this book is that, at critical junctures (such as the Glorious Revolution in 1688 in England), countries start to evolve along different paths. Countries that adopt inclusive political and economic institutions become prosperous democracies. Countries that adopt extractive political and economic institutions fail to develop political and economically.^[72]

Debates in research

Critical juncture research typically contrasts an argument about the historical origins of some outcome to an explanation based in temporally proximate factors.^[73] However, researchers have engaged in debates about what historical event should be considered a critical juncture.

The rise of the West

A key debate in research on critical junctures concerns the turning point that led to the rise of the West.

- Jared Diamond, in *Guns, Germs and Steel* (1997) argues that the development reaching back to around 11,000 BCE explain why key breakthroughs were made in the West rather than in some other region of the world.
- Michael Mitterauer, in *Why Europe? The Medieval Origins of its Special Path* (2010) traces the rise of the West to developments in the Middle Ages.
- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, in *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (2012) and *The Narrow Corridor. States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty* (2019) argue that a critical juncture during the early modern age is what set the West on its distinctive path.

Historical sources of economic development (with a focus on Latin America)

Another key debate concerns the historical roots of economic development, a debate that has address Latin America in particular.

- Jerry F. Hough and Robin Grier (2015) claim that "key events in England and Spain in the 1260s explain why Mexico lagged behind the United States economically in the 20th century."
- Works by Daron Acemoglu, Simon H. Johnson, and James A. Robinson (2001); James Mahoney (2010); and Stanley Engerman and Kenneth Sokoloff (2012) focus on colonialism as the key turning point explaining long-term economic trajectories.
- Rudiger Dornbusch and Sebastián Edwards (1991) see the emergence of mass politics in the mid-20th century as the key turning point that explains the economic performance of Latin America.

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Historical origins of the Asian developmental state

Research on Asia includes a debate about the historical roots of developmental states.

- Atul Kohli (2004) argues that developmental states originate in the colonial period.
- Tuong Vu (2010) maintains that developmental states originate in the post-colonial period.

Reception and impact

Research on critical junctures is generally seen as an important contribution to the social sciences.

Within political science, Berntzen argues that research on critical junctures "has played an important role in comparative historical and other macro-comparative scholarship." Some of the most notable works in the field of comparative politics since the 1960s rely on the concept of a critical juncture.

Barrington Moore Jr.'s *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (1966) is broadly recognized as a foundational study in the study of democratization.

Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier's *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and the Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (1991) has been characterized by Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen as a "landmark work" and by Kathleen Thelen as a "landmark study ... of regime transformation in Latin America."

Robert D. Putnam's *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (1993) provides an analysis of the historical origins of social capital in Italy that is widely credited with launching a strand of research on social capital and its consequences in various fields within political science.

Johannes Gerschewski describes John Ikenberry *After Victory* (2001) as a "masterful analysis."

Frank Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones's *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (2009) is credited with having "a massive impact in the study of public policy."

Within economics, the historically informed work of Douglass North, and Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, is seen as partly responsible for the discipline's renewed interest in political institutions and the historical origins of institutions and hence for the revival of the tradition of institutional economics.

Political sociology

Political sociology is an interdisciplinary field of study concerned with exploring how governance and society interact and influence one another at the micro to macro levels of

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analysis. Interested in the social causes and consequences of how power is distributed and changes throughout and amongst societies, political sociology's focus ranges across individual families to the State as sites of social and political conflict and power contestation.

Introduction

Political sociology was conceived as an interdisciplinary sub-field of sociology and politics in the early 1930s throughout the social and political disruptions that took place through the rise of Communism, Fascism, and World War II. This new area drawing upon works by Alexis de Tocqueville, James Bryce, Robert Michels, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, and Karl Marx to understand an integral theme of political sociology; power.

Power's definition for political sociologists varies across the approaches and conceptual framework utilised within this interdisciplinary study. At its basic understanding, power can be seen as the ability to influence or control other people or processes around you. This helps to create a variety of research focuses and use of methodologies as different scholars' understanding of power differs. Alongside this, their academic disciplinary department/ institution can also flavour their research as they develop from their baseline of inquiry (e.g. political or sociological studies) into this interdisciplinary field (see § Political sociology vs sociology of politics). Although with deviation in how it is carried out, political sociology has an overall focus on understanding why power structures are the way they are in any given societal context.

Political sociologists, throughout its broad manifestations, propose that in order to understand power, society and politics must be studied with one another and neither treated as assumed variables. "For any society to be understood, so must its politics; and if the politics of any society is to be understood, so must that society".

Origins

The development of political sociology from the 1930s onwards took place as the separating disciplines of sociology and politics explored their overlapping areas of interest.^[6] Sociology can be viewed as the broad analysis of human society and the interrelationship of these societies. Predominantly focused on the relationship of human behaviour with society. Political science or politics as a study largely situates itself within this definition of sociology and is sometimes regarded as a well developed sub-field of sociology, but is seen as a stand alone disciplinary area of research due to the size of scholarly work undertaken within it. Politics offers a complex definition and is important to note that what 'politics' means is subjective to the author and context. From the study of governmental institutions, public policy, to power relations, politics has a rich disciplinary outlook.

The importance of studying sociology within politics, and vice versa, has had recognition across figures from Mosca to Pareto as they recognised that politicians and politics do not operate in a societal vacuum, and society does not operate outside of politics. Here, political sociology sets about to study the relationships of society and politics.

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Numerous works account for highlighting a political sociology, from the work of Comte and Spencer to other figures such as Durkheim. Although feeding into this interdisciplinary area, the body of work by Karl Marx and Max Weber are considered foundational to its inception as a sub-field of research.

Scope

Overview

The scope of political sociology is broad, reflecting on the wide interest in how power and oppression operate over and within social and political areas in society. Although diverse, some major themes of interest for political sociology include:

1. Understanding the dynamics of how the state and society exercise and contest power (e.g. power structures, authority, social inequality).
2. How political values and behaviours shape society and how society's values and behaviours shape politics (e.g. public opinion, ideologies, social movements).
3. How these operate across formal and informal areas of politics and society (e.g. ministerial cabinet vs. family home).
4. How socio-political cultures and identities change over time.

In other words, political sociology is concerned with how social trends, dynamics, and structures of domination affect formal political processes alongside social forces working together to create change. From this perspective, we can identify three major theoretical frameworks: pluralism, elite or managerial theory, and class analysis, which overlaps with Marxist analysis.

Pluralism sees politics primarily as a contest among competing interest groups. Elite or managerial theory is sometimes called a state-centered approach. It explains what the state does by looking at constraints from organizational structure, semi-autonomous state managers, and interests that arise from the state as a unique, power-concentrating organization. A leading representative is Theda Skocpol. Social class theory analysis emphasizes the political power of capitalist elites. It can be split into two parts: one is the "power structure" or "instrumentalist" approach, whereas another is the structuralist approach. The power structure approach focuses on the question of who rules and its most well-known representative is G. William Domhoff. The structuralist approach emphasizes the way a capitalist economy operates; only allowing and encouraging the state to do some things but not others (Nicos Poulantzas, Bob Jessop).

Where a typical research question in political sociology might have been, "Why do so few American or European citizens choose to vote?" or even, "What difference does it make if women get elected?", political sociologists also now ask, "How is the body a site of power?", "How are emotions relevant to global poverty?", and, "What difference does knowledge make to democracy?".

Political sociology vs sociology of politics

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When addressing political sociology there is noted overlap in using 'sociology of politics' as a synonym. Sartori outlines, though, that 'sociology of politics' refers specifically to a sociological analysis of politics and not an interdisciplinary area of research that political sociology works towards. This difference is made by the variables of interest that both perspectives focus upon. Sociology of politics centres on the non-political causes of oppression and power contestation in political life, whereas political sociology includes the political causes of these actions throughout commentary with non-political ones. Both are valid lines of enquiry, but it is important to note that 'sociology of politics' is a sociological reductionist account of politics (e.g. exploring political areas through a sociological lens), whereas political sociology is a collaborative socio-political exploration of society and its power contestation.

Marxist People

Marx's ideas about the state can be divided into three subject areas: pre-capitalist states, states in the capitalist (i.e. present) era and the state (or absence of one) in post-capitalist society. Overlaying this is the fact that his own ideas about the state changed as he grew older, differing in his early pre-communist phase, the young Marx phase which predates the unsuccessful 1848 uprisings in Europe and in his mature, more nuanced work.

In Marx's 1843 *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, his basic conception is that the state and civil society are separate. However, he already saw some limitations to that model, arguing:

"The political state everywhere needs the guarantee of spheres lying outside it".

"He as yet was saying nothing about the abolition of private property, does not express a developed theory of class, and "the solution [he offers] to the problem of the state/civil society separation is a purely *political* solution, namely universal suffrage".

By the time he wrote *The German Ideology* (1846), Marx viewed the state as a creature of the bourgeois economic interest. Two years later, that idea was expounded in *The Communist Manifesto*:^[20]

"The executive of the modern state is nothing but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie".

This represents the high point of conformance of the state theory to an economic interpretation of history in which the forces of production determine peoples' production relations and their production relations determine all other relations, including the political.^{[21][22]} Although "determines" is the strong form of the claim, Marx also uses "conditions". Even "determination" is not causality and some reciprocity of action is admitted. The bourgeoisie control the economy, therefore they control the state. In this theory, the state is an instrument of class rule.

Gramsci

Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony is tied to his conception of the capitalist state. Gramsci does not understand the state in the narrow sense of the government. Instead, he divides it

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between political society (the police, the army, legal system, etc.) – the arena of political institutions and legal constitutional control – and civil society (the family, the education system, trade unions, etc.) – commonly seen as the private or non-state sphere, which mediates between the state and the economy. However, he stresses that the division is purely conceptual and that the two often overlap in reality. Gramsci claims the capitalist state rules through force plus consent: political society is the realm of force and civil society is the realm of consent. Gramsci proffers that under modern capitalism the bourgeoisie can maintain its economic control by allowing certain demands made by trade unions and mass political parties within civil society to be met by the political sphere. Thus, the bourgeoisie engages in passive revolution by going beyond its immediate economic interests and allowing the forms of its hegemony to change. Gramsci posits that movements such as reformism and fascism, as well as the scientific management and assembly line methods of Frederick Taylor and Henry Ford respectively, are examples of this.

Miliband

English Marxist sociologist Ralph Miliband was influenced by American sociologist C. Wright Mills, of whom he had been a friend. He published *The State in Capitalist Society* in 1969, a study in Marxist political sociology, rejecting the idea that pluralism spread political power, and maintaining that power in Western democracies was concentrated in the hands of a dominant class.

Poulantzas

Nicos Poulantzas' theory of the state reacted to what he saw as simplistic understandings within Marxism. For him Instrumentalist Marxist accounts such as that of Miliband held that the state was simply an instrument in the hands of a particular class. Poulantzas disagreed with this because he saw the capitalist class as too focused on its individual short-term profit, rather than on maintaining the class's power as a whole, to simply exercise the whole of state power in its own interest. Poulantzas argued that the state, though relatively autonomous from the capitalist class, nonetheless functions to ensure the smooth operation of capitalist society, and therefore benefits the capitalist class. In particular, he focused on how an inherently divisive system such as capitalism could coexist with the social stability necessary for it to reproduce itself—looking in particular to nationalism as a means to overcome the class divisions within capitalism. Borrowing from Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony, Poulantzas argued that repressing movements of the oppressed is not the sole function of the state. Rather, state power must also obtain the consent of the oppressed. It does this through class alliances, where the dominant group makes an "alliance" with subordinate groups as a means to obtain the consent of the subordinate group.

Jessop

Bob Jessop was influenced by Gramsci, Miliband and Poulantzas to propose that the state is not as an entity but as a social relation with differential strategic effects. This means that the state is not something with an essential, fixed property such as a neutral coordinator of different social interests, an autonomous corporate actor with its own bureaucratic goals and interests, or the

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'executive committee of the bourgeoisie' as often described by pluralists, elitists/statists and conventional Marxists respectively. Rather, what the state is essentially determined by is the nature of the wider social relations in which it is situated, especially the balance of social forces.

Weberian

In political sociology, one of Weber's most influential contributions is his "Politics as a Vocation" (*Politik als Beruf*) essay. Therein, Weber unveils the definition of the state as that entity that possesses a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force. Weber wrote that politics is the sharing of state's power between various groups, and political leaders are those who wield this power. Weber distinguished three ideal types of political leadership (alternatively referred to as three types of domination, legitimisation or authority):

1. charismatic authority (familial and religious),
2. traditional authority (patriarchs, patrimonialism, feudalism) and
3. legal authority (modern law and state, bureaucracy).

In his view, every historical relation between rulers and ruled contained such elements and they can be analysed on the basis of this tripartite distinction. He notes that the instability of charismatic authority forces it to "routinise" into a more structured form of authority. In a pure type of traditional rule, sufficient resistance to a ruler can lead to a "traditional revolution". The move towards a rational-legal structure of authority, utilising a bureaucratic structure, is inevitable in the end. Thus this theory can be sometimes viewed as part of the social evolutionism theory. This ties to his broader concept of rationalisation by suggesting the inevitability of a move in this direction.

"Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally domination through knowledge".

Weber described many ideal types of public administration and government in *Economy and Society* (1922). His critical study of the bureaucratisation of society became one of the most enduring parts of his work. It was Weber who began the studies of bureaucracy and whose works led to the popularisation of this term. Many aspects of modern public administration go back to him and a classic, hierarchically organised civil service of the Continental type is called "Weberian civil service". As the most efficient and rational way of organising, bureaucratisation for Weber was the key part of the rational-legal authority and furthermore, he saw it as the key process in the ongoing rationalisation of the Western society. Weber's ideal bureaucracy is characterised by hierarchical organisation, by delineated lines of authority in a fixed area of activity, by action taken (and recorded) on the basis of written rules, by bureaucratic officials needing expert training, by rules being implemented neutrally and by career advancement depending on technical qualifications judged by organisations, not by individuals.

Approaches

The Italian school of elite theory

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Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858–1941), and Robert Michels (1876–1936), were cofounders of the Italian school of elitism which influenced subsequent elite theory in the Western tradition.

The outlook of the Italian school of elitism is based on two ideas: Power lies in position of authority in key economic and political institutions. The psychological difference that sets elites apart is that they have personal resources, for instance intelligence and skills, and a vested interest in the government; while the rest are incompetent and do not have the capabilities of governing themselves, the elite are resourceful and strive to make the government work. For in reality, the elite would have the most to lose in a failed state.

Pareto emphasized the psychological and intellectual superiority of elites, believing that they were the highest achievers in any field. He discussed the existence of two types of elites: Governing elites and Non-governing elites. He also extended the idea that a whole elite can be replaced by a new one and how one can circulate from being elite to non-elite. Mosca emphasized the sociological and personal characteristics of elites. He said elites are an organized minority and that the masses are an unorganized majority. The ruling class is composed of the ruling elite and the sub-elites. He divides the world into two groups: Political class and Non-Political class. Mosca asserts that elites have intellectual, moral, and material superiority that is highly esteemed and influential.

Sociologist Michels developed the iron law of oligarchy where, he asserts, social and political organizations are run by few individuals, and social organization and labor division are key. He believed that all organizations were elitist and that elites have three basic principles that help in the bureaucratic structure of political organization:

1. Need for leaders, specialized staff and facilities
2. Utilization of facilities by leaders within their organization
3. The importance of the psychological attributes of the leaders

Pluralism and power relations

Contemporary political sociology takes these questions seriously, but it is concerned with the play of power and politics across societies, which includes, but is not restricted to, relations between the state and society. In part, this is a product of the growing complexity of social relations, the impact of social movement organizing, and the relative weakening of the state as a result of globalization. To a significant part, however, it is due to the radical rethinking of social theory. This is as much focused now on micro questions (such as the formation of identity through social interaction, the politics of knowledge, and the effects of the contestation of meaning on structures), as it is on macro questions (such as how to capture and use state power). Chief influences here include cultural studies (Stuart Hall), post-structuralism (Michel Foucault, Judith Butler), pragmatism (Luc Boltanski), structuration theory (Anthony Giddens), and cultural sociology (Jeffrey C. Alexander).

Political sociology attempts to explore the dynamics between the two institutional systems introduced by the advent of Western capitalist system that are the democratic constitutional

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liberal state and the capitalist economy. While democracy promises impartiality and legal equality before all citizens, the capitalist system results in unequal economic power and thus possible political inequality as well.

For pluralists, the distribution of political power is not determined by economic interests but by multiple social divisions and political agendas. The diverse political interests and beliefs of different factions work together through collective organizations to create a flexible and fair representation that in turn influences political parties which make the decisions. The distribution of power is then achieved through the interplay of contending interest groups. The government in this model functions just as a mediating broker and is free from control by any economic power. This pluralistic democracy however requires the existence of an underlying framework that would offer mechanisms for citizenship and expression and the opportunity to organize representations through social and industrial organizations, such as trade unions. Ultimately, decisions are reached through the complex process of bargaining and compromise between various groups pushing for their interests. Many factors, pluralists believe, have ended the domination of the political sphere by an economic elite. The power of organized labour and the increasingly interventionist state have placed restrictions on the power of capital to manipulate and control the state. Additionally, capital is no longer owned by a dominant class, but by an expanding managerial sector and diversified shareholders, none of whom can exert their will upon another.

The pluralist emphasis on fair representation however overshadows the constraints imposed on the extent of choice offered. Bachrach and Baratz (1963) examined the deliberate withdrawal of certain policies from the political arena. For example, organized movements that express what might seem as radical change in a society can often be portrayed as illegitimate.

The "power elite"

A main rival to pluralist theory in the United States was the theory of the "power elite" by sociologist C. Wright Mills. According to Mills, the eponymous "power elite" are those that occupy the dominant positions, in the dominant institutions (military, economic and political) of a dominant country, and their decisions (or lack of decisions) have enormous consequences, not only for the U.S. population but, "the underlying populations of the world." The institutions which they head, Mills posits, are a triumvirate of groups that have succeeded weaker predecessors: (1) "two or three hundred giant corporations" which have replaced the traditional agrarian and craft economy, (2) a strong federal political order that has inherited power from "a decentralized set of several dozen states" and "now enters into each and every cranny of the social structure," and (3) the military establishment, formerly an object of "distrust fed by state militia," but now an entity with "all the grim and clumsy efficiency of a sprawling bureaucratic domain." Importantly, and in distinction from modern American conspiracy theory, Mills explains that the elite themselves may not be aware of their status as an elite, noting that "often they are uncertain about their roles" and "without conscious effort, they absorb the aspiration to be ... The One-side." Nonetheless, he sees them as a quasi-hereditary caste. The members of the power elite, according to Mills, often enter into positions of societal prominence through educations obtained at establishment universities. The resulting elites, who control the three

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dominant institutions (military, economy and political system) can be generally grouped into one of six types, according to Mills:

- the "Metropolitan 400" - members of historically notable local families in the principal American cities, generally represented on the Social Register
- "Celebrities" - prominent entertainers and media personalities
- the "Chief Executives" - presidents and CEOs of the most important companies within each industrial sector
- the "Corporate Rich" - major landowners and corporate shareholders
- the "Warlords" - senior military officers, most importantly the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- the "Political Directorate" - "fifty-odd men of the executive branch" of the U.S. federal government, including the senior leadership in the Executive Office of the President, sometimes variously drawn from elected officials of the Democratic and Republican parties but usually professional government bureaucrats

Mills formulated a very short summary of his book: "Who, after all, runs America? No one runs it altogether, but in so far as any group does, the power elite."

Who Rules America? is a book by research psychologist and sociologist, G. William Domhoff, first published in 1967 as a best-seller (#12), with six subsequent editions. Domhoff argues in the book that a power elite wields power in America through its support of think-tanks, foundations, commissions, and academic departments. Additionally, he argues that the elite control institutions through overt authority, not through covert influence. In his introduction, Domhoff writes that the book was inspired by the work of four men: sociologists E. Digby Baltzell, C. Wright Mills, economist Paul Sweezy, and political scientist Robert A. Dahl.

Concepts

T.H. Marshall on citizenship

T. H. Marshall's Social Citizenship is a political concept first highlighted in his essay, *Citizenship and Social Class* in 1949. Marshall's concept defines the social responsibilities the state has to its citizens or, as Marshall puts it, "from [granting] the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society". One of the key points made by Marshall is his belief in an evolution of rights in England acquired via citizenship, from "civil rights in the eighteenth [century], political in the nineteenth, and social in the twentieth". This evolution however, has been criticized by many for only being from the perspective of the white working man. Marshall concludes his essay with three major factors for the evolution of social rights and for their further evolution, listed below:

1. The lessening of the income gap
2. "The great extension of the area of common culture and common experience"
3. An enlargement of citizenship and more rights granted to these citizens.

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Many of the social responsibilities of a state have since become a major part of many state's policies (see United States Social Security). However, these have also become controversial issues as there is a debate over whether a citizen truly has the right to education and even more so, to social welfare.

Saymour Martin Lipset on the social "requisites" of democracy

In *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset provided a very influential analysis of the bases of democracy across the world. Larry Diamond and Gary Marks argue that "Lipset's assertion of a direct relationship between economic development and democracy has been subjected to extensive empirical examination, both quantitative and qualitative, in the past 30 years. And the evidence shows, with striking clarity and consistency, a strong causal relationship between economic development and democracy." The book sold more than 400,000 copies and was translated into 20 languages, including: Vietnamese, Bengali, and Serbo-Croatian. Lipset was one of the first proponents of Modernization theory which states that democracy is the direct result of economic growth, and that "[t]he more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy." Lipset's modernization theory has continued to be a significant factor in academic discussions and research relating to democratic transitions. It has been referred to as the "Lipset hypothesis" and the "Lipset thesis".

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