

CONCEPTS AND CRITICAL THINKING

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

What Is It? Why Study It?

As the world enters the new millennium, a survey of front-page headlines reveals two starkly contrasting tendencies. On the one hand there is no shortage of serious problems. International conflicts and civil wars, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, widespread human rights abuses, festering poverty, and accelerating environmental degradation all continue to spread misery and fear throughout the world.

- In 1999, the nineteen countries comprising the NATO alliance went to war with Yugoslavia over Kosovo. Kosovo is a Yugoslav province whose largely Albanian population was subjected to harsh reprisals, mass murder, forced deportations, and other atrocities by the government of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. More than eight hundred thousand Albanian Kosovars fled the province before Milosevic agreed to peace terms and a NATO-led peacekeeping force entered Kosovo. Fearing reprisals, some one hundred thousand Serbs fled the province soon after the completion of NATO's eleven-week bombing campaign. The Kosovo conflict was one of more than a dozen inter-state wars and civil wars occurring in the 1990s. These conflicts, inflaming parts of Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, claimed more than 6 million lives and created an even larger number of refugees.
- Nuclear devices and other agents of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological weapons, pose a continuing threat. The United States and Russia, despite agreements requiring sizable cutbacks in their nuclear arsenals, together have more than 14,500 nuclear bombs capable of being delivered at long range. Though they have been on amicable terms since the final stages of the Cold War, the danger of an accident or the theft of nuclear material from Russian storage areas constitutes a deadly hazard. Eight countries are known to possess nuclear weapons, with the total estimated to exceed forty thousand. At least four other countries, all of them dictatorships hostile to the United States and its democratic allies, are thought to be developing their own nuclear weapons programs.¹
- Human rights abuses are flagrant in many parts of the world. They include violations of fundamental democratic freedoms, such as the freedom of speech and the right to vote, the arrest and torture of political dissidents, mass atrocities committed in times of civil war or unrest, religious and ethnic persecution, the abuse and repression of women, and the exploitation of some 250 million child laborers between the ages of five and fourteen, among other offenses. Political corruption is also endemic, even in established democracies.²

- Abject poverty is a widespread phenomenon, especially in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Though some of these countries have increased their economic growth in the past decade or two, the number of people subsisting on less than one dollar per day actually rose in the 1990s, reaching 1.5 billion by the end of the decade. Of some 4.4 billion people in the developing world, about 60 percent lack basic sanitation; one out of three lacks access to clean water; one-fourth do not have adequate housing; and one-fifth do not have access to modern health facilities. Twenty percent of children do not receive minimal amounts of protein and calories in their diets; a similar percentage fail to complete five years of schooling. Eighty-two countries dependent on subsistence farming cannot adequately feed their populations or afford food imports. Despite gains in public health, infectious diseases—some of them preventable—claim millions of lives every year because of lack of treatment. The maldistribution of the world's wealth is also striking: the net worth of the richest 225 people in the world equals one year's income for the poorest 2.5 billion.³
- Threats to the global environment and life systems stemming from emissions of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), greenhouse gases, and other pollutants, together with deforestation and harmful agricultural and fishing practices, result in a variety of perils, including illnesses, the disruption of global climactic patterns, the deterioration of the Earth's ozone layer, and the depletion of its food and medicinal supplies.

On a more encouraging note, there are some unmistakably positive trends. The end of the Cold War, the unprecedented spread of democracy, the advancement of international trade and economic cooperation, the extraordinary achievements of science and technology, and the development of widening cultural connections among the peoples of the world have created opportunities for peace, prosperity, and social well-being that are literally unparalleled in human history.
- In 1987 there were approximately sixty-nine countries with procedures for democratic elections. By the late 1990s there were 117, including a number of former communist countries in-

involved in nearly fifty years of Cold War confrontation with the United States and its allies.

- International trade and other forms of economic exchange have risen exponentially in the past two decades, embracing virtually every corner of the globe. Exports of merchandise around the world rose from \$1.8 trillion in 1983 to \$5.4 trillion in 1998; exports of services (such as banking services, insurance, and the like) went from \$357 billion to \$1.3 trillion in roughly the same time span. Private and government investment in foreign countries also rose dramatically. The value of the world's stock markets appreciated from \$9 trillion to \$23 trillion between 1990 and 1998 alone. The creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995 was designed to promote these global economic links. By 1999 the WTO consisted of 135 member countries, with China expected to join their ranks. The global economic marketplace has surely taken a toll on many people, shifting jobs and investment capital around the world with few restraints. Still, the overall growth in employment opportunities and economic development, though unevenly distributed, has been unmistakable.⁴
- The creation of the Internet and the World Wide Web has had an impact of gargantuan proportions on the growth of international economic, cultural, and political linkages. Internet hosts grew from virtually zero at the start of the 1990s to more than 40 million worldwide by 1999. Though computer literacy and access to the web are most prevalent in the wealthier countries, their global proliferation is expected to widen appreciably in the coming years.
- International travel for business, tourism, and other purposes has increased significantly, contributing to closer connections among the peoples of the world. The number of travelers arriving in destinations beyond their own borders skyrocketed from 69.3 million in 1960 to more than 625 million in 1998.⁵

In one way or another, governments are central to these and many other developments that shape the world we live in. Governments make war and negotiate peace, promote scientific research and take responsibility for the environment. Governments set the ground rules for international trade,

while managing public expenditures and influencing private enterprise at home. And governments decide to what extent the people under their jurisdiction will be granted basic human rights, such as the right to elect their leaders and enjoy freedom of expression and religious worship, the right to travel abroad, and other civil liberties. It is no exaggeration to say that the fate of all humanity depends to a considerable degree on the governments of the world. How governments are organized, how they relate to their own populations, and how they deal with the rest of humankind are realities that directly determine such life-and-death matters as war, civil strife, and public health, while materially influencing the quality of life for more than 6 billion people who now inhabit our planet.⁶

Any clear understanding of the contemporary world therefore requires a concentrated focus on governments and politics. This task is especially necessary in view of the unprecedented scope of governmental activity around the globe and the expanding web of relationships that link the nations of the world far more closely than ever before. Scarcely more than a hundred years ago, the governments of most countries were considerably smaller than they are now. In democracies like the United States and Great Britain, officials tended to maintain a hands-off policy toward the economy, leaving private businesses and individuals to fend largely for themselves in the free marketplace. State investment in scientific research, education, public health, and general human welfare was minimal. Most other countries were not democracies at all. China, Japan, Germany, and Russia, to name just a few, were governed by emperors whose regimes exercised dictatorial supremacy over their populations. Although they maintained sizable bureaucracies and military establishments, these and similar dictatorships devoted minuscule sums to citizen welfare. Meanwhile, much of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East in 1900 was ruled by colonial powers whose governments in London, Paris, or elsewhere paid scant regard to the rights or welfare of the millions under their sway.

As the twentieth century began, international transactions were also considerably less intense than they are at the start of the new millennium. World trade was feeble by today's standards.

Communications links were confined to print media and the telegraph. International travel was a privilege enjoyed by a few. Most people lived in veritable isolation from the rest of the world.

The extraordinary developments of the twentieth century—in politics, economics, science, and a multiplicity of other fields—decisively changed all that. The world of 2000 is a world where politics touches almost everything and isolation is not a viable option. It is a world where events in the country next door or on the other side of the globe sooner or later have an impact on one's own life at home. And it is a world where the age-old question of how we should govern ourselves—whether as democracies that respect human rights or as dictatorships that severely limit them or deny them altogether—retains an enduring immediacy. The world of the new millennium, in short, is a world where the study of comparative politics matters more than ever.

Comparative politics examines political realities in countries all over the world. It looks at the many ways governments operate and the ways people behave in political life.

More specifically, comparative politics examines such things as the following:

- How governments are structured and how they function, including different forms of democracy and various forms of non-democratic government. This area of inquiry focuses mainly on *governmental institutions*.
- The processes through which governments interact with their populations in pursuing community goals (such as improving health care, reducing unemployment, and so on) and in dealing with conflicts that arise over a variety of political, economic, and social issues. Here the emphasis is on *public policy*, such as health policy, economic policy, and the like.
- How political leaders and the population behave in politics, including the ideas they have about politics and the ways they participate in politics through such mechanisms as elections, political parties, interest groups, and other modes of political activity. The focus here is on *elite and mass political behavior* and includes such things as *political ideologies* and *political participation*.

- How political leaders and the mass public think and feel about politics, and how these attitudes affect their behavior. This topic is known as *political culture*.

In this book we'll look at politics in a wide range of countries in Europe, the former Soviet Union, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. We'll also make quite a few references to political life in the United States.

A GLOBAL INTRODUCTION

True to its title, this book is introductory in nature. It assumes you have little or no background in studying the politics of different countries on a systematic basis. Of course, no single volume, not even one as lengthy as this one, can substitute for extensive reading across a wide range of sources. Nor can this book make you an expert on any particular country or region. Its principal aims are simply to widen your horizons by introducing you to political life in a variety of countries and to provide you with some concepts and analytical methods so that you can think for yourself more coherently about politics and the world in which we live.

Our approach is "global" in three senses of the term: (1) *global coverage of the nations of the world*, (2) *conceptual comprehensiveness*, and (3) *critical thinking*.

Global Coverage of the Nations of the World

In the most literal sense, this book is global in its coverage of a representative selection of countries spread across all the world's geographic regions. Chapters 16 through 24 are devoted to specific countries. In addition, chapters 1 through 15 present a considerable amount of information about other countries not covered in subsequent chapters—Canada, India, Iraq, Poland, Haiti, and South Korea, among others—for the purpose of illustrating various concepts in comparative politics. Though there is no chapter devoted specifically to the United States, there are numerous references to the United States throughout the book for comparative purposes.

We also provide biographical *profiles of world leaders* in various countries. They include past

leaders who have decisively influenced the contemporary world—Margaret Thatcher, Charles de Gaulle, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Nelson Mandela, among others—as well as leaders who were in power as the new millennium began, like Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, Tony Blair, Gerhard Schroeder, Ehud Barak, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Portraits of these and a host of additional leaders can tell us a great deal not only about political developments in their respective countries but also about the nature of political leadership more generally.

Conceptual Comprehensiveness

In another sense, this book is global in its comprehensive *conceptual* treatment of the field of comparative politics. In order to understand political life in the United States, Japan, or any other country, we must not only examine relevant facts concerning the country's history, political institutions, public opinion, and other essential features of its political system; we must also pay close attention to the ways *general political processes and concepts* apply to them. For example, in order to understand the way democracy works in countries like Israel, France, or South Africa, we need to know something about democracy in general. What is it? How does it come about? Why is it that some countries have managed to develop and sustain democratic institutions for long periods of time (such as the United States, Canada, and Britain), while others have experienced the collapse of democracy (like Germany, Argentina, and Brazil) or have never really had democracy at all (China, for example)? Why do some countries build their democracy around a strong president and a weak legislature, while others favor powerful legislatures? In other words, to understand democracy in any specific country we need to understand the *concept* of democracy in more general terms. *Comparative politics almost always involves the interaction of the general and the specific.*

There are numerous additional concepts and categories of political phenomena that must also be examined if we are to get a good grasp of political reality around the world. Accordingly, chapters 5 through 15 are specifically designed to introduce you to some of the main concepts in

comparative politics. A brief look at the titles of these chapters will give you an indication of what some of these concepts are. They include such things as *power*, the *state*, *nationalism*, *ideology*, *political culture*, and *political economy*. In order to help you see how these and other conceptual notions and analytical categories pertain to the real world, these chapters provide a considerable amount of material drawn from a vast array of countries as well as from a broad sampling of scholarly literature produced by some of the top specialists in comparative politics. They also present some of the core ideas of prominent political thinkers whose theories have helped shape political history and the ways we think about politics: Aristotle, John Locke, James Madison, and Karl Marx, to name just a few. In sum, our approach to comparative politics is not confined to giving you just “a bunch of facts” about individual countries. It seeks to deepen your understanding of political life in today’s world by broadening your understanding of politics in general.

Critical Thinking

The third sense in which this text is global relates to another form of comprehensiveness. Relevant facts and key concepts are necessary, but by themselves they are still not enough to round out a truly comprehensive introduction to comparative politics. To appreciate the complexities of political reality more fully, we need to know *how to think* about politics and *how to analyze* it in a logical and systematic manner.

Comparative politics is a subfield of political science. Students often ask, “Is political science *really* a science?” The answer to this question obviously requires an understanding of what science is. While the term may conjure up images of people in lab coats measuring chemicals or observing mice, in fact science is primarily a system of logic. *Science is a set of rules and methods for investigating reality logically and systematically.* Political science is therefore a science to the extent that it observes the cardinal rules of scientific logic. To be more specific, political science is “scientific” when it engages in the following operations: **definition, description, explanation, prediction, and prescription.**

Definition Any science must define its terms as precisely as possible, and political science is no different. Just as biologists must refine their definitions of life and physicists wrestle with the meanings of space and time, political scientists must clarify political terminology in order to make sense out of the world of politics. Definitional clarity is especially necessary in politics because terms like “democracy,” “socialism,” “liberalism,” and other commonly used political concepts often have more than one meaning and are frequently misused. Without clear definitions of the words we habitually employ, we may completely misunderstand one another when we talk about politics, and we run the potentially damaging risk of failing to appreciate what politicians actually mean when they speak to us about political issues. To avoid these pitfalls, we need precise and consistent definitions of political terms and concepts as well as a subtle appreciation of their variations and shades of meaning in particular contexts.

Description The systematic observation of things and their accurate description is another essential component of comprehending reality scientifically. Physicists must describe the atom in meticulous detail in order to unlock its secrets, and doctors must have a clear description of their patients’ symptoms in order to make an appropriate diagnosis. Similarly, political scientists need to describe the phenomena they are examining as accurately as possible in order to understand them. How, for example, does the U.S. system of checks and balances among the three branches of government actually work? How does the British parliamentary system work? How does the Russian variant of a strong president and a weak legislature work? How can we categorize various types of government, such as the several existing variants of democracy and the numerous different forms of non-democratic regimes (monarchies, military dictatorships, and the like)? These and a plethora of other political phenomena need to be carefully described if we are to make any sense out of them.

Explanation Why do things happen the way they do? Just as physicists ask why atoms work the way they do and biologists ask why diseases

occur, political scientists are curious about why political phenomena occur. Why, for example, does democracy succeed in some countries but not in others? Why do some countries have large voter turnouts while others attract smaller proportions of eligible voters to the polls? Why did the communist party dictatorship collapse in the Soviet Union but not in China? The list of political phenomena begging for explanation is practically endless.

In an effort to explain the realities that intrigue them, scientists of all kinds frequently make **generalizations** about the phenomena they seek to understand. Very often these generalizations are expressed as **theories** or **hypotheses** that posit a **cause-and-effect relationship** between things. Sir Isaac Newton hypothesized that gravity causes physical objects to conform to certain general laws of motion. Charles Darwin theorized that evolutionary processes linking all animal life forms provide the causative explanation of how the human species developed. Using similar logic, political scientists formulate generalizations that seek to address the causes of such things as democracy, war, voter turnout, fascism, and other political realities. And like natural scientists, political scientists are frequently engaged in **testing** their generalizations against the hard facts of reality to determine whether they are true or false, or whether perhaps they are true under some conditions but not in others.

Hypothesis testing is a central activity of political science. One of the main aims of this book is to teach you to think about politics in terms of hypotheses that can be tested against relevant evidence.

Prediction In some cases the physical sciences have predictive capabilities. Astronomers are able to calculate the future positions of the planets hundreds of years into the future, and biologists can trace out the likely course of a disease if it is not medically treated. Even the physical sciences, however, must acknowledge limits to their predictive abilities. Astronomers cannot predict when the next asteroid will hit planet Earth until it is well in view, and biologists may not be able to predict how an individual patient will react to medication. To be sure, political scientists cannot predict future events. The realities of human be-

havior and political life are so variegated that we have no ability to foretell with any accuracy what will happen in any particular country over the near term, let alone the long term. Nevertheless, we can observe **trends** and **patterns** in various aspects of political life. As a consequence, we can sometimes extrapolate from these observable trends and suggest, however tentatively, what broad tendencies are *possible*, or even *probable*, assuming that certain conditions hold.

While we cannot say with certainty that democracy is bound to succeed or doomed to fail in Brazil or Russia or somewhere else, we can at least specify the factors that may make democracy's success or failure more probable. While we may not wish to make any bets on the outcome of next year's elections, we may be willing to hazard a prediction after seeing the last public opinion polls taken a few days before the vote. In other words, prediction in political science is **probabilistic** in nature. It can sketch out alternative possibilities and probabilities, while modestly desisting from claims to foolproof reliability.

Prescription The theories of Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi, and other physicists led to formulas for building the atomic and hydrogen bombs. Doctors can prescribe medicines on the basis of the findings of research biologists and pharmacologists. Can political science prescribe remedies to the political problems besetting the nations of the world?

Yes and no. In some instances we can provide recommendations that, if followed, may increase the probability that a desirable outcome will ensue at some indeterminate point in time. We can prescribe, for example, a set of actions that need to be taken in order to establish a democracy and enhance its prospects for success. Thus we can urge the adoption of a body of laws ensuring fair elections, civil rights, an independent judiciary, and so forth. No political advisor can compel any country to take her advice, however, and no one can guarantee that, even if all the prescribed steps are followed, democracy will inevitably succeed. The particularities of each individual country and the unforeseeability of future events may dash even the most scrupulously observed efforts to make democracy triumph. Still, our prescriptions for democracy can at least increase the *chances* that democracy will succeed.

Another obstacle to the prescription of desirable political actions is that people often differ over what is desirable. If our calculations reliably demonstrate that the economy will be better off if we avoid budget deficits and maintain prudent surpluses, should we achieve these goals by raising taxes or by slashing government spending? If we agree to raise taxes, should we increase them equally for everybody or raise them disproportionately on the rich? If budget surpluses permit us to reduce taxes, how should we do so? And if we agree to reduce spending, how should we apportion the budget cuts among such claimants to public money as the poor, the disabled, the elderly, the military, and advocates for government expenditures on highways, education, the environment, the space program, and so on? Although science can show us with statistical objectivity that the country as a whole will benefit from deficit reduction and rising surpluses, it cannot demonstrate the objective correctness of *individual preferences or values*. If you do not wish to pay more taxes or see your government-subsidized education loan eliminated, science cannot prove that you are right or wrong. If I place a higher value on military spending than on welfare benefits for the poor, or vice versa, science cannot prove that my values are either correct or incorrect.

In actual practice, much of what occurs in politics is about how we deal with competing individual preferences and values. Science can help us figure out the costs and consequences of our preferred choices, but it cannot always prescribe with objective certainty what is “right” or “good” for you or me. A great deal of what goes on in political life, therefore, is beyond the reach of science and scientific logic. **Political discussion and debate are thus only partially “scientific”; in addition to scientific logic, they also involve values and preferences.** When we study political science as an academic discipline, we must be constantly attentive to both its scientific, factual side and its “non-scientific,” value-centered side.

The two frequently go together. The scientific aspect of political science helps us understand political reality in a coherent, systematic fashion. In the process, it provides important knowledge and insights that may help us think through our own political preferences and values. Many readers of

this book may be drawn to the study of politics out of a desire to make some impact on the real world. Whether one seeks to embark on a political career, to be an activist in a political cause, or simply to become a better informed citizen, a scientific approach to politics can assist us in devising policy prescriptions or in assessing the recommendations offered by politicians, government officials, and others engaged in political action and debate. *Sound government policies rest on sound analysis.* To the extent that a scientific approach to politics contributes to intelligent analyses of political reality, it also contributes to intelligent policy prescription.

Thus the third global aspect of this book is designed to teach you how political scientists think when they study comparative politics in accordance with scientific rules and methods. In the process, this book explicitly seeks to *improve your own critical-thinking skills*. The value of taking a scientific approach to the study of politics thus extends well beyond the field of political science. The ability to think logically and coherently is a vitally necessary skill in a large number of academic disciplines and non-academic careers. Its cultivation deserves the highest priority in your education. The analytical techniques employed in this volume, while rudimentary, can be applied across a wide spectrum of intellectual and professional endeavors. In helping you understand the world of politics, therefore, this book contributes to your general education by helping you learn how to think more sharply and effectively.

The scientific approach to comparative politics is spelled out in chapters 3 and 4. To get the most out of these chapters, and out of the rest of the book, you are advised to read them with great care. In addition, every subsequent chapter contains at least one *hypothesis-testing exercise* designed to bolster your comprehension of how scientific analysis can be applied to the study of politics. A considerable number of additional references to the application of hypotheses, models, and other aspects of scientific reasoning are also sprinkled throughout the book.

GETTING STARTED

In sum, the global approach to comparative politics presented in this volume provides an all-encompassing, conceptually integrated introduction

to the study of political life around the contemporary world. Of course, a book is not a newspaper. Inevitably, this volume is only as current as the day it was signed to press in the summer of 2000. Many important events will surely have occurred since then. It is up to you to stay on top of world developments as you read this book and pursue your future explorations. (You can take advantage of the McGraw-Hill Supersite on comparative politics to stay abreast of some recent occurrences related to this book's themes.) As we've already indicated, our chief goals are to introduce you to political realities in a wide variety of settings and to improve your ability to think for yourself about politics. With those aims in mind, *let's get started!*

COMPARATIVE POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? HOW ARE THEY CONNECTED?

Political scientists make a basic distinction between two areas of inquiry: *comparative politics* and *international politics*.

Comparative politics examines political activities *within* individual countries. It looks at politics inside, say, the United States, Russia, Japan, Mexico, or South Africa. It then compares the domestic experiences of particular countries with the domestic experiences of others. The focus is on each country's *internal* politics, with a view to making generalizations about politics in a variety of domestic settings. For example, we can compare various democracies with one another to learn more about the process of democracy. We can also compare various non-democratic governments to learn more about how they work, such as communist countries or military dictatorships.

International politics, by contrast, concerns relations *between* countries. Here the focus is on the *external* relationships of individual countries. Diplomacy, international law, international economic relations, war, and peacemaking are among the chief topics studied by political scientists concerned with international affairs. Their task is to look at relationships between, say, the United States and Russia, Israel and Egypt, Western Europe and Eastern Europe, the countries of the Northern Hemisphere and those of the Southern

Hemisphere, and so on. These investigations aim at explaining how these relationships work and seek to provide us with a more general theoretical understanding of the processes of international politics as such.

If you wish to combine your study of comparative politics with a study of international politics in theory and practice, or if you want to concentrate primarily on the international relations of the countries examined here, you will need to read other books and articles and perhaps take other courses devoted principally to international relations.

The dividing line between comparative and international politics is razor thin, however, and it's getting thinner all the time. Domestic and international politics are increasingly intertwined within virtually every country in the world today. We cannot really understand the domestic politics of most nations without some reference to their international relationships. What goes on internally is often affected by events occurring externally, beyond the country's borders. Conversely, we cannot fully comprehend international affairs without a good look inside the domestic political systems of individual countries. The actions of individual governments frequently have a powerful impact on other countries or on the world as a whole. Somewhat like biology and chemistry, comparative politics and international politics are complementary: though they are separate fields of analysis, they are intimately interrelated.

GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE

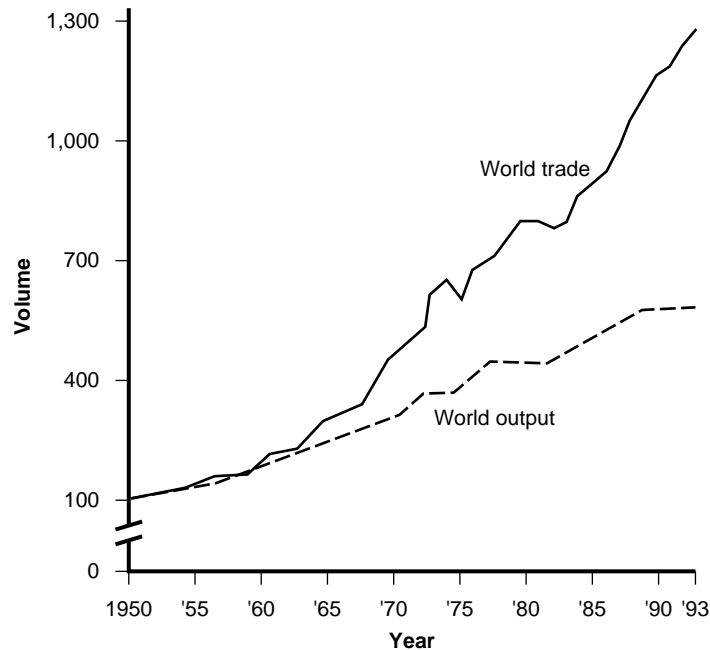
This ever-tightening linkage between domestic and international politics is one of the chief manifestations of global **interdependence**. As we noted at the start of this chapter, the nations of today's world are increasingly enmeshed in a web of interactions, with their governments playing a pivotal role in many of them.

Interdependence refers to the fact that the countries of the world do not live in isolation from one another but are linked through a variety of political, economic, environmental, and other relationships.

One of the most prominent types of global interdependence is economic **globalization**. (By it-

FIGURE 1.1 Growth in World Trade and Output, 1950–1990s

With the total volume of world trade and the world's output of goods and services assigned a value of 100 in 1950, the graph shows that trade was thirteen times greater by the 1990s while output had grown more than fivefold. Part of the rise in output was due to the steep rise in trade. (Source: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.)



self, the term “globalization” as it is commonly used in the press and academic literature usually refers to *economic* relationships.) Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich has observed that it no longer makes sense to speak of the “national economy” of any individual country, such as “the American economy” or “the Chinese economy,” as though it can be separated from the economies of other countries. We are now living in a truly global economy. International trade is intensifying, as figure 1.1 shows. Businesses are not only selling their goods in a rapidly expanding and highly competitive global marketplace; they are setting up factories and offices outside the borders of their home countries to an extent unimaginable even a few decades ago, moving jobs and money around the world at a dizzying pace.

Some people are hurt by these developments. When companies close down their plants in one locality and relocate in countries that offer cheaper wages, lower taxes, or other advantages, those

who are left behind must often cope with unemployment or other harsh consequences of economic change. But for others, the forces of globalization are creating unprecedented possibilities. As Reich points out, the fastest-growing career opportunities are precisely in areas that are tightly plugged into the world economy. Globalization holds out rich rewards to those who possess the intellectual skills these careers require (especially analytical skills) along with a keen sensitivity to the economic, political, and cultural factors at work in the international arena.⁷

The forces of economic globalization are by no means limited to private companies. Governments around the world are also caught up in the globalization process, whether as active promoters of international trade or as sources of jobs, unemployment compensation, retraining, and other forms of assistance to those whose livelihood is jeopardized by the maelstrom of global economic activity. *It therefore matters who governs.* Some political leaders may deal

with the effects of economic globalization differently from others. Studying comparative politics helps us understand these differences and why they occur. The global financial crises of 1997–99 are a superb example of globalization.

THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISES OF 1997–99: Asia, Russia, and Brazil

It all started on July 2, 1997, when domestic economic difficulties forced the government of Thailand to announce that it could no longer support the value of its currency, the baht.

The currencies of the world—U.S. dollars, Japanese yen, the euro and so on—are like stocks and bonds: they are traded on world markets every business day. As a consequence, the value of individual currencies relative to other currencies is constantly shifting. If the dollar is strong and the yen is growing weaker, for example, people involved in currency exchanges, whether they are Japanese tourists visiting the United States or professional currency traders, will have to pay out more yen for each dollar they wish to buy. On a typical day the value of most currencies against other currencies does not change very much, usually by a small fraction of 1 percent. But if a country's economy is in severe crisis, the value of its currency may plummet very quickly as the world's currency speculators rapidly sell their holdings of that currency. When that happens, the government must usually come to its own currency's rescue by buying it in world currency markets. But when the government cannot afford to take such remedial action, as in Thailand's case, its currency may go into a tailspin. Immediately after the Thai government made its announcement, the value of the baht fell a whopping 20 percent against the dollar.

Although Thailand is a small country, the effects of its currency crisis had global repercussions. Because the economies of Southeast Asia are closely linked, Thailand's neighbors Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia immediately experienced currency troubles of their own. A ripple of currency devaluations and stock market slides spread to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea over the following weeks and months. Even more ominously, the Asian currency crisis coincided with other economic problems that had been brewing throughout the region for quite some time. Japan and South Korea, for example, witnessed the collapse of several of its largest banks in late 1997.

The deterioration of East Asia's previously dynamic economies sent shock waves throughout the global economy. Because private companies and governments around the world, from the United States and Canada to Latin America and Europe, were heavily involved in trade and other economic transactions with Asia, it was not long before their economies felt the effects of the Asian crisis. On October 27, 1997, the New York Stock exchange fell 554 points, until then its biggest one-day loss in history. The sudden plunge reflected the fears of investors that Asia would no longer be able to purchase American-made goods as actively as in the past, thereby reducing the profits of U.S. corporations. Wall Street quickly recovered from this drop, but other countries were not so fortunate. Some were affected by a substantial loss of revenue from trade with Asian partners. A number of countries were also affected by a decline of foreign investments as the Asian crisis made many international investors squeamish about placing their funds in risky economies known in the investment world as "emerging markets." India and South Africa, among others, experienced severe economic problems before too long.

While the consequences of the Asian crisis were still reverberating around the world, Russia and Brazil suffered financial shocks of their own. In August 1998, the Russian government declared its inability to prop up the ruble. Within a week the currency lost about a third of its value against the dollar and plunged considerably lower by year's end.

Brazil's woes were precipitated in 1998 by the decision of one of the country's governors to withhold his region's tax payment to the federal government. That decision made it very unlikely that Brazil's government would be able to balance the national budget, a prospect that severely jeopardized President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's carefully constructed economic reform program. For several years, Cardoso had sought to stimulate Brazil's chronically underperforming economy by cutting excess government spending, smothering inflation, and encouraging private investment. The 1999 financial pinch occurred just as these efforts were



bearing fruit. Nervous investors, still reeling from the Asian and Russian crises, began pulling money out of Brazil, and Cardoso's government could no longer support the country's currency, the real. The real's value dipped 20 percent against the dollar in early 1999. Brazil's stature as the eighth largest economy in the world and the largest in Latin America inevitably meant that its financial troubles would have international consequences. On Wall Street, for example, U.S. companies whose business was tied to the Brazilian market suffered losses. And by mid-1999, much of Latin America was in a deep economic slump.

The ramifications of these multiple financial crises were by no means limited to economics. Political changes also ensued in a number of places. Indonesia's financial crunch precipitated riots and student demonstrations that ultimately brought about the resignation of President Suharto, who had ruled the country as its unchallenged dictator since 1965. South Korea's economic woes paved the way for the election of a new government under President Kim Dae Jung, a courageous advocate of democracy and an outspoken opponent of his country's previous military governments. In elections held in July 1998, Japan's ruling party received a rude jolt from an electorate worried about continuing stagnation in the world's second largest economy. The prime minister resigned and a new government under Keizo Obuchi came to power. Russian President Boris Yeltsin fired his prime minister as the ruble disintegrated but got into a dispute with the Russian parliament over his replacement. In Brazil, Cardoso managed to gain parliamentary approval for the main elements of his reform program, but only after protracted negotiations. In other countries affected by the global financial turmoil, a number of political leaders found themselves under intense pressure to deal with the economic hardships the crises had created or exacerbated. For governments and their populations around the world, the crises provided indisputable evidence that economic globalization is a daily reality, and that it has profound *political* consequences.

A key player in the Asian financial crisis, and in many other global economic transactions, is the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**. The IMF is an international organization that provides financial assistance to governments that have currency problems or difficulty repaying loans borrowed from other governments or commercial banks. Before providing any assistance, however, IMF officials may impose fairly stringent conditions on the recipient government. They may require it to cut

its budget deficit, for example, compelling it to raise taxes or eliminate unaffordable government spending programs. Such measures may have unwelcome domestic political implications for the government in need of IMF aid. Raising taxes invariably sparks protests, and slashing government spending may terminate jobs for bureaucrats and funding for students, private businesses, social welfare recipients, and others. Problems of this nature are now being experienced by numerous countries around the world. As the 1997–99 financial crises unfolded, the IMF pledged a \$17 billion rescue package for Thailand, \$23 billion for Indonesia, \$57 billion for South Korea, \$22.6 billion for Russia, and \$41.5 billion for Brazil. All these loans were to be doled out in periodic allotments stretched out over a period of one year or more. The payment of each disbursement typically depends on the country's fulfillment of the IMF's demands for economic restructuring, providing vivid examples of *how international forces can affect a country's domestic political framework*.⁸

International security constitutes a particularly vital aspect of global interdependence. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union (the USSR) at the end of 1991, the Cold War that dominated international political life from the end of World War II came to an abrupt end. The tensions that kept the United States and the USSR, together with their allies, on the brink of nuclear annihilation for more than forty years suddenly dissolved as the Soviet Union's largest constituent element—Russia—embarked on the path to democracy. Cooperation between the two largest military powers in the world replaced confrontation. Landmark arms reduction agreements, several of which were actually concluded before the collapse of Communist Party rule in the USSR, led to the destruction of thousands of nuclear weapons and deadly guided missiles on both sides, together with the demobilization of hundreds of thousands of troops. The late 1980s and early 1990s truly marked one of the most important political turning points in world history.

Despite these auspicious developments, the world remains a dangerous place, as the Kosovo conflict amply demonstrated. In 2000 Russia still possessed well over twenty thousand nuclear bombs. There is considerable concern that some of

those bombs may not always be kept under effective safeguards against theft by terrorists or others who might sell them to countries abroad. Just as important, the long-term stability of Russia's nascent democracy is by no means a sure thing. Communists and other political groups who have confrontational attitudes toward the United States pose the continuing possibility of a return to a conflictual relationship with the West should they come to power. *It therefore matters who governs Russia.* As was the case during the Cold War, global security still hinges in large measure on political developments *inside* the two largest nuclear powers.

In addition to the United States and Russia, several other countries are known to possess nuclear weapons as well. Britain, France, and Israel are firm U.S. allies. But China, India, and Pakistan are pursuing their nuclear weapons programs in ways that at times conflict with U.S. interests. China's Communist Party dictatorship is building nuclear bombs and missiles capable of striking several neighboring countries, including Russia and Japan. In 1998 India and Pakistan, arch rivals that share a disputed border, engaged in a series of nuclear tests that were patently aimed at mutual intimidation. How these countries manage their nuclear weapons programs obviously depends on who governs them.

The security of hundreds of millions of people is also affected by a host of potential sources of military conflagration or international terrorism spread across the globe. Here are just a few examples:

- **Iraq** under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, sparking the Persian Gulf War of the following year. Saddam's transparent efforts to build a large chemical weapons capability and obtain nuclear weapons have mobilized an international campaign to stop him. In 1998 the United States bombed alleged Iraqi weapons facilities.
 - **Iran** has been identified as a source of terrorist activity aimed against the United States and Israel ever since its government was taken over by fundamentalist Islamic clerics in 1979.
 - **North Korea**, which has been governed by a repressive communist dictatorship since the end of World War II, has posed a continuing military danger to South Korea's pro-U.S. government, threatening a reprise of the Korean War of 1950–53.
- These and other flashpoints of potential conflagration make it abundantly evident that security *among* the nations of the world depends in the first instance on who holds governmental power *within* them.
- Another form of global interdependence is **environmental interdependence**. Ecological developments occurring inside one country can have immediate and long-term repercussions in neighboring areas as well as in countries clear across the planet. The unabated rise in industrial emissions, the degradation of the rain forests, and other environmental perils of recent decades have compellingly underscored the fragile unity of the global ecological system.
- Since the mid-1960s, ozone in the globe's stratosphere has been decreasing over North America, Europe, and Australia at rates of about 10 percent in winter and 5 percent in summer. An especially large ozone hole opens up over Antarctica every year, at times amounting to 60 percent of the region's total protective layer. By the mid-1990s, the Earth's ozone hole was as large as Africa. Alarming increases in skin cancer and eye problems have resulted. More than three-fourths of ozone depletion is caused by human emissions of chlorofluorocarbons such as chlorine and bromine. Various agreements concluded under United Nations auspices have brought about significant reductions in CFC emissions, but the continuing cooperation of the signatory governments will be necessary to restore the ozone layer to acceptable levels by the middle of the twenty-first century.
 - A hundred years ago, rain forests covered 14 percent of the Earth's land surface. Deforestation in recent decades has destroyed half of it. Some 500,000 trees are cut down every *hour* in tropical rain forests, resulting in the annual destruction of an area as large as Florida. At these rates, the rain forests will disappear completely by 2040. Rain forest depletion destabilizes global climactic patterns and contributes to the loss of between twenty thousand and one hundred thousand plant and animal

species a year, depriving humanity of potential cures for cancer and other pharmaceuticals. By 2000, approximately one million species had already disappeared before they were even identified.⁹

- The emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane has quadrupled since the 1960s. These gases promote global warming, which has a major impact on ocean temperatures, the melting of polar icecaps, and other climatic phenomena.¹⁰

These problems present obvious challenges to the international scientific community. But they also provoke reactions from governments and from those who seek to influence governmental policy, as the cases of Chernobyl and Brazil indicate.

THE POLITICS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

CHERNOBYL

In April 1986, Swedish monitors detected unusual amounts of radiation in the immediate atmosphere. Their projections traced the source of the emissions to the Soviet Union. After first denying any problem, Soviet officials admitted that a nuclear reactor used to generate electricity had exploded in Chernobyl (cherno-bil), in Soviet Ukraine. For ten days the burning reactor released deadly atomic debris into the air, contaminating the atmosphere with more than ten times the amount of radiation emitted by the atomic bomb



Chernobyl nuclear reactor shown after explosion and prior to its encasement.

that exploded over Hiroshima in 1945. The area around Chernobyl was evacuated, but more than 3.5 million people in Ukraine were affected by the radiation, along with more than 2 million in neighboring Belarus and over 3 million in Russia. Farmland within a wide radius of the blast suffered nuclear contamination whose effects could last thousands of years. Carried by wind and rain, the effects of the disaster were felt not only in Scandinavia but in Eastern Europe, Germany, and other countries far from the explosion. A United Nations report released in 2000 stated that 1,800 children who had been exposed to radiation had developed thyroid cancer, while another study predicted that about 3,500 cancer deaths attributable to the blast would probably occur in the future. People continued to consume contaminated milk and food from the region, however, and no one knows how many people will be affected over the coming years and generations.

The incident had immediate political implications. Mikhail Gorbachev, the head of the Soviet Communist Party, had been in office for little more than a year. Although he was a lifelong communist, Gorbachev knew that the Soviet economy was in serious trouble and that the political system needed major changes. Accordingly, he used the Chernobyl catastrophe to improve Moscow's relations with the outside world as well as to loosen up some of the more rigid aspects of the party's dictatorial rule. Soviet requests for medical and scientific assistance brought an immediate response from the United States and other countries, thereby reducing Cold War confrontation. Recognizing the enormous fears of nuclear devastation that the accident had provoked, the Soviet leader joined with President Ronald Reagan in signing an unprecedented nuclear weapons agreement in December 1987. For the first time ever, the two superpowers agreed to destroy large quantities of missiles and nuclear warheads, something Gorbachev's predecessors had steadfastly resisted. Domestically, Gorbachev responded to the Chernobyl accident by calling for more "openness" in the way Soviet leaders dealt with their population. No longer would natural disasters and other problems confronting the country be kept secret by the Communist Party leadership, as they had been in the past. The quest for greater openness ultimately increased popular pressures for political democracy in the USSR, leading to the dissolution of the communist dictatorship several years later.

With the Soviet Union's collapse at the end of 1991, Ukraine became an independent country and ultimately assumed responsibility for Chernobyl. After several years of negotiations, forty countries agreed to provide Ukraine with more than \$700 million to close down

Chernobyl's remaining reactors and re-encase the damaged one. The Ukrainian government promised to shut down Chernobyl by the end of 2000.

THE BRAZILIAN RAIN FORESTS

The Amazon region of Brazil, an area about half the size of the United States, contains the world's largest rain forest. This vast ecosystem encompasses about a third of all surviving tropical forests on Earth and nurtures hundreds of animal and plant species. Like other rain forests around the globe, it makes a vital contribution to the global atmospheric balance and is a significant source of medicinal plants. It is also home to some of the last remaining Stone Age people on Earth.

Until the 1960s, Amazonia was largely undeveloped. Brazilian leaders were acutely aware of the region's potential for economic development, however, especially its untapped mineral resources and its vast expanses of cultivable land. They also hoped that a flourishing Amazon would encourage migration from the country's increasingly overcrowded cities. The military, in particular, was determined to secure the region against possible foreign incursions and to exploit Amazonia's hidden wealth with the aim of catapulting Brazil into the ranks of the world's great powers.

In 1964 a military coup put an end to a succession of ineffective elected governments that had failed to stabilize the economy. The military governed Brazil until democracy returned in 1985. During that period the government launched a series of ambitious programs designed to fulfill its dreams of Amazonian development. Highways, dams, and earthmoving projects attracted large-scale agricultural, mining and industrial interests to take advantage of Amazonia's natural riches. Many of these undertakings were financed with funds the government borrowed from foreign banks and other international lenders. By the early 1980s Brazil had run up a debt of approximately \$90 billion to foreign creditors.

Meanwhile, the accelerated pace of Amazonian development wreaked havoc on the environment. The clearing of wide tracts of forest for agricultural purposes, much of it carried out with slash-and-burn methods, resulted in persistent brush fires and the release of carbon dioxide and other noxious greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Indiscriminate deforestation also threatened the world's climactic patterns and the survival of indigenous species and plant life. The harnessing of lakes and rivers for hydroelectric power severely jeopardized the region's delicate ecology. These government-sponsored programs also took a harsh toll on local populations as small farmers were pushed off their lands by powerful agrobusinesses while rubber

workers, miners, and other laborers were exploited by industrial companies. The Yanomami Indians and other native tribes were subjected to the rude intrusion of outsiders who upset their traditional way of life.

In the 1970s and 1980s a global coalition of environmental groups, governments, and international organizations exerted mounting pressure on the Brazilian government to change its policies. In 1985 the military, cognizant of its failure to solve Brazil's economic problems, gave up power and permitted free elections. When the new president died after only a few weeks in office, power passed to Jose Sarney, a former colleague of the military rulers. Although he governed in accordance with a new constitution passed by a democratically elected assembly, Sarney was powerfully influenced by the leading members of Brazil's political elite, above all by large business interests and the military. Accordingly, his government resisted international pressures for a shift in Brazil's Amazonian development policy. Sarney and his supporters were particularly resentful of efforts by the United States and West European countries, which had environmental problems of their own, to interfere in Brazil's internal affairs and to "keep Brazil down." But the world's focus on Brazil's problems only intensified in 1988 when Chico Mendes, a Brazilian environmentalist who led a rubber workers' union in Amazonia, was murdered. The following year, President Sarney refused to attend a global environmental conference.

Following his victory in the election of 1989, Fernando Collor de Mello assumed the presidency. The new president quickly acted to reverse the tone and substance of his predecessor's environmental policy. He appointed one of Brazil's most widely respected environmentalists as secretary of the environment, launched efforts to halt the illegal burning of forests, saw to it that Mendes's murderers were arrested and convicted, and initiated a variety of programs to improve environmental conditions in Amazonia. He also took measures to protect the region's Indians. Most important, Collor replaced Sarney's antagonistic attitude toward international concern about Brazil's environment with a more cooperative stance. By the end of 1990 Brazil reported a significant decline in the rate of deforestation.

The change in Brazil's government thus resulted in a marked change in its environmental policies. Nevertheless, the nature of the Brazilian political system imposed noticeable limits on these policy shifts. Today Brazil's political affairs remain in the hands of a small elite. Large corporations and the military high command exert an ever-present influence on elected officials and the government bureaucracy. The powers of the president are circumscribed by the national legisla-

ture and the competing political parties represented in it. These and other factors resulted in severe neglect of the rain forest in the 1990s. In 1995 more than eleven thousand square miles of forest were lost, a single-year high. Environmentalists around the world criticized the Brazilian government for failing to keep its promises. In all likelihood, the future of the Brazilian rain forests will continue to depend on fluctuating relationships between the international community and Brazil's complicated domestic political processes.

The Chernobyl and Brazilian rain forest cases amply demonstrate that, when it comes to the environment, *it matters who governs*. Soviet leaders before Gorbachev would probably have handled the Chernobyl situation very differently, in all likelihood refusing to level with the population about the severity of the country's environmental problems. Successive governments in Brazil dealt with the rain forest in different ways. Clearly, anyone interested in the global environment needs to be a keen student of comparative politics.

Meanwhile, the international spillover effects of events occurring in countries wracked by civil conflict or ineffective government continue to manifest themselves in **migration and refugee flows**. For example:

- Collapsing governments and bloody civil wars in Liberia, Somalia, and a number of other African countries produced more than 5 million refugees throughout the continent by the mid-1990s. One of the deadliest of these tragedies was the bitter tribal clash between Tutsis and Hutus in Burundi and Rwanda. In 1993 at least ten thousand people were killed in Burundi and some five hundred thousand were slaughtered the following year in Rwanda. As panic spread, more than a million refugees streamed into neighboring Uganda, Zaire (now called the Congo), and Tanzania. Lacking the means to support the new arrivals, these governments relied on the United Nations and other international relief organizations to provide the refugees with shelter, food, and medical treatment. Continuing political turmoil in Africa over the following years only exacerbated the plight of the burgeoning refugee populations.
- As Yugoslavia broke up into five separate countries in the early 1990s, long-simmering ethnic hatreds erupted into brutal warfare. The most severe initial confrontations, occurring in and around Bosnia, involved clashes between Bosnian Muslims and Serbs, and resulted in massacres and forced evacuations from native villages, a process that Serb leaders called "ethnic cleansing." Fighting between Serbs and Croats, and between Croats and Bosnians, also took place. Before the Bosnian fighting stopped in 1995 more than 250,000 people were killed and some 1.8 million were left homeless. Over a million of these uprooted people emigrated to Germany, Sweden, and other countries willing to take them. The Kosovo conflict of 1999 produced an additional eight hundred thousand refugees or more prior to the end of the war. Most of them returned home after peace was restored, but new refugees, mostly Serbs, have left Kosovo since then.

The United Nations estimated that there were 22 million refugees scattered throughout the world by the end of the 1990s. Here, again, it is evident that political events occurring in one country can have profound consequences for other countries around the world, requiring us to pay serious attention to what is going on within individual states.¹¹

Additional examples of global interdependence abound. In **public health**, the scourge of AIDS, the world's most infectious disease with more than 2 million deaths annually, requires intense international cooperation among scientists and governments to contain and eventually eliminate the epidemic. In **communications**, the global expansion of the Internet opens up unprecedented possibilities while at the same time creating problems regarding intellectual property rights and other legal issues that governments must resolve. In **law enforcement**, international drug trafficking and organized crime present daily challenges to societies and governments around the world. In these and other fields, the distinction between what is "domestic" and what is "international" is increasingly blurred. So, too, is the distinction between what is "political" and what is not.

Not even the United States is immune to the all-embracing forces of interdependence. As the country with the world's largest economy and most powerful military arsenal, the United States is strategically positioned at the hub of the world's political, economic, and security interconnections. Inevitably, the United States cannot help but have a tangible impact on virtually every country in the world. At the same time, the accelerating forces of global interdependence cannot help but expose the United States to far more external influences on its domestic life than ever before.

THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE U.S. DOMESTIC AGENDA

JOB MARKET

In the 1950s and 1960s, the United States had relatively low levels of imports and foreign competition. In 1960 the United States imported only 4 percent of its autos and steel and 6 percent of its consumer electronics. Employment remained high in domestic companies manufacturing steel, cars, and various consumer goods. Auto and other imports began to rise in the 1970s, and by the following decade the United States was importing 28 percent of its cars, 25 percent of its steel, 25 percent of its computers, 66 percent of its radios and TVs, and 100 percent of its VCRs. In addition, a growing number of U.S. firms relocated abroad. As a result, the United States lost well over a million jobs in the auto, steel, and textile industries in the 1980s.

ENERGY

Until the 1960s, the United States did not import any oil. Inflation (i.e., price increases) remained low. During the 1970s U.S. oil imports rose from one-third to about one-half of its domestic consumption. A watershed occurred in October 1973, when the leading Middle East oil producers suddenly quadrupled world petroleum prices, causing a significant economic slowdown and double-digit inflation (known as *stagflation*) in the United States and other countries around the world. Subsequent oil price hikes aggravated these conditions until well into the 1980s. Chastened by this experience, the United States reacted quickly when Iraq invaded Kuwait, a major oil producer, in 1990. Fearing Iraq's intention of continuing its aggression and significantly raising world oil prices, the United States organized a forty-nation alliance that evicted Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the Persian Gulf War of February 1991.

ENVIRONMENT

Early efforts focused on the cleanup of domestic air and water. The Clean Air Act of 1970 required, among other things, the installation of tall smokestacks to disperse industrial pollution. Later in the decade it was discovered that these smokestacks were responsible for creating acid rain in the northeastern United States and Canada, creating frictions with that country. In addition, the United States, along with most other countries, was materially affected by ozone depletion, tropical deforestation, global warming, and other worldwide phenomena.

IMMIGRATION

In 1960, there were 9.7 million foreign-born people in the United States, 5.4 percent of its total population. By 1990 the figure was 19.8 million, 7.9 percent of the total. Though most immigrants came from Europe until 1970, by 1990 43 percent of foreign-born Americans were from Latin America and 25 percent were from Asia. An estimated two hundred thousand immigrants enter the United States illegally every year.

HEALTH

Health policies in the 1950s and 1960s focused on combating cancer and heart disease and initiating anti-smoking campaigns in the United States. The emergence of AIDS in the 1980s necessitated international cooperation and resulted in a ban on HIV-infected individuals seeking immigration.

CRIME

Until the 1980s, most violent crime was linked with urban poverty and some imported drugs (mostly heroin). Most murders were due to disputes among family members or personal acquaintances. In the 1980s, violent crime (especially murders) rose significantly, much of it linked with criminal activity involving imported narcotics (e.g., crack cocaine) and foreign drug gangs. Accordingly, the United States increased international drug enforcement efforts in Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

ETHNIC STRIFE

In the 1950s, most ethnic conflict centered on black-white tensions. By the 1980s there was a rise in conflicts involving immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and elsewhere.

One of the chief implications of global interdependence is that the sovereignty of individual countries is weaker than it used to be. **Sovereignty means the exclusive legal authority of a government over its population and territory, indepen-**

dent of external authorities. While virtually all governments still subscribe to the principle of sovereignty, which remains enshrined in international law, in actual practice most of them find it increasingly difficult to maintain full control over the various economic, environmental, and other influences that penetrate their borders. Countries today are considerably more porous than in the past. In addition to the examples we've just considered, the Internet alone makes it practically impossible for dictatorships to shield their citizens from the outside world. Many countries, moreover, have voluntarily surrendered large portions of their sovereignty in exchange for the rewards of closer international cooperation. The fifteen nations of the European Union (EU), for example, have ceded many of their sovereign rights to EU institutions in hopes of promoting prosperity. Most of them have even abandoned their national currency in favor of a multinational denomination, the euro. (For a fuller description of the European Union, see chapter 7.) Whether voluntarily or involuntarily, governments will probably continue to see sovereignty slip away as global interdependence intensifies.¹²

DEMOCRATIZATION

Another major example of the relationship between domestic politics and international politics in the contemporary world is the spread of democracy. A global process of **democratization—the transition from non-democratic to democratic forms of government**—is unfolding before our very eyes.

THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONS OF OUR TIMES

WESTERN EUROPE

The latest trend toward democracy began as the last remaining dictatorships of Western Europe fell apart in the 1970s.

- **Greece**, the “cradle of democracy,” where democratic ideas and practices first blossomed more than two thousand years ago, experienced a military coup in 1967. A group of senior officers seized control of the government and established dictatorial rule, abolishing democratic rights and freedoms. But in 1974 the Greek military gave up power and democratic procedures were restored.
- **Portugal**, which had been governed by dictators since the 1920s, held free, competitive elections in 1975. It has maintained democratic procedures ever since.
- **Spain** had been ruled by a dictatorship ever since the victory of Generalissimo Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War of 1936–39. Franco's death in 1975 led to the creation of a new democratic system of government that enjoyed the solid support of King Juan Carlos. A majority of Spanish voters expressed their approval of democratic reforms in a referendum held the following year. A freely elected assembly then drafted a democratic constitution, which won the electorate's approval in 1978.

LATIN AMERICA

In the late 1970s and 1980s democratic tendencies spread through Latin America, a continent where democracies have come and gone ever since Spain and Portugal gave up their colonies there in the nineteenth century.

- In **Peru**, the military clique (or *junta*) that ruled the country permitted elections to a constitutional assembly in 1978; elections to the presidency under the new democratic constitution followed in 1980. Authoritarian rule returned in 1992, however, as President Alberto Fujimori suspended the constitution and assumed virtually dictatorial powers. His reelection in 2000 was denounced as fraudulent by the Organization of American States, Latin America's leading international organization.
- **Ecuador's** military government stepped down and permitted free elections in 1979.
- Military rule gave way to the democratic process and civilian government in **Bolivia** in 1982, **Argentina** in 1983, **Uruguay** in 1984, and **Brazil** in 1985.
- **Chile**, whose forty-six-year-old democracy was extinguished in a bloody military coup in 1973, returned to the democratic fold as elections were held for a civilian government in 1989.
- Central American countries like **Honduras**, **Guatemala**, and **El Salvador** also underwent transitions from military juntas to democratically elected civilian governments in the first half of the 1980s. **Nicaragua**, which had come under the domination of a communist-oriented dictatorship in 1979, held elections in 1990 that swept pro-democracy forces into power.
- And **Mexico** took a giant step toward genuine multi-party democracy in 2000 as Vicente Fox won the presidency, ousting the party that had dominated the country's political life since 1929.

EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Communist governments that were installed by the Soviet Union in the aftermath of World War II fell like a row of dominos in the final frenetic months of 1989.

- **Poland's** communist authorities were pressured into holding competitive elections in September, the first free elections held in that country since the 1920s. The communist candidates were roundly defeated by their pro-democracy rivals, a result that accelerated the adoption of more formal democratic procedures and institutions in the 1990s.
- On November 9, the communist authorities who ruled **East Germany**, pressured by mounting public demonstrations against communist rule, opened the Berlin Wall—the infamous barrier that divided West Berliners, who lived under democracy, from East Berliners, who lived under communism. This unanticipated event astounded the world and had immediate repercussions throughout the region.
- Several weeks later in **Czechoslovakia**, people came out into the streets of Prague by the hundreds of thousands to demand an end to more than forty years of communist domination. Finding no visible support from Soviet leaders, who were no longer willing to save communism in Eastern Europe by armed force, the Czechoslovak communists simply gave up. In a nonviolent “velvet revolution,” they conferred power on Vaclav Havel, a playwright internationally respected for his decades of brave opposition to communist dictatorship. Over the following months and years, Havel presided over the installation of democratic institutions. In 1993, Czechoslovakia split up into two countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.
- As 1989 came to a breathtaking close, the repressive communist dictators of **Romania** and **Bulgaria** were also compelled to give up power. Finally, elections held in 1990 led to the ouster of communist rule in **Hungary** and the institution of a democratic government.

AFRICA

This vast continent, where democracy has traditionally enjoyed little success, witnessed numerous democratic developments in the 1980s and 1990s.

- Elections were held, in some cases for the first time, in such countries as **Angola**, **Ethiopia**, **Ghana**, **Kenya**, **Mozambique**, **Niger**, and **Nigeria**, among others.
- **South Africa**, governed for decades by a white minority that refused to grant political rights to blacks and other non-whites, experienced a particularly promising transformation. In April 1994, blacks were allowed to vote for the first time. Nelson Mandela, a black leader who had spent twenty-seven years in

prison for his opposition to white supremacy, was elected to the presidency of the country's first multiracial government.

ASIA

Several countries spread across Asia also experienced democratic changes.

- **Turkey**, an Islamic country with both European and Asiatic roots, returned to electoral democracy in 1983 after years of military rule.
- **India**, whose democratic institutions were abruptly suspended by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975, restored democracy two years later.
- Neighboring **Pakistan** also returned to democracy in 1988 following eleven years of military rule. The military reclaimed power in a coup in October 1999, however.
- Farther to the east, **South Korea**, governed for decades by a succession of strong military rulers, moved progressively closer to democracy in the late 1980s. In 1992 a proponent of democratic government, Kim Young Sam, was elected to the presidency, followed by a veteran pro-democracy activist, Kim Dae Jung, in 1997.
- Pressures to restore democratic freedoms to the **Philippines** succeeded in 1986 as Corazón Aquino, the wife of an assassinated political leader, replaced Ferdinand Marcos as president. Marcos had ruled the Philippines as a veritable dictator since declaring martial law in 1972.
- In **Indonesia**, President Suharto's resignation in the midst of his country's financial crisis in 1998 led to parliamentary elections the following year, the first since the 1950s. Opponents of the regime won the upper hand, resulting in the assembly's election later in the year of Abdurrahman Wahid, a pro-democracy Muslim cleric, as president. Another proponent of democracy, Megawati Sukarnoputri (the daughter of a former dictator, Gen. Sukarno), was elected vice president.
- And in the **Republic of China** (better known as **Taiwan**), democratic tendencies by the 1990s were exercising a growing impact on a government monopolized by one party for more than forty years. That party was finally defeated in elections held in 2000.

THE CARIBBEAN

Free elections held in **Haiti** in December 1991 resulted in the victory of Jean-Baptiste Aristide, a champion of the island's impoverished masses. After being ousted by a military coup the following year, Aristide was returned to power through U.S. political and military intervention in the fall of 1994.

Perhaps the most stunning example of this development was the collapse of the Soviet Union. In one of the most extraordinary political events that has ever occurred, the Soviet Union's communist government, which had been in power since 1917, simply gave up control over a country with more than 260 million inhabitants. The various subdivisions that constituted the USSR—Russia, Ukraine, and other areas—split up into fifteen separate countries. Many of them are now engaged in the arduous task of replacing decades of repressive communist dictatorship with democratic modes of government.

The USSR's collapse, and the current process of building democracies in its place, are truly revolutionary events. But they are not the only democratic transformations to have taken place in recent years, as we have just seen. In places as far apart as Latin America, Europe, Africa, and East Asia, quite a few countries have been switching their form of government from dictatorship of one kind or another to democracy. The dominance of powerful ruling cliques who permit little or no political freedom to the people has been giving way to such democratic practices as the free expression of political views, competitive elections to political offices, and other liberties and procedures typically associated with democracies. Between the early 1970s and the late 1990s, the number of democratic governments in the world increased from just over forty to 117.

Will the new democracies last? Or will they collapse in failure, as numerous democracies have failed in the past? What factors account for the success or failure of democracy? What can the experiences of some democratizing countries tell us about the possible fate of others? And what can established democracies like the United States do to help these fledgling democracies survive? One of the principal purposes of studying comparative politics is to address questions such as these.

These democratization tendencies provide another example of the connections linking comparative politics and international politics. Perhaps the most important of these connections centers on the relationship between democracy (a typical concern of comparative politics) and peace (a typical concern of international politics).

Are democracies inherently more peaceful than non-democracies?

DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

President Woodrow Wilson was a firm believer in the hypothesis that democracies are inherently more peaceful than non-democracies. "A steadfast concert of peace can never be maintained," he said, "except by a partnership of democratic nations." For that reason, Wilson justified American involvement in World War I on the grounds that American troops in Europe would be fighting to "make the world safe for democracy." If democracies could be set up throughout Europe after the war, replacing such non-democratic regimes as the kaiser's government in Germany and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Wilson believed that World War I would turn out to be the "war to end all wars."

Was Wilson right? If we look at the historical evidence, we find that democracies can sometimes be just as aggressive as non-democracies are. To begin with, democratically elected governments often defend themselves quite vigorously if they or their allies have been attacked. Britain and France, which had democratically elected governments in 1914, both responded rapidly to the aggressive actions of Germany and Austria-Hungary at the start of World War I. The United States entered World War II after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941. These and other historical examples provide ample evidence that democracies can—and do—undertake massive military commitments for *defensive* purposes.



Woodrow Wilson

Surely, a nation can defend itself against attack and still be fundamentally peace loving. The real test of whether democracies are peaceful by nature centers on the question of whether they refrain from launching unprovoked attacks on others. In fact, democratic governments have at times taken the initiative in starting military conflicts. When the French Revolution replaced the monarchy in the 1790s with a government that was more representative of popular sentiments, France attacked its neighbors on the European continent with the aim of bringing the blessings of “liberty, equality, fraternity” to the Germans, the Austrians, and other people who still lived under monarchies of one form or another. One of the guiding principles of the revolutionaries was the notion that, in a democracy, every male citizen has the duty to fight for his country. As a consequence, democratic ideals led to the introduction of mass conscription in France, a novelty in late eighteenth-century Europe.

British and French imperialism provide additional examples of unprovoked aggression by democracies. Both countries had democratically elected governments in the latter decades of the nineteenth century when they sent troops to Africa and other parts of the world to impose their imperial rule on the peoples they conquered. These and other historical examples suggest that democracies can sometimes be just as aggressive as non-democracies in *starting* military conflicts, even when they are not militarily threatened.

But the historical record also indicates that *democracies generally do not fight one another*. The world’s leading democracies, such as the United States, Britain, and France, have tended to be allies rather than enemies. Why haven’t these democracies gone to war against one another? One reason is that a fundamental principle of democracy asserts that conflicts should be settled peacefully, through negotiation and compromise, rather than by force. Another reason is that democratic governments require popular consent in order to govern. If a majority of the people are opposed to war, a democratically elected government may find it difficult to engage military forces abroad. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who opposed Germany’s aggression in Europe and Japan’s aggression in Asia, could not take military action against those countries as long as most Americans opposed it. Only when public sentiment turned around after Pearl Harbor was Roosevelt able to get Congress to declare war. In later years, the U.S. government sought negotiated settlements to end American military involvement in the Korean War (1950–53) and the Vietnam War (1961–73) once a majority of Americans turned against armed intervention.

Still, there are exceptions to the rule that democracies do not fight one another. The United States and Britain

clashed in the War of 1812, for example, and the American Civil War pitted the North against the South in a four-year conflict that left over six hundred thousand dead. Both the northern Republic and the southern Confederacy were governed by democratically elected officials (though the right to vote was restricted to white males).

We must therefore conclude that President Wilson’s hypothesis is only partially correct. Democracies are not always peaceful by nature; they have at times launched unprovoked attacks against non-democracies, and they have even gone to war against one another. War can be a popular choice; it can be supported by a majority of the people, at times with considerable patriotic passion. Nevertheless, the record also shows that democracies *usually* do not go to war against one another. Certainly in the twentieth century, democracies tended to stick together against authoritarian regimes like Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union while resolving their own disputes through peaceful negotiation. Hence we may accept as a *general tendency* Wilson’s idealistic proposition that “a partnership of democratic nations” will promote world peace.

As in virtually all human affairs, nothing can be guaranteed. Nevertheless, it appears that *democracy increases the probability of peace, at least among democratic nations*. Hence it may be no exaggeration to state that peace *among* the nations of the world may ultimately depend on the fate of democracy *within* the nations of the world.¹³

The apparent connection between democracy and peace is crucially important today because it bears directly on the issue of how much the United States and other established democracies should do to help democracy succeed in a country like Russia. When Russia was under communist rule during the days of the Soviet Union, Cold War tensions between the democracies and the communist world drove both sides to divert hundreds of billions of dollars to military expenditures. With thousands of deadly nuclear weapons targeted at each other and their allies, and with confrontations occurring at one time or another in virtually every corner of the globe, the USSR and the United States held out the grim threat of mutual—indeed global—extinction for more than four decades. Will Russia become a peaceful partner of the established democracies if it succeeds in stabilizing its own democracy over the long term?

THE PURPOSES OF COMPARISON

What exactly is “comparative” about comparative politics? What are we comparing, and for what aims?

As we indicated at the start of this chapter, *comparative politics examines the ways governments operate and the ways people behave in political life in a variety of countries*. In order to understand political life comprehensively, we must compare. If humanity’s political experience can be summed up in any single word, it is *diversity*. Whether we look back into history and survey the plethora of governments and political relationships that have existed over thousands of years, or confine our view just to the contemporary world, it is abundantly evident that there is—and always has been—an extraordinary variety of governments, political organizations, ideologies, behaviors, and attitudes.

Thus we cannot possibly understand democracy by simply concentrating on one example of a democratic government, such as the United States or Britain. Democracies organize their executive, legislative, and judicial institutions in different ways. Some have encouraged free enterprise while others have favored greater government interference in the economy. Some democracies have succeeded while others have failed. Democracy is not a single phenomenon; it has many manifestations. The same is true of non-democratic regimes. To deepen our appreciation of politics, therefore, we need to look at political life in a wide variety of cases.

Another reason for making systematic comparisons between different countries and political systems is that we can learn a great deal more about any one particular case (country X) by comparing it with other relevant cases (countries A, B, and C). If you are interested in South Africa, China, Russia, or any other country, you will acquire a deeper appreciation of its history and politics by holding it up against the experiences of other nations. This simple idea is central to the logic of comparative analysis. And it strikes very close to home: we can learn a lot more about politics in our *own* country by comparing it with other countries. Specialists in comparative politics are fond of quoting Rudyard Kipling in this regard. “And what should they know of England,” the poet inquired, “who only England know?” Presumably,

not much. At least, not as much as they would know if they ventured outside their homeland and savored life’s possibilities in other places.

To a considerable extent, studying comparative politics is like traveling abroad. It awakens us to the varieties of human experience and shows us that there are different ways of doing things than what we are used to in our own country. In the end we come home with a greater sensitivity to both the positive and negative features of our homeland as well as an enhanced appreciation of why other people do things differently.

Thus for people in the United States, a comparative analysis of Britain, Japan, Israel, or other established democracies can shed an illuminating light on how the American political system actually works. Both the similarities the United States shares with these countries and the peculiarities that set America apart from them will stand out in sharp relief. Here are some examples:

- The U.S. system of government is based on a *separation of powers* and *checks and balances*. But how does this system compare with the British system? Or the Brazilian, French, or South African? In fact, these and other democracies are organized quite differently. The U.S. system is unique in many of its most essential features. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the U.S. system as compared with other democratic systems of government? How do other democracies differ from the United States in their procedures for removing their top leaders should they become highly unpopular or are accused of wrongdoing while in office?
- One of the most frequent criticisms Americans level at their own system of government is that it is prone to *gridlock*: between Congress and the president, major decisions often do not get made effectively. Is gridlock a peculiarly American phenomenon, or do other governments have it, too? Can the United States reduce or eliminate gridlock by adopting constitutional procedures used in other democracies?
- Americans complain that their elected officials are not always very effective when it comes to keeping their campaign pledges once they are in office. How effective are governments around the world when it comes to pursuing their declared

goals or fulfilling their election campaign promises? To what extent are government leaders in various countries compelled by domestic or international pressures to take actions contrary to what they would prefer to do?

- Some of the most controversial political issues in the United States center on such topics as campaign financing, health care, and gun control. How do other democracies handle these problems? Can the United States learn anything from these countries, or vice versa?

The principal purposes of studying comparative politics may therefore be summarized as follows:

- *to widen our understanding of politics in other countries*
- *to increase our appreciation of the advantages and disadvantages of our own political system and to enable us to learn from other countries*
- *to develop a more sophisticated understanding of politics in general, including the nature of democracy and non-democratic governments, the relationships between governments and people, the interdependencies connecting individual countries with the rest of the world, and other concepts and processes*
- *to help us see the relationship between politics around the world and such fields as science and technology, the environment, public health, law, business, religion, ethnicity, culture, and the like*
- *to enable us to become more informed citizens, so that we can more effectively develop our own political opinions, participate in political life, evaluate the actions and proposals of political leaders, and make our own political decisions and electoral choices*
- *to sharpen our critical thinking skills by applying scientific logic and coherent argumentation to our understanding of political phenomena*

Of course, you may have your own special reasons for studying comparative politics. Whatever your main field of study may be and whatever your personal goals, we hope this introductory text is sufficiently comprehensive to appeal to your interests and stimulate your curiosity about the world in which we live. By studying comparative politics, you will not only gain greater insight into the dangers afflicting the modern world as

well as the extraordinary possibilities that lie before us; far more important, you will have a better understanding of how you fit into the global web of human interdependencies. By studying comparative politics, you will truly be studying *yourself* in relation to the rest of humankind.

KEY TERMS

(Underlined in the text)

Comparative politics
International politics
Interdependence
Globalization
International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Sovereignty

NOTES

1. The countries known to possess nuclear weapons are the United States (with 8,420 operational warheads—that is, bombs—and 3,650 in reserve or awaiting dismantlement in 1998); Russia (10,240 operational warheads and about 18,000 in reserve or awaiting dismantlement); Britain (200 operational warheads and 200 awaiting retirement or dismantlement); France (460 operational warheads and 50 awaiting dismantlement); China (425 operational warheads); Israel (70 to 125 nuclear weapons); India (60 to 80); and Pakistan (10 to 15). The four countries seeking to acquire nuclear weapons are North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Libya. See The Arms Control Association's website, <www.armscontrol.org>.
2. The figure on child laborers is in the World Bank's *World Development Report 1999/2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 62.
3. *Ibid.*, 24–27. See also <www.populationinstitute.org>. Another source of information on economic development issues is the United Nations Development Program, which publishes an annual *Human Development Report* and other studies. Its website is <www.undp.org>. On global population issues, contact the website of the United Nations Population Fund at <www.unpfa.org>.
4. The WTO's website is <www.wto.org>.
5. *Compendium of Tourism Statistics, 1993–1997* (Madrid: World Tourism Organization, 1999).
6. The United Nations designated October 12, 1999, as the official birthday of the planet's 6 billionth person.

7. Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).
8. The IMF consists of 182 member countries; all contribute to its funds. The United States contributes \$35 billion to the IMF's assets, 18 percent of the total. The United States is therefore entitled to 18 percent of the vote in IMF deliberations. The Fund's major decisions are taken by its executive committee, usually by consensus. For further information, contact <www.imf.org>.
9. Norman Myers and Nancy J. Myers, *The Primary Source: Tropical Forests and Our Future* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992). Also, consult <www.rainforest.org>.
10. See the report by the United Nations Environment Program, *Global Environment Outlook 2000*, available online at <www.unep.org/geo2000>.
11. See the 1999 Global Appeal issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <www.unhcr.ch>.
12. Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
13. For arguments supporting the proposition that democracies are peaceful, see Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, published in 1795; Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (December 1986): 1151-69. For counterarguments, see Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (fall 1994): 5-49; and David E. Spiro, "The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace," *ibid.*, 50-86.