INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS:
NATIONALISM, RELIGION, AND STATE POWER

Whereas the field of international relations focuses upon the actions of sovereign states toward one another, the comparative study of politics looks mainly at what goes on within countries. Because many contemporary issues in the former arena originate in the latter, even for students of international relations it makes sense to turn to comparative and area studies to understand these issues more fully.

This course introduces comparative politics by considering key topics from important works in the field. After a brief descriptive introduction focusing on life in urban shantytowns, the first part considers influential answers to the question, “why are some areas of the world so much richer and more powerful than others?” We read scholarship that explores the roles of geography, trade, revolution, religion, war, and the state. In the second part, we examine contemporary world politics through the lens of modern liberal democracy—its institutional variety, its socioeconomic and cultural foundations (including national identity), and its discontents. On the last, we look more closely at the roots of religiously inspired violence.

This syllabus includes introductions to each reading and study questions. The latter will serve as starting points for discussion and Socratic interrogation in class. Several (printed in bold) also function as prompts for short papers.

Requirements. There are seven dates, where the syllabus has one of the study questions in bold, on which you must (on the first three) or may (on the remaining four) turn in a two-page (500-word) essay based on that question. These are due at or before the start of class. Only the best five will count. The grade will suffer a serious penalty if the paper is turned in late. For the final exercise you choose a country and write a 5-page briefing paper about it, due the Monday of Reading Period. There will also be a short final exam. Weights in the grade are: the five short essays, total 50 percent; the 5-page briefing paper, 20 percent; the final exam, 20 percent; attendance and participation, 10 percent.

Writing the papers. For the short essays, the bolded questions generally ask you to compare two or three authors’ arguments or to discuss the practical implications of an argument. You could also make critical commentary (about assumptions, logic, or implications), based on a good understanding of all the reading assigned. Good two-page essays briefly and clearly summarize the relevant arguments first, and then compare, critique, or apply them.

The briefing paper involves describing key facts about the politics, economics, and history of a country, while relating these to concepts discussed in the course, with the goal of assessing the likelihood of political violence, civil war, or serious instability. The only restrictions are that you cannot choose your own country or one you’ve written about for another course (this semester Syria is also ruled out because an article on this country, which we read for the last class, will serve as the exemplar for your papers).

Honor code guidelines are in the Student Handbook. For all papers: give credit for ideas you get from others; put marks around direct quotations; and for course readings, internal abbreviated citations like this (Porter, 95) are fine.
Final exam. The final exam will feature short answer/identification of key ideas and concepts, coming from a list handed out on the last day of class. It will take 75 minutes.

Readings. The following books are required and for sale at Water Street Books:
Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 2nd ed. (Norton 2005);
Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 3rd ed. (U. California, 2003);
Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton 1993);
Robert Neuwirth, *Shadow Cities* (Routledge 2005); and

There is also a packet of photocopied materials. Because we use only books for the first few weeks, it will be printed in the second full week, after the class enrollment is settled.

**SCHEDULE**

* = in packet

2/5 (Wed.) Introduction

2/10-2/13 Politics and the World’s Urban Poor
Robert Neuwirth, *Shadow Cities*.
2/10: Preface, Prologue, and Chaps. 1-3 (pp. xi-142).
2/13: first part of Chap. 5 (pp. 177-88); Chap. 7-9 (pp. 241-306).

According to good estimates, sometime in 2007 the world became over half urban. It is therefore appropriate that we begin with an on-the-ground examination of the day-to-day struggles and political challenges of the world’s new urban poor. Neuwirth’s widely praised book compares life in the shantytowns of four growing cities—Rio de Janeiro, Nairobi, Mumbai, and Istanbul. We’ll read about the first three and then a little about shantytowns in European history, before moving on to his discussion of third-world urban political problems and the issue of property.

2/10:
1. Would you feel safe living in a shantytown? If not, what would you do in order to feel safer?
2. Why do the poor pay ten times what the rich do for many basic items in Nairobi?
3. What are some of the main differences among the three cities?
4. Do we get any sense of the role of religion in their lives?

2/13:
1. Are the urban poor rugged individualists?
2. Do they suffer from too much government in their lives, or too little?
3. Why would they not want or need titles to their property?
4. Do you agree with Neuwirth’s argument about property rights and possession?
I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND STATE POWER

Nearly all the readings in this section address the great historical puzzle often referred to as “the Rise of the West.” Why did that small region, clearly behind some other parts of Eurasia in power and wealth as of 1400 A.D., thereafter rise to dominate much of the world? This has long been a central question of comparative historical scholarship and social theory.

2/17-2/20 Geography and Destiny
Jared Diamond, Guns, Germs, and Steel.

2/17: Prologue, Part One, and all of Part Two except Chap. 7 (pp. 13-113, 131-91).
2/20: Part Three, starting with the end of Chap. 11, then Chaps. 13 and 14 (pp. 212-14 and 239-92); Part Four, Chap. 16, first part of Chap. 18, last part of Chap. 19 (pp. 322-33, 354-60, and 393-401); Epilogue, first and last parts (pp. 405-19, 424-25); and two excerpts from the 2003 Afterword (pp. 454-56 and 462-64).

Diamond’s widely read, Pulitzer-Prize-winning book offers an answer to racist and national-character-based explanations of the disparities in power and wealth across the globe today. He is not the first person to use a kind of geographical determinism (Ibn Khaldun and Montesquieu did, centuries ago) to explain differences in power and well-being. But his account is unusually detailed, comprehensive, and evidence-based, containing more logical steps than others (the contingent role of large animals in both productivity and disease, for instance). For us, his Chapter 14 and his Epilogue will be very important.

2/17:
1. Is it really plausible that differences in the availability of grains (grasses with heavy seeds) and large domesticable mammals can, in Diamond’s phrase, “[go] a long way toward explaining the course of human history” (139)?
2. Wouldn’t we have expected the most advanced early civilizations to have arisen somewhere in Eurasia just by chance—since it is so much larger than other land masses in the world?
3. What significance does Diamond attribute to the orientation of continents—that is, whether they are longer east-west or north-south?

2/20:
1. What connections does Diamond draw between societies’ political arrangements, their complexity, and their power? Do you agree?
2. Does culture have an independent role in this argument, or is it assumed to depend on material factors like wealth, climate, and the natural environment?
3. In the Epilogue (and in the 2003 Afterword, 454-56), Diamond reflects on why Europe leapfrogged China in technology and political power. Are his suggestions consistent with his earlier discussion of China and his description, in Chapter 14, of the selection for larger political units? (Required paper.)
2/24  Commerce and Progress: The Liberal Vision

Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* [1776], Book I, Chaps. 1-3; Book III, Chap. 4, paragraphs 1-7 and 10-19.*

Smith became the most influential prophet of economic liberalism (the idea that it is good and wise to leave people free in their economic decisions) in large part because he argued persuasively that it was also the surest route to national wealth, and thus, to power. He believed that wealth largely depended on economic productivity. This is why he put his remarkable description of a pin factory in the first few pages of a 1000-page book. Chapters 2 and 3 then relate the division of labor to human nature and to geography, broadly conceived.

As we see in Book III, he also saw a causal connection between the expansion of the market economy and the rise of peaceful, law-bound, “civil government.” (The tale of the profligate nobles makes an argument similar to one Montesquieu made in *The Spirit of the Laws*.)

Notes: “corn” follows British usage to mean “grain;” “police” corresponds roughly to our “policy”; “stock” is just invested capital; the "policy of Europe" refers to the mercantile system (which involved national economic strategy and had an important role for guild regulations) and "corporations" to guilds.

1.  To what does Smith attribute the relative poverty of, say, Africa? How does this compare with Diamond’s argument?
2.  In the readings from Book I and in the argument in Book III about the rise of “civil government,” what human motivations does Smith find at work?
3.  What do his ideas about the extent of market relations (both in Book I and Book III) imply for policy—not just domestic policy but also foreign policy with respect to trade?

2/27  Marx and Engels: Historical Dialectics and Material Interests

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto" [1848], part I.*
Marx, "The British Rule in India" [1853].*
Marx, excerpts from *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* [1852].*

BEGIN READING FOR NEXT WEEK

There are not many pages here, but they bear careful reading. All texts are from the early careers of Marx and Engels. The first part of the “Manifesto” reads like an early description of globalization—which it was, before the word was invented. *The Eighteenth Brumaire* was a quickly penned commentary on events surrounding the coup d’etat of Louis Bonaparte that overthrew the short-lived Second Republic in France. We’ll be looking mainly at two things in these readings. First, what does their historical theory, “dialectical materialism,” tell us about how to describe, explain, and predict political change? And second, can we derive general propositions from the descriptions of classes and their political behavior?

The “Manifesto” is the best expression of the Marxist argument that capitalism inevitably undermines its own foundations. Most of the key terms of Marxist analysis are here, including the “bourgeoisie” (referring to the capital-owning class, ancestrally linked to the market-towns, with liberties granted by the crown and growing up in the interstices of feudal society, a member of which is called a “bourgeois”) and the “proletariat” (the class of propertyless, named after the landless of ancient Rome, who have to work for wages in order to live, a member of which is called a “proletarian”). Note also that for Marx, “natural” does not mean “good.”

A few historical notes on the *Eighteenth Brumaire*. The Legitimist (Bourbon) Monarchy and
the July (Orleans) Monarchy were the regimes that followed Napoleon I and the uprising of 1830, respectively; the latter fell in 1848 and the Second Republic followed. Louis was the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, and like his famous relative, he also overthrew an elected government. The title refers to his uncle’s deed, which began on the 18th of Brumaire (one of those poetic names for the months under the French Revolutionary calendar), in the year VIII. (The date is also known as November 9, 1799.) Louis’ coup came on December 2, 1851. His uncle had restored the traditional calendar in the meantime.

1. For Marx and Engels, is the bourgeoisie a progressive force? If so, how?
2. Considering the “Manifesto” along with the excerpts from the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, what’s the difference between the proletariat and the *lumpenproletariat* (in the Manifesto called the “dangerous class,” in *Brumaire* the “rabble” following Louis Napoleon)?
3. Into what class would Marx and Engels place the residents of shantytowns? So what does a Marxist analysis suggest about their politics?

3/3 Two Economists Look at Politics, Culture, and Development

Fisman and Miguel focus on how economic matters influence or get influenced by politics, culture, geography, and the weather. For our purposes, one key virtue of these chapters lies in their focus on how corruption and violence hinder economic development, which brings us back into the realm of states and politics. But perhaps most surprising ought to be their acknowledgement (a big deal for two economists!) that economic rationality and a gangster mindset are not very far apart. In fact, one implication of their observations is that economic development might depend on certain forms of economically *irrational* behavior—a proposition that ties in nicely with the Weber book we read next.

1. Fisman and Miguel observe that, in general, diplomats from richer countries were less likely to have lots of parking tickets in Manhattan. Do you agree with their explanation?
2. Is it useless to try to change culture? What makes culture hard to change?
3. Why is drought so powerful as an agent of political breakdown in Africa?

3/6 Religion as Midwife of Modernity: Max Weber
William Perkins, “A Survey, or Table declaring the order of the causes of Salvation and Damnation, according to God’s word,” reproduced with modernized spelling by June Reed, to accompany a similar update of Perkins, *A Golden Chaine* [1590], in Ian Brewer, ed., *The Works of William Perkins* (Sutton Courtenay, 1970).*

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. xxxi- xxxii, 53-77, and 99-125 in the Routledge edition. In other editions: paragraph 7 (only) of the Author’s Introduction (“And the same is true...”); all of Chapter 2; in Chapter 4, the beginning and the section on Calvinism up to “So far we have considered,” about two pages from the section end, plus the chapter’s conclusion (starting at “The mercantilistic regulations of the state,” about two pages before the end of the chapter); and all of Chap. 5.

Weber’s long essay is famous, difficult, and often misunderstood. As you will see, his main argument was not that radical Protestants got rich, but that the appearance of radical
Protestantism as a major religious force could be linked with the later appearance of a particular kind of modern, "rational" (here note Weber's use of the term) capitalism. To help us understand the force of radical Protestantism, we begin with a remarkable graphical depiction of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination from one of its ablest preachers in England, William Perkins. (Note that the paths of the saved and the damned never intersect.) In Weber, we avoid passages where he claimed that modern rationalism is unique to the West, homing in on his argument that its rise was related to the doctrines of prior religious movements.

To get Weber, you have to take seriously this remarkable and, to many, counterintuitive statement from the first assigned paragraph: “The impulse to acquisition, pursuit of gain, of money, of the greatest possible amount of money, has in itself nothing to do with capitalism.” Weber offers an illustration of what he sees as the real spirit or ethos of capitalism, in Chapter 2 (after the fourth paragraph, where you see a line space), in a very long series of quotes from Benjamin Franklin. The book then takes us on a search for the roots of this ethos, with a long analysis of Calvinist doctrine. Note: when arguing against alternative explanations for the rise of modern capitalism, he uses the term “theorists of the superstructure” to refer to Marxists.

1. What does Weber say to those who assert that capitalism is destined to triumph because greed is a universal human trait?
2. What is it about the doctrine of predestination that helps create a “spirit of capitalism”?
3. If rational capitalism puts us in an “iron cage,” what is the iron? Is Weber suggesting we cannot resist the dominant culture?
4. In these pages, what is (implicitly or explicitly) the explanation for differences in power and wealth among countries? How does this argument compare to those of Marx and Smith? (Required paper.)
coordination”) could be analyzed into these three principles.

Today’s readings begin with examples from recent years—in Tunisia, Iran, and the USA. They are meant to illustrate the concepts of authority and legitimacy in the first selections from Weber. The fourth reading is a short excerpt from Neil Sheehan’s book on Vietnam. It describes the results of bureaucratic discipline, and the lack of it, in the midst of war.

In Weber, after the initial selections on the three ideal types of legitimate authority, we get his discussion of discipline. Though it comes from another part of Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, it should be considered an elaboration on his idea of legal-rational authority. Weber saw this form of authority as the basis for the modern bureaucratic state as well as the modern capitalist enterprise. The final reading is Weber’s lighter, more sociological and observational take on the function of Protestant church (sect) membership in the United States. It can be considered a companion to The Protestant Ethic, but as you will see the argument is different: it’s about the spread of religious membership and the propagation of norms in an already-capitalist economy, and unlike the longer essay it relies very little on doctrinal details.

1. Considering the first three readings, how would you fit the bases of political authority each describes into Weber’s analysis of legitimacy?
2. Thinking of the discussion of bureaucracy and discipline alongside the reading on Vietnam, what conditions might lead to more bureaucracy and more discipline—or less?
3. When people criticize bureaucracy, do they mean the same thing as Weber does?
4. Could Weber’s observations about Protestant sect membership apply to secular clubs and organizations? Can you think of examples?

3/13- 3/21  War and the State

   Bruce D. Porter, War and the Rise of the State.
   3/13:  Chaps. 1 and 4 (pp. 1-22, 105-147).
   3/17:  Chap. 5 and epilogue (pp. 149-193, 297-304).
   3/21:  War and the State in the USA:  Chap. 7 (243-96).

   Porter’s book pulls together a long tradition of scholarship that sees war (and not commerce, class struggle, or religion) as the main motive force behind political and economic development. You will note some affinity with the last reading from Weber. We will discuss not only the kind of historical evidence such an assertion requires, but also its ethical implications, which clearly trouble Porter himself. For Americans, Chapter 7 is particularly important, as many of us only appreciate the force of Porter’s argument when he applies it to our own country. There is a refreshing neither-left-nor-right tone to the chapter as he details the contribution of wars to the expansion of the American state.

3/13:
1. Porter begins from the familiar international-relations Realist premise of interstate anarchy, but seems to argue that external anarchy favors the emergence of less anarchic, more ordered conditions within states. Does this apply to states in the “third world” today? How does this idea compare to Diamond’s argument?
2. For Porter, what made dynastic states become nation-states?
3/17:
1. What, for Porter, is the connection between total war, on the one hand, and on the other, democracy and social welfare policy? What do you think?
2. How would Porter respond to those who believe that culture is the most important determinant of differences in political organization and outcomes?

3/21:
1. Why does Porter think American nationalism has even stronger military roots than that in other countries? Do you agree?
2. Considering this chapter and the epilogue, do you think Porter offers us any useful insights about US politics? If not, why does his argument fall short? (Required paper.)

-----22 March – 6 April: SPRING BREAK-------------------------------------------------------------

II. CHALLENGES TO THE DEMOCRATIC NATION-STATE

4/7 Varieties of Democratic Institutions and Why They Matter


Sven Steinmo, “American Exceptionalism Reconsidered: Culture or Institutions?” in Dodd and Jilson, eds., The Dynamics of American Politics (Westview, 1996).*

Patrick O’Neil, “Democratic Regimes,” Chap. 5 from Essentials of Comparative Politics (Norton, 2010).* Read introductory sections, then skip to “Institutions of the Democratic State.”

With the birth of political science as a professional discipline, around 1900, comparative politics deserved its name, engaging in the systematic comparison of constitutions, electoral laws, party systems, and public administrations. In the U.S., with figures such as Woodrow Wilson, the enterprise acquired a melioristic cast: comparative study, it was thought, would reveal how institutional and administrative reform could best promote wealth, liberty, and happiness. The World Wars shattered this optimism in Europe and damaged it in the U.S.

In recent years there has been a rebirth of this approach, now called the “new institutionalism” and practiced by political scientists and economists. It has a more sober outlook. It recognizes that as more countries establish elected governments, our task will be to diagnose their problems, knowing from past experience that some will be more stable than others, some will answer public needs better than others, and some will be more vulnerable to revolutionary overthrow than others. It often begins from the (“rational-choice” or “public-choice”) postulate that humans are narrowly selfish and conniving. But even when it does not, its fundamental premise remains that the design of institutions is one of the few moments in which people can apply informed practical reason to politics.

We’re not going to wade very far into this literature, but these readings ought to persuade you of its importance to understanding politics in the US. For context, we begin with James Fallows’ recent piece on the problems of the US and how our political institutions make it harder for us to solve them, followed by a blog post in which he extends and illustrates his argument. The Steinmo article is a nice summary of the view that institutions, and not a culture of individualism, explain several things that are distinctive about the USA in comparison to other rich countries, such as the historical lack of success of socialist parties and (related to this) the
small size of the welfare state. O’Neill gives us a summary of the great institutional variety of
democracy today—a picture in which the US is indeed an outlier.

1. Does Steinmo think Americans are not individualists, or that they are but it doesn’t matter?
Do you agree with his position?
2. What might Porter say to Steinmo?
3. What difference might it make if we had a parliamentary system with proportional
representation (rather than first-past-the-post elections to single-member districts)?

4/10 What Causes Democracy?
Skim O’Neil, “Democratic Regimes,” sections on origins of democracy.*
Larry Diamond, Squandered Victory (2005), Chap. 1 and two excerpts from Chap. 10 (pp.
11-24, 279-87 and 297-302).*
  Fareed Zakaria, The Future of Freedom (2003), first part of Chap. 2. *
Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, “How Development Leads to Democracy,”
Foreign Affairs 88:2 (March-April 2009).*
  Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, Why Nations Fail (2012), middle of final chapter
(pp. 437-46).*

Some countries are democratic and some are not; among those that are, some are more
democratic than others and some have been democratic longer. Why? Is it just culture
democratic countries are peopled by democrats)? Wealth? Ethnolinguistic unity? The O’Neil is
a brief overview, and the Diamond excerpt starts us off with a practical example: the author
was told to figure out how to make Iraq into a stable democracy. Zakaria offers a quick
historical tour as he usefully expands our scope to the “liberal” part of liberal democracy.
Following on Zakaria’s main thrust—that ample income (of a particular origin) is the key,
Inglehart and Welzel elaborate on “modernization theory,” which connects democracy
ultimately to economic growth. Acemoglu and Robinson don’t buy it.

1. Was Diamond’s mission doomed to failure? What does he think? Do you agree?
2. How important is it that a democracy be liberal? Does it somehow make it more likely to
persist as a democracy? Or is it important for other reasons?
3. On income and democracy, how do Diamond, Zakaria, and Inglehart and Welzel all
disagree with Acemoglu and Robinson? Which position do you find more persuasive and
(very briefly) why?

4/14 Transitions from Authoritarian Regimes: The Dominican Republic and Beyond
Jonathan Hartlyn, The Struggle for Democratic Politics in the Dominican Republic (UNC
Press, 1998), end of Chap. 8 and first half of Chap. 9 (pp. 252-73).*
  Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy
(Cambridge, 2006), middle sections of Chap. 2 (pp. 24-43; after p. 31 you may skim sections on
democratic consolidation, they are a bit repetitive).*
  BEGIN READING FOR NEXT TIME: Robert Putnam, Making Democracy Work, Chap. 1,
plus the beginning and end of Chap. 2 (pp. 3-18, 60-62).
Although the Dominican Republic does not have a perfect democracy, since 1996 its electoral processes and most aspects of governance have been a lot fairer and more institutionalized than they were during prior dictatorial (1930-61) and semi-dictatorial (1963-78 and 1986-96) governments. Here we begin with fine-grained journalistic detail and move by steps to abstract theory about transitions in general. Although the selections read very differently, they do not contradict each other on important points of fact or interpretation. The first two relate explicitly to the Dominican Republic in the 1994-96 period. Reid gives us an account of the 1994 elections, including clear signs of fraud, and various reflections on political culture and the burden of history in the country. Hartlyn picks up where Reid’s account leaves off, taking us through the negotiations of 1994 and the election of 1996. He also provides an explanatory model with three sets of factors (Table 9.2, p. 269), one that should apply to other countries, although he only implies this. Finally, we sample the widely cited 2006 book (perhaps more cited than fully read) by Acemoglu and Robinson, which develops a parsimonious economic model of how democracy appears and then persists. There is no mention of the Dominican Republic. The model is taken to apply universally. The authors’ references to historical cases are ostensibly for illustration only, and in fact, you can probably see how the model could apply to the events in the DR we read about.

1. Which factors are mentioned in all three writings?
2. Whose model do you find more accurate, Hartlyn’s or Acemoglu and Robinson’s?
3. Which of the three accounts do you find most informative? What gets lost in the drive for parsimony in explanation?

4/17 - 4/21  Culture, Democracy, and Economic Development
Robert Putnam, Making Democracy Work.
4/17: Chaps. 3-4 (pp. 63-120).
4/21: Chaps. 5-6 (pp. 121-185). Skim appendices.

This book has been called "a Democracy in America for our times." We study it both for its message and for its method. The latter begins from the premise that the Italian regional government reforms of 1970 presented an opportunity for a natural “experiment.” Twenty very dissimilar regions were given similar governmental structures and enough autonomy to put them to work; the results, it was hoped, would show the degree to which deliberate institutional change could make a real difference in politics and economics. As you will see, Putnam and his collaborators took on more than this, exploring the historical and cultural bases for responsible politics and economic prosperity.

4/17:
1. What does Putnam mean by institutional performance? Do you think his series of indicators adequately captures the sense of the concept, as he defines it and as you would define it?
2. What is "civicness"? What importance does Putnam attribute to it?
3. Putnam says that although “community and liberty are often said to be inimical”,... “the Italian case suggests, however, that because citizens in civic regions enjoy the benefits of community, they are able to be more liberal” (112). What do you think?
4/21:
1. One might argue from sociobiology, as did Francis Fukuyama in *The Great Disruption* (2000), that effective norms of “civicness” (or “social capital”) ought to arise spontaneously to fill a void. What might Putnam say to this argument?
2. What does Putnam’s argument imply about the spread of capitalism and democratic government around the world? Do you agree?

**Date TBD**  Thinking about Nationalism and Religion: Mumbai

Suketu Mehta, *Maximum City* (2004), “Powerton” (pp. 39-112) and last pages of “Sone ki Chidiya” (494-96).*

Mehta’s book was a Pulitzer Prize finalist and, in the words of Danny Boyle, his “bible” for the making of the 2008 hit movie *Slumdog Millionaire.* (Boyle has the movie rights to the book.) We read most of his section entitled “Power,” much of which focuses on the underworld. Among other things, it gives a vivid portrait of Maharashtrian nationalism in the Shiv Sena as well as the connections between organized crime and terrorism that have been forged in the wake of the 1992-93 riots. Those riots followed the destruction of the mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, by extreme advocates of political Hinduism.

1. Earlier we discussed theories of democracy that begin from the premise that people are rational. Are the people we meet in these pages—the women of Jogeshwari who don’t want to leave the slum, the followers of Bal Thackeray, the assassins—rational? Should we ask this question about ourselves?
2. According to Mehta, who benefits from communal strife?
3. Do these pages give us any insight into why people—and not just people who turn violent—often embrace new identities such as nationalism or radicalized forms of religion after they move to a big, growing city?
4. Would you place the people we see here engaging in violent politics on the left or right part of the political spectrum?

4/28  Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism

Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging* (Noonday/ FSG, 1993), Introduction (to p. 14).*


“Is Ethnic Conflict Inevitable? Parting Ways over Nationalism and Separatism,” responses to Muller from various authors, and his reply, *Foreign Affairs,* July/ August 2008.*

We commonly talk about “nations” conducting their political business through states. So if they somehow exist before the state, where do nations come from? What, if not the state, determines who is in and who is out? Our first reading is a vivid and accessible excerpt from Ignatieff’s book (which became a PBS series), in which the author makes a useful theoretical distinction between “civic” and “ethnic” nationalism—with Americans partaking of the former. (The author was leader of the Liberal party in Canada when it suffered its historical defeat in 2011. He lost even in his own district, in suburban Toronto.)

Like Ignatieff, Muller also asserts the continuing power of ethnic nationalism. He argues that people in most of the rich countries of the world can afford to ignore it willfully because in these countries’ forgotten (or psychologically repressed) pasts they “solved” the nationalities...
problem, generally by means their citizens would deplore if people in other places used them today. His critics believe he overestimates the inevitability of ethnic conflict in the contemporary world, although they arrive at this position by various routes.

1. What is the difference between ethnic nationalism and racism?
2. Who do you find more persuasive, Muller or his critics? Why?
3. Assuming that everybody has an ethnicity, why do these become so politically salient in some times and places but not in others?

5/1 National Identity, Language, and Liberal Democracy


In the wave of scholarship on nationalism and national identity that began around 1990, Anderson’s book, which blazed the trail in many ways, became a widely cited classic. The idea of the “imagined community,” if not some of his theses about the historical emergence of nationalism, is now broadly accepted and used. It is a difficult text, however. Keep in mind when reading it that the author (although he teaches at Cornell) comes from a tradition of British Marxist scholarship; he is also a specialist on Indonesia. Just as Muller begins his description of ethnic nationalism with a nod toward Americans who tend to avoid or ignore it, Anderson’s point of departure is the befuddlement felt by many Marxists at the evident nationalism at work in the wars of the 1970s in Southeast Asia between ostensibly Communist regimes. Hence its early concentration on what Marxism missed about nationalism.

The last reading is by the famous American political scientist Francis Fukuyama, from a 2005 lecture on democracy in Toronto in honor of Seymour Martin Lipset (hence the opening paragraphs). It is a review of literature and a meditation on important issues of belonging facing Europe—and lots of other countries—today. The key concern here—similar to the one voiced by Ignatieff and Mehta—is whether and how liberal democracy can thrive in a society with plural cultural identities. The *Spiegel* article adds to this concern.

1. For Anderson, why do people embrace the "imagined community"? What are some of the material and social factors that make the emergence of national identities more likely?
2. What is the alleged connection between nationalism and language? What do you think? Does this argument support “English only” in the USA?
3. Is Fukuyama basically saying that Mumbai shows Europe (and the US) its future? Would Muller disagree? Would their prescriptions differ?
5/5- 5/8  Religion and Violence  
5/5:  Chaps. 1, 7, 8, and 9.  **PICK BRIEFING COUNTRY BY NOW**  
5/8:  Chaps. 10-11 and  
    Robert Pape, “Methods and Findings in the Study of Suicide Terrorism,”  
    *American Political Science Review* 102: 2 (May 2008).*  
    See also:  

Juergensmeyer’s diagnosis of religious violence and fundamentalism, though written before 9/11 (and revised after), became a touchstone for many comparative studies in the field. He finds a deep similarity--anti-modernity--among the violent religious groups he studies. In this sense, the book brings us back to our readings on the “Rise of the West,” and especially to Weber. We then read snippets of Robert Pape’s argument (elaborated at length in his 2005 book *Dying to Win*) about the importance of military occupation as a cause of suicide terrorism. Finally, we challenge these views with the remarkable story of Omar Hammami, an American convert to radical Islamic terrorism, as told by Andrea Elliott. Hammami released a memoir in May 2013 and was killed by al-Shabaab, the Somali guerrilla he had joined, that September.

5/5:  
1. How does religious radicalism differ from nationalist radicalism?  
2. Why is religious violence so symbolic in its intent?  
3. How do the effects of “cosmic war” ideology compare to Porter on territorial wars?  
4. How do these religious movements relate to modernity?  Is it likely that they would serve, like Weber’s radical Protestantism, as its midwives?

5/8:  
1. Why is it mainly young men who are involved in religious violence? (Is it simply because young men are the main agents of nearly all kinds of interpersonal violence?)  
2. Do you agree with Juergensmeyer’s prescription in the last chapter?  
3. How well does the story of Omar Hammami fit the pattern described by Juergensmeyer—or Pape?  What else would you suggest we think about in order to make sense of Hammami?

5/12  New Social Media, Movements, and Governance  
    Carles Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 36-41.*  
    Excerpt on “Audience Democracy” from Daniele Carmani, *Comparative Politics* (Oxford 2008).*  
    Clay Shirky, “The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change,” *Foreign Affairs*, 90:1 (Jan-Feb 2011).*  
    Review readings on democracy from April
Here we consider the effects of new global economic and communications linkages on the spread and nature of democracy. In different ways, the Boix and Carmani readings present us with the worrisome prospect that democracy is becoming more common in large part because it is becoming less consequential, with many aspects of the contemporary global capitalist order beyond the reach of even the strongest governments. Boix’s argument ought to remind you of Acemoglu and Robinson (2006). The next two readings debate the political importance of electronic media and social networks--Gladwell with his famous cranky dismissal of these, and Shirky responding. Chenoweth then picks up the thread on strategy and coordination in protest movements.

1. What is Boix’s argument?
2. So with whom do you side in the debate over the political importance of social media?
3. What do Chenoweth’s observations suggest about the importance of electronic social media in protest movements?
4. Is democracy the answer to civil unrest?

5/15 Conclusion: Comparative Perspectives on Democracy and Political Order
“The Shoe-Thrower’s Index,” The Economist 2/9/11.*
Discussion of the final exam—list of topics to be passed out
Course evaluations

These readings serve as background for your briefing papers. The first three of these refer to or argue for the usefulness of brute-facts analysis when comparing countries and assessing their relative likelihood of radical regime change. The last, on the civil war in Syria, pulls together this sort of information while touching on many of the themes of the course—war, nationalism, religion, identity, and the state. It can serve as an exemplar for your briefing papers—though it is obviously longer and more detailed than yours will have to be, and with more historical background than you will be able to provide.

5-page briefing paper due Monday May 19, at noon