What is comparative politics?
1. Recap: Structure, readings and assignments
2. Comparative approaches and methods
3. Discussion exercise
1. RECAP: ROADMAP
<table>
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<th>Class</th>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>Conclusion &amp; wrap up</td>
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Readings

Pippa Norris DPI-415

John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

DPI-415 Home Page
Comparative Politics in Global Perspective
Spring 2010

Announcements

- The syllabus for Spring 2010 is now available for downloading in pdf.

CONTACTS: To email the professor for DPI-415, click here.

This course provides the analytical knowledge and practical skills to understand comparative politics worldwide.

It addresses a wide range of policy-relevant issues: What are the key features of democracies and autocracies, and how can regimes in South Africa, Nigeria, and Iran be classified? What is the appropriate balance of powers between the president and the Congress in Venezuela, Brazil, and Mexico? What are the prospects for building stable states and democratic governance in Iraq and Afghanistan? How could human rights be strengthened through constitutional reforms in Russia and Belarus? Is traditional political activism eroding in the U.S., UK, France and Germany? How do government structures shape the delivery of economic and welfare policies in India and China?

The course covers these questions and many others by utilizing the methods and techniques of comparative politics. You will learn about politics worldwide— as well as thereby enriching and deepening your understanding of your own nation. The orientation is problem and reform focused. DPI415 analyzes (i) the nature of comparative politics (ii) processes of state formation and the classification of regimes types, (iii) the structure of political institutions, (iv) the role of political actors, and (v) processes of governance performance. DPI415 requires the leading
Course Assistant

• Simonida Subotic

• Simonida.Subotic@gmail.com

• Office Hours: TBD

• Assist with course materials, reports, case-study presentation groups
API415

2: COMPARATIVE APPROACHES
Common types of questions

• What is the impact of political institutions on economic development?
• Do elections increase the accountability of governments?
• How do electoral systems effect the number of parties?
• What is the influence of treaty signing to output performance?
• Does federalism reduce conflict?
Discussion exercise

• You are asked to act as an independent consultant to explain the failure of electoral democracy to develop in the Arab region.

• General question: why do authoritarian states democratize?

• What alternative propositions would you consider to be important when explaining this question?

• How methods and approaches would you suggest to analyze this issue?
Comparative approaches

1. Single unit cases
   - Low
   - One

2. A few units of analysis
   - Low
   - Scope

3. Many units of analysis
   - High
   - Many
Option 1: One nation studies

Focused single case or area study

Eg Historical development of the Turkish state, case-study of the Egyptian election, survey of Iraqi opinion

— Advantages
  • Depth especially for understanding longitudinal processes
  • Grounded in historical developments, context
  • Generates further hypotheses for research
  • Analyzes deviant cases

— Disadvantages
  • Limited generalizability and theory building
  • Demands extensive fieldwork/language skills/immersion
Option 2: Comparing a few nations

1. **Most similar design**
   - Focuses on similarities within region/area
   - Compares like-with-like to ‘control’ for shared factors such as culture, history, social or economic structure
     - eg Compares institutions across all Arab states
     - Executives, legislatures, courts, etc

2. **Most different design**
   - Focuses on contrasts in outcome
   - Selected by variations in the *dependent* variable
     - eg Compare most and least democratic regimes in Arab region, or most secular and most religious states, or by levels of development
Comparing a few nations

• **Advantages?**
  - Combines both depth *and* breadth
  - Identifies variations within culturally-similar regional area
  - Builds middle-level theories
  - Selected paired cases

• **Disadvantages?**
  - Limited theoretical generalizations outside of cases/area/region
  - Higher demands for contextual fieldwork and language skills
  - Can generate too many independent variables and too few nations
  - Choice of countries? How selected?
Option 3: Many nations

Large N, multiple countries worldwide for global perspective

- **Advantages?**
  - Comprehensive generalizations
  - Identifies outliers and deviant cases
  - Build and test general theories
  - Expansion in statistical datasets
  - Develops scientific inference

- **Disadvantages?**
  - Limited availability of data
  - Valid cross-cultural measures
  - Problem of conceptual equivalence
  - Loss of detailed understanding
  - Lack of insights into ‘black-box’ political processes
  - Too abstract and far removed from context and processes
3. Discussion Exercise

• You are asked to act as an independent consultant to explain the failure of electoral democracy to develop in the Middle East.

• Your client could be:
  – An international organization eg the UNDP, the World Bank,
  – A government department eg the UK Foreign Office, US State dept.
  – The non-profit NGO eg the Soros foundation or Amnesty International
  – The private sector seeking a risk assessment for investment eg Mobil oil

• What alternative factors would you consider to be important when analyzing this issue and why?

• Brainstorm and write down a list of factors, ranked from most to least important, working in pairs for 10 minutes. We will then compare explanations across the class and consider how we would analyze the issue.

• What method and approach would you use to analyze the evidence?
Problem focus

Adrian Karatnycky *The Democracy Gap in the Muslim world (Freedom House)*

“Since the early 1970s, when the third major historical wave of democratization began, the Islamic world—and, in particular, its Arabic core—has seen little significant evidence of improvements in political openness, respect for human rights, and transparency. Indeed, the democracy gap between the Islamic world and the rest of the world is dramatic.

Of the 192 countries in the world today, 121 are electoral democracies; but in countries with an Islamic majority, only 11 of 47 have democratically elected governments, or **23 percent**. In the non-Islamic world, there are 110 electoral democracies out of 145 states, **over 75 percent**. This means that *a non-Islamic state is nearly three times more likely to be democratic than an Islamic state*. There are **no** electoral democracies among the 16 Arabic states of the Middle East and North Africa.”
Note: The historical index of democracy is the combined Freedom House civil liberties and political rights score, 1972-2007, standardized to 100-pts.
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<th>A</th>
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<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
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A: 0 = no; 1 = indirect or partially free; 2 = yes
B: 0 = no; 1= indirect or limited; 2 = yes
C: 0 = prohibited or nonexistent; 1 = controlled by government approval; 2 = reasonably free
D: 0 = none; 1 = some; 2 = yes
E: 0 = not free; 1 = party free; 2 = free
F: 0 = none; 1 = some; 2 = yes
G: 0 = not observed; 1 = partly observed; 2 = fully observed
H: 0 = low human development; 1 = medium development; 2 = high human development
I: 0 = strong governmental interference; 1 = medium governmental interference; 2 = low governmental interference

Source: Saliba Sarsar. 2006. "Quantifying Arab Democracy in the Middle East." *Middle East Quarterly* Summer 2006, pp. 21-28
Discussion Exercise

• You are asked to act as an independent consultant to explain the failure of electoral democracy to take off during the 1990s in the Middle East.

• Your client could be:
  – An international organization eg the UNDP, the World Bank,
  – A government department eg the UK Foreign Office, US State dept.
  – The non-profit NGO eg the Soros foundation or Amnesty International
  – The private sector seeking a risk assessment for investment eg Mobil oil

• What alternative factors would you consider to be important when analyzing this issue and why?

• Brainstorm and write down a list of factors, ranked from most to least important, working in pairs for 10 minutes. We will then compare explanations across the class and consider how we would analyze the issue.
Monday’s class

Topic: class 3
Comparative methods
Reading: Daniele Caramani Ch 2 & 3