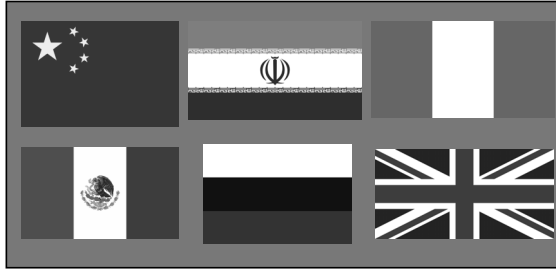


## Comparative Government



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## Reasons to Study Comparative Government

- Countries are actors in a continuously unfolding play
- Comparative Government and Politics helps “connect the dots”
- A set of basic understandings helps make sense of world events



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## Basic Terminology

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| • Nation       | • Power           |
| • State        | • Authority       |
| • Nation-state | • Legitimacy      |
| • Regime       | • Cleavage        |
| • Government   | • Command economy |

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## The Comparative Approach

Comparing governments instills understanding and helps explain past and current events and predict future events

Comparisons at multiple levels
Sovereignty, authority, and power
Political institutions
Citizens, society, and the state
Political and economic change
Public policy

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## Sovereignty, Authority, and Power

- A government's legitimacy comes from its sovereignty, authority, and power
- Factors influencing legitimacy include:
  - The state's history of leadership
  - Supranational systems
  - Religious or other social movements
  - Economic considerations



The scepter, a monarchical symbol of sovereignty, authority, and power

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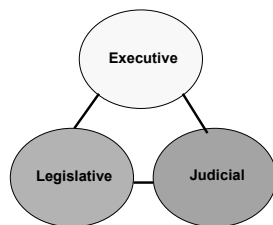
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## Political Institutions



- Formal and informal structures of authority and their interactions, such as between:
  - Branches of a single government
  - Governments of different countries
  - Countries and international organizations
- How those in power gain their legitimacy

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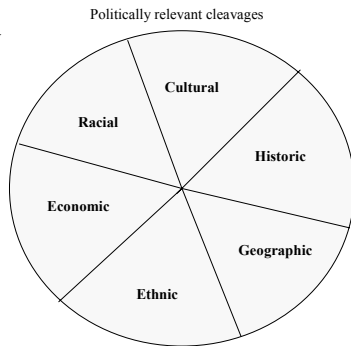
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## Citizens, Society, and the State

- Consider politically relevant cleavages and their effect on the state
- The media and advocacy groups also influence state operations




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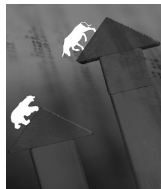
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## Political and Economic Change

- Examine the common character of change within a country
- Economic change can bring about political change, and *vice versa*
- Identify and analyze the forces that promote or deter democratization




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## Public Policy

- Developing public policy is like squeezing a long balloon
- Public policy implementation reflects the structure and power flow of the state
- Formal and informal influences affect policy decisions
- Examine policy issues (especially persistent ones) and the impact of decisions made

Formal influences	Informal influences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rival political parties</li> <li>Other branches of government</li> <li>Domestic and international organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic changes</li> <li>Grassroots movements</li> <li>Changes in social values/beliefs</li> </ul>

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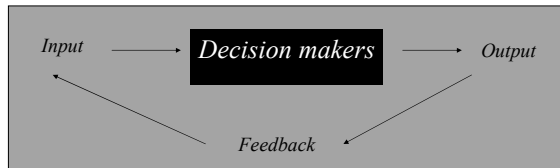
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## The Black Box Analytical Approach

- Illustrates how different segments of society influence a government to make decisions
- Society gives feedback on the government's decision, which becomes input for the next decision



Adapted from "Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics" by Frank L. Wilson

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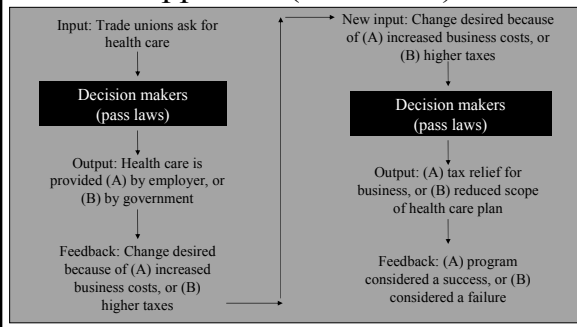
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## The Black Box Analytical Approach (continued)




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## Discussion Questions

1. What is Comparative Government, and how does it help us understand international politics?
2. What do the terms "nation-state," "cleavage," and "command economy" mean?
3. What five aspects make up the comparative approach to examining different governments?
4. What is the "black box analytical tool" used for, and how does it work?

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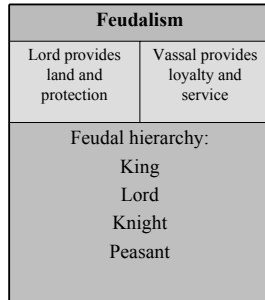
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## Systems of Government: Feudalism

- A political and economic system of government
- Government and law established by the lord
- Economy based on farming
- In time, powerful lords became kings and employed knights to lead their armies
- Feudalism declined in Europe as peasants became skilled workers




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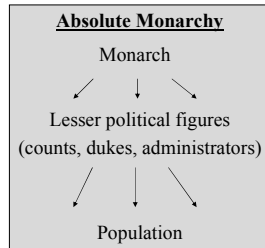
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## Systems of Government: Monarchy

- Oldest form of government
- Term comes from Greek, meaning “one ruler”
- In past, most monarchies held absolute authority




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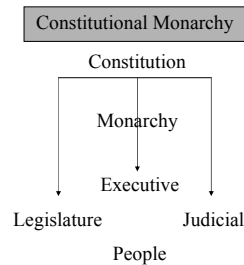
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## Systems of Government: Constitutional Monarchy

- Government actually established under a constitution
- Power of monarch separate from government; often limited or ceremonial




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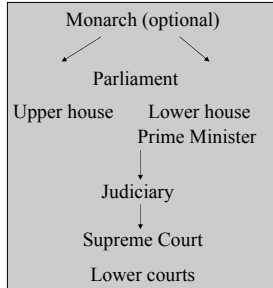
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## Systems of Government: Parliamentary Government

- Parliament chooses the head of state, who must answer to the legislature
- Political party in power chooses the prime minister
- Legislature usually bicameral
- Originated in England around 1066
- Limited the power of the monarchy over time




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## Systems of Government: Democracy

- “Rule by the people”
- Works best when it reflects the culture of the people
- Two forms:
  - Direct (for smaller areas)
  - Representative
- Representatives can use their own judgment in making decisions

Direct democracy  
The people vote directly on policy decisions

Representative democracy  
The people vote for government officials who make policy for them

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## Systems of Government: Totalitarianism

- Nearly all aspects of life are controlled to benefit the state
- Employs secret police, widespread surveillance, and terror to maintain control
- Restricts people’s liberties and freedoms
- Established by force
- Employs a cult of personality to represent the regime




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## Systems of Government: Fascism



Roman *fasces*



*Fasces* in U.S. House of Representatives chamber



Italian dictator Benito Mussolini with German Führer Adolf Hitler

- Similar to totalitarianism
- Seeks to improve society through nationalism and rejection of liberal values
- Comes from Italian word for “union” and from the Roman *fasces*
- Movement led by Benito Mussolini in Italy (1922–1943)
- The term today carries a negative connotation

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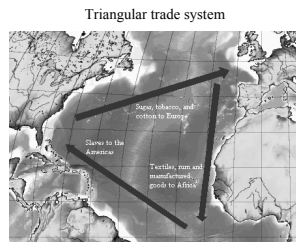
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## Mercantilism

- Practiced by European powers from 16th to 18th centuries
- Government control of industry and trade
- Nation’s wealth measured in holdings of gold and silver
- Closed trading system between colonies and parent country
- Required military power to protect interests, resulting in large-scale wars



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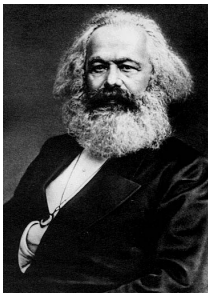
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## Communism



Karl Marx

- Modern communism developed by Karl Marx
- Theoretically, communism creates a classless society
- Proletariat (working class) controls all means of production
- Marx thought communism would replace capitalism
- In practice, most communist states were authoritarian and repressive

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## Communism (continued)

- Russia (later the USSR) became the first communist country in 1917
- After World War II, communism spread to eastern Europe, China, southeast Asia, and Cuba
- Soviet communism collapsed in 1990
- China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam only practicing communist countries today



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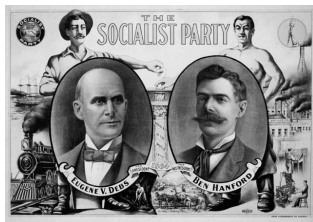
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## Socialism

- Property, major industries, natural resources, banking, public utilities largely controlled by state
- Socialism has roots in classical, Renaissance, and Enlightenment thought
- Many different forms



Campaign poster for Eugene Debs, an American socialist who ran for president several times during the early 20th century

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## Structures of Government: Federalism

- Political system with two levels of government
- Each level has exclusive powers in some areas and overlapping powers in others
- Uncommon form of government
- Disputes occur, which are usually settled by the courts or through negotiation

### Federal Powers

- Establish military
- Print money
- Make treaties

### State Powers

- Regulate local trade
- Establish local governments
- Provide for public health and safety

### Shared Powers

- Establishing courts
- Making and enforcing laws
- Borrowing money
- Taxation
- Building roads

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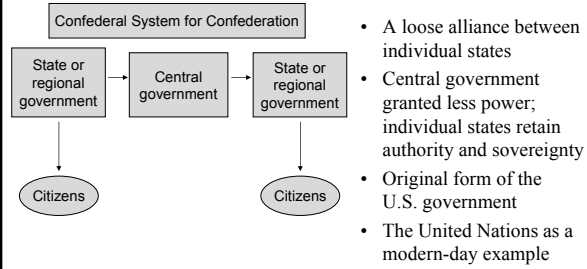
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## Structures of Government: Confederation




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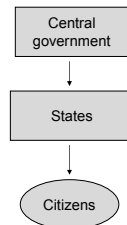
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## Structures of Government: Unitary

- Greatest authority held by central government
- Central government can grant and retract power from local political units
- Unitary governments come in different forms: dictatorships, monarchies, parliamentary systems, or democracies




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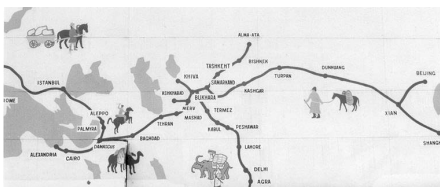
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## Globalization and Interdependence

- Basic definition
- Historical examples:
  - The Silk Road and others
  - Mercantilism as an early form of globalization




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## Globalization and Interdependence (continued)

Contemporary concepts:

- “Farther, faster, cheaper, and deeper”
- More-open trade policies
  - Freer markets
  - International agreements
- Impact of technology
  - Transportation
  - Information technology



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## Globalization and Interdependence (continued)

Supporters claim that globalization:

- Gives consumers more choices
- Lowers prices
- Can raise the standard of living in less developed countries

Critics argue that globalization:

- Favors large corporations over local producers
- Homogenizes cultures
- Puts economic development ahead of national sovereignty and environmental concerns

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## International Organizations

- Definition and purpose
- Examples:
  - European Union (EU)
  - United Nations (UN)



The EU flag



The UN flag

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## International Organizations (continued)

- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- World Bank



The IAEA flag



The World Bank logo

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## International Organizations (continued)

- International Monetary Fund (IMF)



Map of IMF member states

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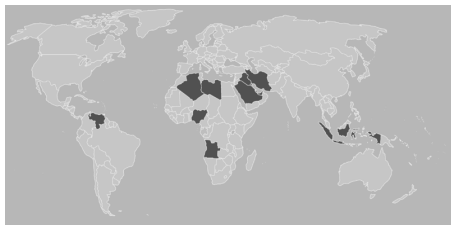
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## International Organizations (continued)

- Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

The  
OPEC  
flag



Map showing  
current  
(dark green)  
and former  
(light green)  
OPEC nations

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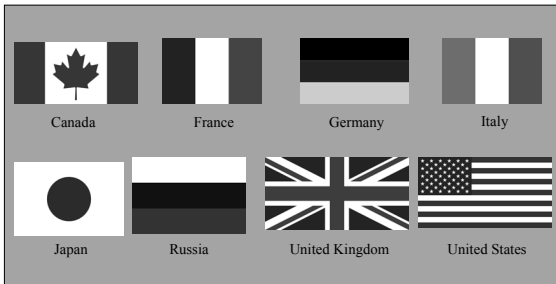
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## International Organizations (continued)

- Group of Eight (G8)



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## Discussion Questions

1. What is globalization, and why it is not considered a new concept?
2. What are some arguments that supporters of globalization make? What are some of globalization's negative effects, according to its critics?

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## Discussion Questions

3. Name several major international organizations and describe the purpose of each.

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## United Kingdom



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## United Kingdom: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power

The Magna Carta



- No written constitution
- Historical events helped legitimize sovereignty, authority, and power
- Established rule of law and a limited and representative government
- The British people believe strongly in the country's political institutions

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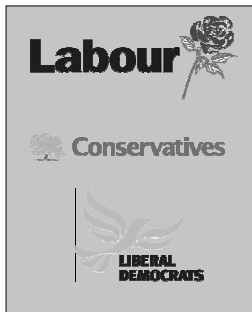
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## United Kingdom: Political Institutions

- Political institutions
  - Constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy
  - Executive (prime minister) elected by majority party in the House of Commons
  - Strong party discipline: votes fall along party lines
    - Labour Party
    - Conservative Party
    - Liberal Democrats



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## United Kingdom: Political Institutions (continued)

- Lobbyists focus on party leadership and on garnering public support
- Government has a long tradition of economic influence



Headquarters  
of the Trades  
Union  
Congress  
in London

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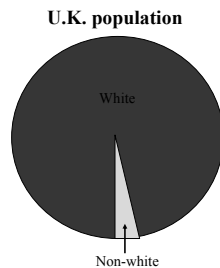
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## United Kingdom: Citizens, Society, and the State

- UK mostly an ethnically homogeneous society
- Historic tension in Northern Ireland and recently with new immigrants
- Prominent social class cleavages and class consciousness
- Social mobility, social safety nets, and upper-class social responsibility keep tensions in check



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## United Kingdom: Political and Economic Change

- Relatively peaceful throughout its history, since events occurred sequentially, not simultaneously
- Post-WWII era saw substantial, rapid change
- The weak economy in the 1970s brought on change in the 1980s, with government privatization of industries, housing, and public services
- Most political movements are locally inspired and operated, though some rise to national and international prominence
- New challenges face the UK: participation in the EU, the government economic role, and the global economy

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## United Kingdom: Public Policy

- Directed from the top down
- Lobbyists pressure party leaders and public
- Environmental issues addressed at local, national, and international levels
- UK's historic involvement in international affairs obligates it to address these issues in the future



Parliament and Big Ben, London

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## Discussion Questions

1. Without a written constitution, from where does the United Kingdom draw its sovereignty, authority, and power?
2. What are the major institutions of British government? How do the roles of its monarch and its prime minister differ?
3. While strong social-class divisions exist in the UK, what factors help reduce conflicts among the different classes?

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## Discussion Questions

4. Why has political and economic change been relatively peaceful throughout much of Britain's history? Why did the situation change after World War II?
5. How is public policy developed in the United Kingdom?

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Russia

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## Russia: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power

- Largest country in the world
- Abundant in natural resources, though difficult to acquire
- Government policy has been to assimilate different ethnic groups into Russian culture
- Historically, Russians have believed in the supremacy of their culture as the last best hope for Christian civilization
- Western culture's influence has created a tug-of-war between modernists and traditionalists

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## Russia: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (continued)

- 1990 collapse of Soviet economy plunged the country into political and economic chaos.
- Russia struggles with tsarist and communist legacies
- A sense of the unknown surrounds Russia's immediate future



Mikhail Gorbachev



Boris Yeltsin

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## Russia: Political Institutions

- Old Soviet system of loyalty and patronage still in operation
- Three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial
- Executive branch controls security forces, foreign affairs, defense, and the economy

### Executive powers

- Appoint prime minister and cabinet
- Issue decrees
- Veto acts passed by the legislature
- Dissolve the legislature and call for new elections
- Control most ministries

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## Russia: Political Institutions (continued)



Emblem commemorating 100 years of the State Duma in Russia

- Legislative branch composed of Federal Council and State Duma
- Communist Party and United Russia Party only major national parties
- Emerging judiciary system finally adopting principles of “innocent until proven guilty” and constitutional precedent

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## Russia: Political Institutions (continued)

- Local leaders, as members of the Federal Assembly, tend to bend national policy toward local desires and needs.
- In 2000, the president consolidated control of local leaders through district governors
- Except for the Communist Party, most parties don't have strong ideology to drive policy
- Oligarchs control much of the economy and the political power behind it; government efforts to curb their power has been controversial

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## Russia: Citizens, Society, and the State

- Social cleavages fall along longstanding geographic, cultural, and linguistic lines
- Though making economic progress, underlying problems of poverty and unemployment still exist
- There distinct classes: oligarchs, middle class, and lower sectors
- Some political groups have formed, though decentralized and more focused on local issues

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## Russia: Political and Economic Change

- Gorbachev's reforms to stabilize Soviet society released forces for democracy and change
- Change has been dramatic and unpredictable:
  - Russia has adopted democracy and a free-market economy
  - Corruption and growing consolidation of government power could offset progress
- Small-business community making increased contributions, but pales in comparison to vast energy industry

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## Russia: Public Policy

- Government controls much of the economy with little input for different ideas
- Duma largely composed of politicians more concerned about local issues rather than national ones
- Russians now enjoy greater civil liberties, but media still under government control
- Russia faces environmental devastation from overuse and past abuses

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## Discussion Questions

1. How have the Russian people historically viewed their civilization as compared with those of the rest of the world? How does this impression still prevail in the people's relationship with their government and in Russia's relationship with the West?
2. What challenges to its power and authority has Russia faced in transitioning from the old methods of the tsars and the Communist Party to a more democratic society with a free-market economy?
3. Describe Russia's past system of patronage and how that system still prevailed in local government after the breakup of the USSR. How did new laws passed in 2000 attempt to change this balance of power, and what were the intended results?

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## Discussion Questions

4. What social cleavages exist in Russia today, and how did the government encourage them? What economic cleavages exist?
5. Though Russia has made great progress in adopting democratic principles and a free-market economy, how might corruption and growing consolidation of government power offset this progress?

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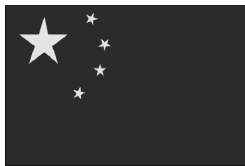
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## China



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## China: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power

- Slightly larger than the United States but with four times the population
- Closed its doors to outside trade for centuries, until Europeans forced it to open in the 19th century
- Communist takeover in 1949 improved food production at first, but created cultural chaos



Foreign armies march through Beijing, 1900

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## China: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power



Shanghai, one of the main centers of private enterprise and foreign investment in China

- China has long operated as a command economy
- The communist government relaxed some controls on private enterprise and foreign investment
- An adherence to a commercial rule of law
- Government legitimacy depends on continued economic growth and raising the standard of living

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## China: Political Institutions

- Government functions in parallel with—and under the control of—the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)
- CCP members cultivate political and economic connections
- Three new principles that the CCP represents:
  - Advancing production methods in order to compete economically in the world market
  - Keeping all developments in line with Chinese culture
  - Protecting the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people

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## China: Political Institutions (continued)

### Executive branch:

- President—head of state and sometimes general secretary of Communist Party
- Premier—head of cabinet; in charge of various ministries
- Both serve on the Central Military Commission, which oversees the armed forces

### CCP executive structure:

- General Secretary—heads party bureaucracy
- Secretariat—highest level of party bureaucracy

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## China: Political Institutions (continued)

### Legislative branch:

National People's Congress

↓  
People's Central  
Committee

↓  
People's Standing  
Committee

### CCP legislative structure:

National Party Congress

↓  
Party Central  
Committee

↓  
Politburo  
↓  
Standing Committee

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## China: Political Institutions (continued)

- The Supreme People's Court heads the judiciary
- Government is defining commercial and property law, but mediators settle most civil disputes
- The Supreme People's Procuratorate oversees the court system

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## China: Political Institutions (continued)

Local government:

- Structured like the national government, with people's congresses at provincial, city, and township levels
- Like national government, Communist Party counterparts exist at all levels
- Main function of local institutions is to promote economic development

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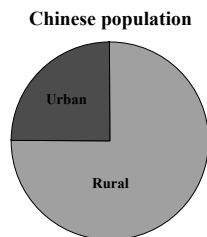
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## China: Citizens, Society, and the State

Social cleavages:

- Language (dialects)
- Disparities between urban and rural population
  - Education
  - Income




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## China: Citizens, Society, and the State (continued)

Social cleavages:

- Gaps between three distinct generations with different experiences under governmental control

Generation influenced by Mao	Generation influenced by the Cultural Revolution	Generation influenced by modern society
Party loyalty as a means to success	Lost local patron-client connections when sent to farm camps	Less likely to view party loyalty as means to success; focus on economic advancement

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## China: Citizens, Society, and the State (continued)

- Traditional values vs. economic and political change
  - Collective responsibility
  - Struggle and harmony
  - Deference to moral authority



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## China: Political and Economic Change



- Chinese government and Communist Party have acted deliberately in pursuing economic change
- Economic change has brought more autonomy and self-responsibility to the individual
- Government maintains control of banking, but not willing to share with private citizens or foreign investors

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## China: Public Policy

Major issues:

- Sustaining long-term economic growth in order to reach superpower status
- Finding balance in the educational system between the urban elite and the rural peasantry
- Addressing severe environmental degradation while still achieving economic goals

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## Discussion Questions

1. How did China's "closed door" economic policy eventually cause it to lag behind European powers? How did this affect the Chinese belief in their own cultural superiority?
2. Describe China's dual system of government. How does this structure help ensure that both sides work in unison to execute government policy and achieve unified goals?
3. How might the social cleavages between urban and rural communities and between generations pose future problems for the government and the Communist Party?

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## Discussion Questions

4. What are the three political values to which China has traditionally adhered? What might threaten these values in the near future?
5. What are three vital policy issues that the Chinese government faces today?

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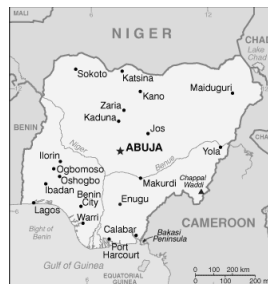
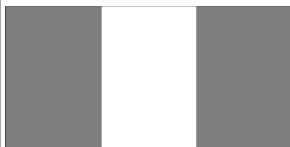
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## Nigeria



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## Nigeria: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power



### Land of paradoxes:

- Vast resources, yet widespread poverty
- Fertile land, yet imports much of its food
- Many respected universities, yet about a third of a population is illiterate
- Began as a model of democracy but has since been mostly under military rule

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## Nigeria: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (continued)

- Precolonial Nigeria was loosely divided into three ethnic groups with many autonomous subgroups in each
- Slave trade hit the region in the late 15th century
- Legacy of 19th-century British colonization:
  - No sense of democratic rule or self-government
  - One set of rules for the government and another set for the governed
  - Mercantile economy based on export of raw materials; no industrial base

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## Nigeria: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (continued)

- 1960: First republic established (constitutional monarchy)
- 1966–1968: Civil war breaks out along ethnic lines; results in military dictatorship
- 1979: Second republic established (presidential system) after a series of coups
- 1983: Fraudulent election leads to another military takeover
- 1999: Democratic government reinstated

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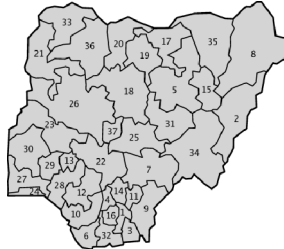
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## Nigeria: Political Institutions

- Nigeria has periodically increased the number of states it has in order to defuse ethnic tension
- Process expensive because each state requires its own administration
- Increased numbers of states creates competition for resources
- Long history of dominant executive branch



Map of Nigerian states

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## Nigeria: Political Institutions (continued)



The Nigerian Parliament House

- Nigeria's legislative branch resembles the U.S. Congress
- Little experience with the legislative process
- Nigeria's judicial branch often bypassed and neglected by previous military leaders
- Northern Nigeria heavily influenced by Islamic Sharia law

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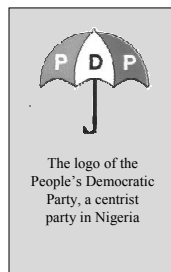
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## Nigeria: Political Institutions (continued)

- Nigeria's bureaucracy marginalized by military rule
- Creation of new states has increased the number of bureaucratic employees who advance through patron-client arrangements
- Political parties created along ethnic and geographic divisions; mostly serve as campaign committees
- Interest groups often stage protests in support of causes



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## Nigeria: Citizens, Society, and the State

- Nigeria's ethnic/cultural cleavages outweigh all others
- North: one-third of the population; mostly Muslim; farming and livestock; less educated; suspicious of outside influences
- Southwest: 20% of the population, equal numbers of Muslim and Christian Yorubas; better educated; more diversified economy
- Southeast: 17% of the population; predominantly Christian Igbo peoples; well educated; mostly farmers
- "Middle belt": no dominant ethnic or religious groups; most national leaders from here; farming is the main activity

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## Nigeria: Citizens, Society, and the State

- Political culture as complex as the ethnic/religious culture
- Cleavage exists between educated urban-dwelling elite and rural masses
- Elite work toward an effective democracy; masses want results
- A patron-client relationship exists between the two that fosters corruption

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## Nigeria: Political and Economic Change

- Frequent military coups have made civilian leadership uneasy about implementing change
- Nigeria's main source of income comes from raw petroleum revenues; Nigeria imports nearly all of its petroleum-based products
  - This has led to an enormous, unpayable debt
  - Instability in leadership compounds the problem, with few foreign countries willing to invest in Nigeria

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## Nigeria: Public Policy

Factors that make the implementation of public policy difficult:

- Lack of a sense of nationalism
- Leadership tends to help themselves before helping the country
- Poverty
- Corruption
- History of seeking stability in government at the expense of democracy and rights

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## Discussion Questions

1. How did its colonial past leave Nigeria ill-prepared for independence?
2. Why have various governments chosen to increase the number of states in Nigeria's federal system? What side effect of this policy has contributed to Nigeria's enormous debt?
3. What major ethnic and cultural cleavages exist in each of Nigeria's main geographic regions? What effect do these cleavages have on Nigerian national unity?

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## Discussion Questions

4. What is the "catch-22" quandary facing the Nigerian government in trying to attain economic and political stability?
5. What factors make implementing sound public policy difficult in Nigeria? Which do you think is the hardest to overcome? The easiest?

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## Mexico: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power

- Rich in cultural heritage and resources, yet 40% live under poverty line
- Gained independence from Spain in 1821
- Populist movements emerged during period of nation building, bringing wide political perspectives
- PRI created monopoly on political power and ruled for nearly 80 years



Miguel Hidalgo, leader of Mexico's war of independence against Spain

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## Mexico: Political Institutions

- On paper, Mexico's government resembles the U.S.
- Executive branch:
  - President is head of state
  - Responsible for foreign affairs, creating government agencies, and issuing legislation
  - President builds administration through appointees, who in turn make their own appointments

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## Mexico: Political Institutions (continued)

- Legislative Branch
  - National Congress: bicameral with members limited to one six-year term
  - Political monopoly of the PRI made the legislature a virtual “rubber stamp” until the 2000 election
  - Genuine coalition government formed during President Fox’s term in office



The Chamber of Deputies, part of Mexico's legislature

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## Mexico: Political Institutions (continued)

- Judicial branch:
  - Structured much like the judiciary in the U.S.
  - Justices and judges appointed by the president with consent from the Senate
- The bureaucracy:
  - Built on a system of patronage starting at the executive branch
  - Most civil servants loyal to their patron, not their job

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## Mexico: Political Institutions (continued)



Mexican soldiers patrolling for drug runners

- Military has mostly concerned itself with enforcement and defense
- Local governments constitutionally and financially subordinate to national government
- Patronage system deeply ingrained in local politics

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## Mexico: Citizens, Society, and the State

Several significant cleavages:

- Racial
- Geographic
- Economic
- Social classes (in ascending order):
  - Rural farmers and Amerindians
  - Urban poor and unskilled workers
  - Working class
  - Middle class
  - Upper-middle class
  - Rich landowners



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## Mexico: Citizens, Society, and the State (continued)



Logo of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI)

Interest groups and influence:

- Prior to 2000 election, the PRI could counter the effects of opposition groups
- Part of the patron-client system
- Most influence done within the party and/or at the local level
- National government selects schools' curricula
- Voting mandatory and many Mexicans politically active
- Mexico's political culture has been marked by violence

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## Mexico: Political and Economic Change

- Mexico has enjoyed a long run of stable political leadership due to:
  - Revolutionary pride
  - Presidential term limits
  - Pragmatic approach to politics and solving disputes
- PRI lost in 2000 and 2006 for several reasons:
  - Growth of the middle class
  - Economic crisis of the 1990s
  - Privatization of key industries
  - Advances in communications technology

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## Mexico: Public Policy

- Issues that make public policy difficult to implement:
  - PRI's legacy still evident in Mexican politics
  - Rise in influence of other political parties
  - Legislative coalitions of opposition parties
- Important issues to address:
  - Expanded economic growth
  - Global competition
  - U.S. immigration policy
  - Drug trade

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## Discussion Questions

1. How did Mexico's period of nation building influence political movements like the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI)?
2. How do the powers of the presidency reflect Mexico's history as a colony of the Spanish Empire? How does the president maintain control of his administration?
3. How did the PRI's political monopoly from 1921 to 2000 shape relations between the executive and legislative branches? How has its fall from power changed the ways in which the legislature operates?

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## Discussion Questions

4. What are some reasons why it's been difficult to implement public-policy changes in Mexico?
5. What are some pressing issues facing Mexico's government today?

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## Iran



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## Iran: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power

- Iran differs from most Middle Eastern Muslim states:
  - Iran's culture is Persian, not Arab
  - Iranians speak Farsi, not Arabic
  - Vast majority is Shi'a, not Sunni
- Leadership highly centralized, but other groups hold power and authority:
  - *Bonyads*—religious charitable organizations
  - The military
  - *Baazaris*—the merchant class

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## Iran: Sovereignty, Authority, and Power (continued)

- Other influential groups:
  - Educated middle class—small, but potentially powerful
  - Urban and rural poor—conservative and religious; majority of the population
- Political authority comes from Islamic doctrine and law, religious leaders, and institutional representation
- Power comes from the government, *bonyads*, and violence



Tehran, the capital of Iran

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Iran: Political Institutions

On the surface Iran’s governmental structure looks familiar:

**Legislative branch (*Majlis*):**

- Unicameral house
- Considers budgets
- Passes laws (with Guardian Council’s approval)

**Executive branch:**

- President (head of state)
- Cabinet
- Local officials
- Heads of state businesses

**Judicial branch:**

- Supreme Court
- Lower courts
- All judges are clerics

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Iran: Political Institutions

(continued)

**Supreme Leader:**

- Commander-in-chief
- Power to dismiss president
- Nominates and approves judges and prosecutors
- Appoints half of Guardian Council
- Chooses heads of all media outlets

**Guardian Council:**

- Half appointed by Supreme Leader
- Approves or vetoes *Majlis* legislation
- Approves all candidates for election

**Expediency Council:**

- Permanent members appointed by Supreme Leader
- Resolves disputes between *Majlis* and Guardian Council
- Meets in secret
- Initiates legislation

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Iran: Political Institutions

(continued)

- Elections:
  - *Majlis* and president elected every four years
  - Guardian Council must approve all candidates
- Political parties:
  - Most are small and limited to local issues
  - National organizations for political figures only outwardly resemble parties

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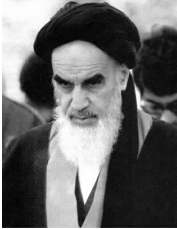
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## Iran: Citizens, Society, and the State



Ayatollah Khomeini, who established the "Guardianship of the Jurist"

- "Guardianship of the Jurist" states that Islamic clergy should be involved in governing the country
- The state controls political expression and strongly discourages dissent
- Government control of media (including Internet access) and educational system

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## Iran: Citizens, Society, and the State (continued)

- Cleavages exist on a number of levels:
  - Political: some high-ranking clerics disagree with religious control of government
  - Religious: 90% Shi'a and 10% Sunni
  - Ethnic: Kurds and Azeris seek independence
  - Social: rich vs. poor




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## Iran: Political and Economic Change

- Though also a democracy, Iran's theocrats hold the power
- Political change has occurred historically through conquest and force, but more recently via coups and international pressures
- Discovery of oil in 1908 brought about huge economic changes and gave Iran political influence
- Thus far, globalization and international sanctions have not effected much economic change



Petroleum reserves and production in Iran

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## Iran: Public Policy

- Most political discussion focuses on the poor relationship between Iran and the U.S.
- Policy initiatives can come from a variety of sources
- Issues under consideration:
  - Attracting more foreign investment
  - Decentralizing control over economic activity and development
  - Further economic reform
  - Pressure by young people to loosen theocratic rule
  - The potential discontent of the urban poor

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## Discussion Questions

1. Though all power and authority appear to flow from the Supreme Leader, what other groups also have power and authority in Iran?
2. What are the general responsibilities of each of the three branches of the Iranian government? How does theocratic dominance minimize the exercise of any real political power by any of the branches?

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## Discussion Questions

3. Though the Iranian population is very politically active, how does the government control political expression and discourage political dissent?
4. What political, religious, and ethnic cleavages exist in Iran?

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### Discussion Questions: Comparing Governments

1. How have the the political histories of the United Kingdom and Nigeria shaped their citizens' belief in the legitimacy of their respective governments?

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### Discussion Questions: Comparing Governments

2. China has a system of one-party rule, and for most of the 20th century Mexico effectively did as well. What were some costs to these countries of having only one party in power for such a long time?
3. How do the social cleavages in China and Nigeria differ? What are some of the historical reasons for these differences?

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### Discussion Questions: Comparing Governments

4. Compare and contrast the dual governmental structures of China and Iran.
5. What are some similarities and differences between the political patronage systems of Mexico and Russia?

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