

**COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

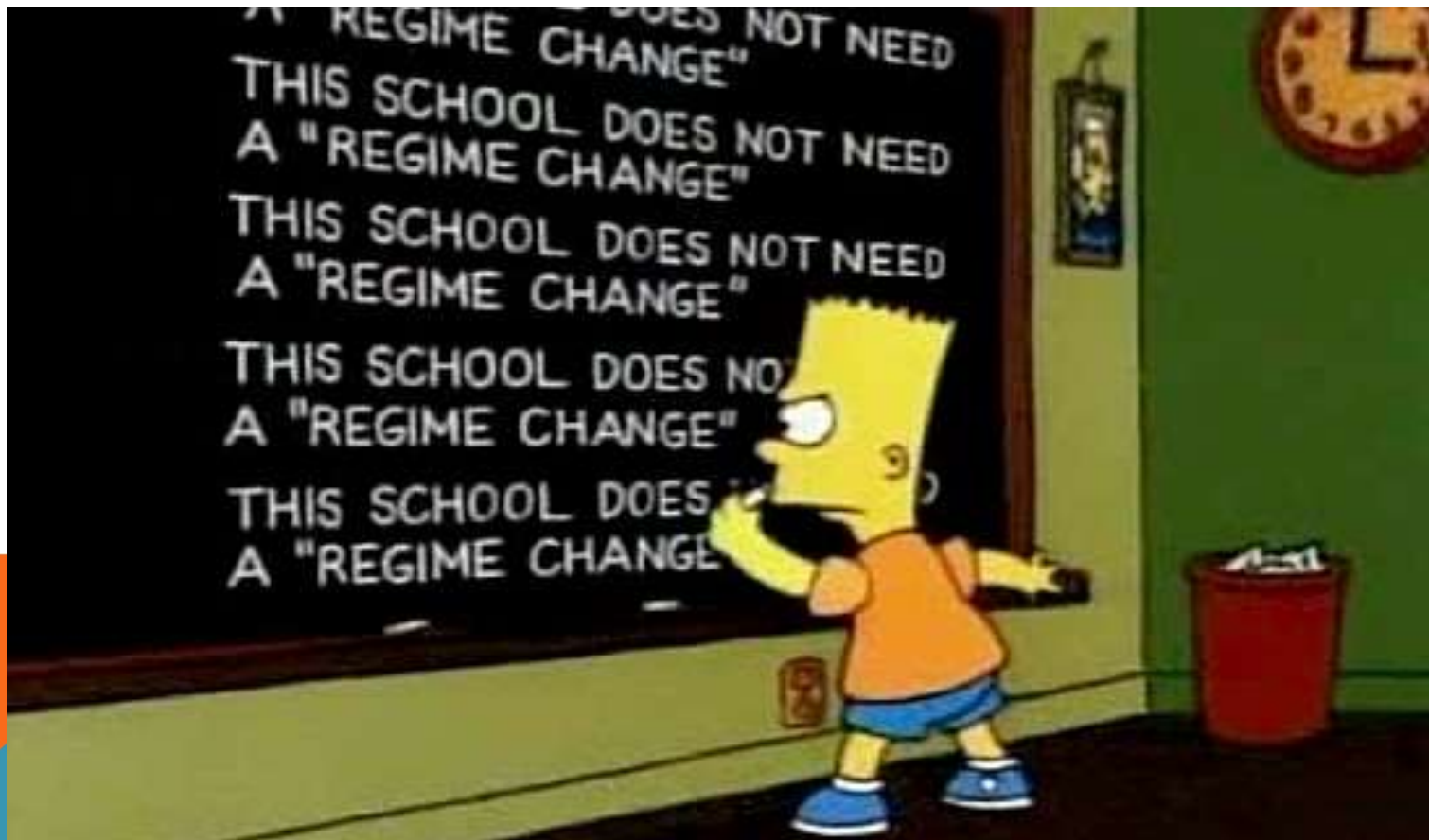
# Regime Change

The logo for the Department of Political Science features a blue horizontal bar with an orange triangle on the left side. The text "DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters on the blue background.

DEPARTMENT OF  
**POLITICAL SCIENCE**

## INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS AND KEY QUESTIONS

**Orvis** and **Drogus** describe *regime change* as the high drama of comparative politics.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Many of our most iconic political images are of regime change, from the “shot heard ‘round the world” signaling the start of the American Revolution in 1776....

Campaign

OSPREY  
PUBLISHING

## Boston 1775

The shot heard around the world



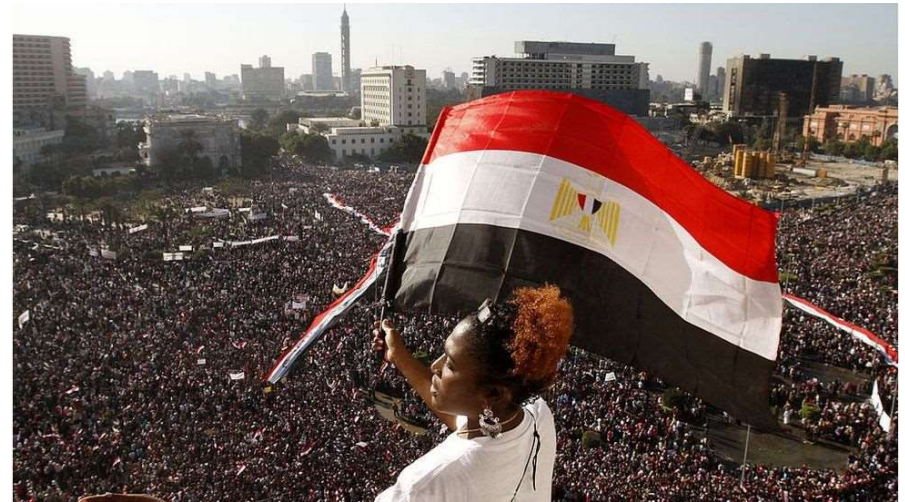
Brendan Morrissey

## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

...to Nelson  
Mandela taking  
the oath of office  
in South Africa in  
1994...



...to protestors in  
Tahrir Square in  
Egypt in 2011.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Comparativists analyze all of these events, whether positive or negative, as **regime change**, the process through which one regime is transformed into another.



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Comparativists have long studied regime change. Initially focused on military coup d'état and revolutions, since the 1980s we have concentrated primarily on what **Samuel Huntington** (1991) called the “third wave” of democratization.



The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion [...] but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact; non-Westerners never do.

— Samuel P. Huntington —

AZ QUOTES

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

The study of regime change raises several fundamental questions in comparative politics such as:

1. Why do revolutions or military coups happen in some countries and not in others?



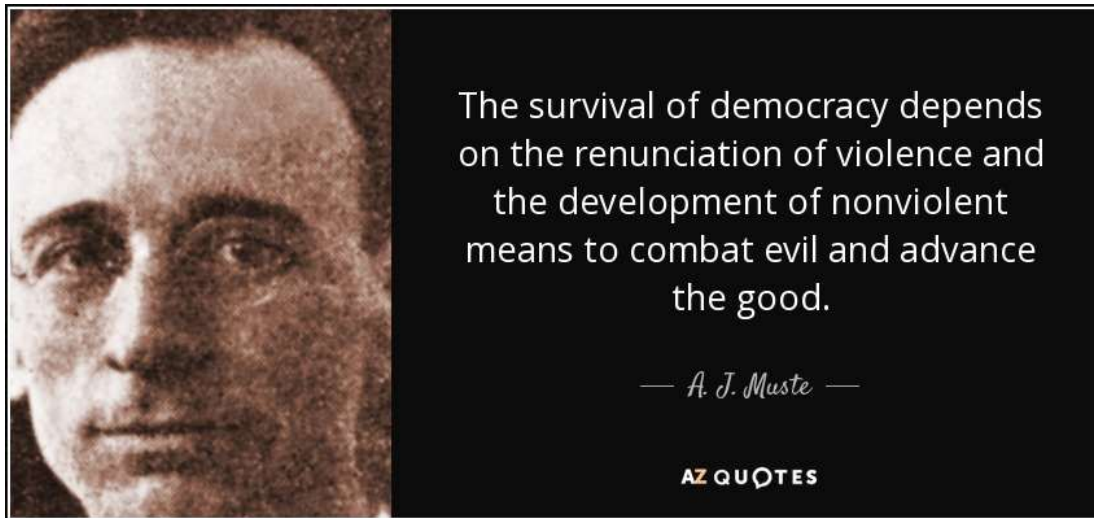
# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

2. When the military stages a coup, what explains how it rules and how much power, if any, it shares with civilians?





# COMPARATIVE POLITICS



4. Can democracy survive in any country or in only certain types of countries, and why?



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

### 1. The Military in Politics: Coups d'État

Americans generally view the military as an organization that is firmly under civilian control and that should stay out of politics.



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

But in reality, no military is completely apolitical.

The key is that a regime with effective control over the military, whether democratic or authoritarian, keeps various activities within institutionalized limits: the military does not go beyond the bounds set by the civilian leadership.



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

But if they do, it can lead to a **coup d'état**, in which the military forcibly removes the existing regime and establishes a new one.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

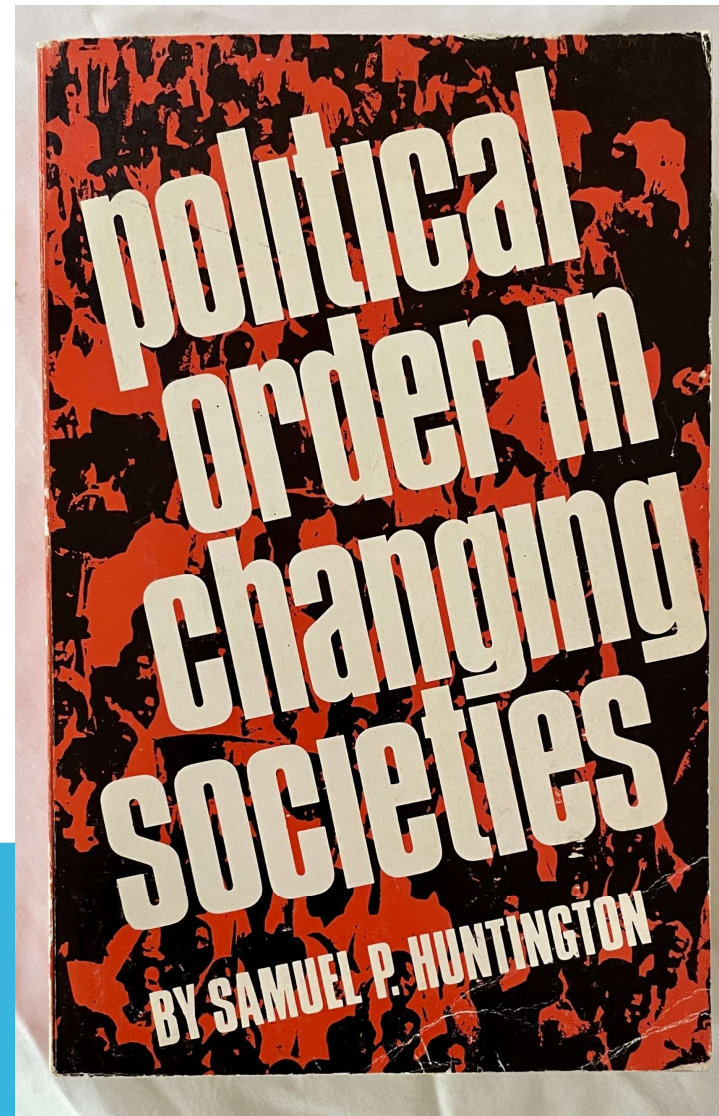
## Why Do Military Coups Happen?

Military coups occur when all efforts to keep the military loyal (or at least under the control of) the regime fail. Three major schools of thought attempt to explain why coups happen.

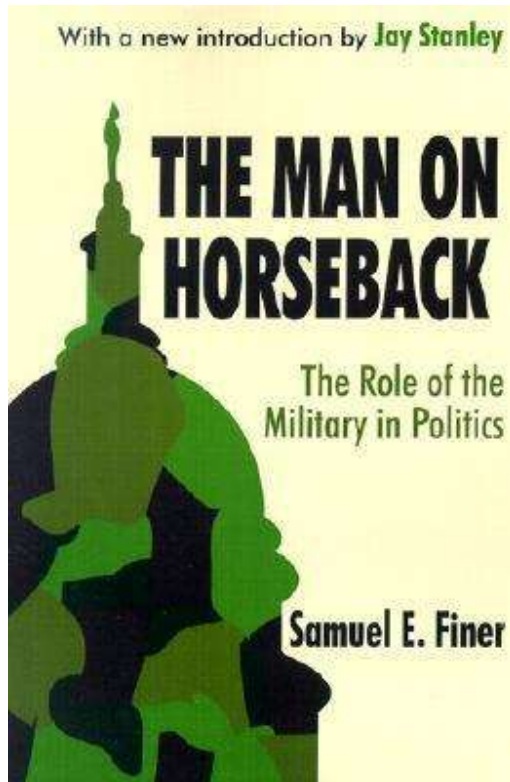


## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

The first school, promoted by **Samuel Huntington** (1968), focuses on the weakness of institutions, noting that “the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military....but the political and institutional structure of the society.”



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

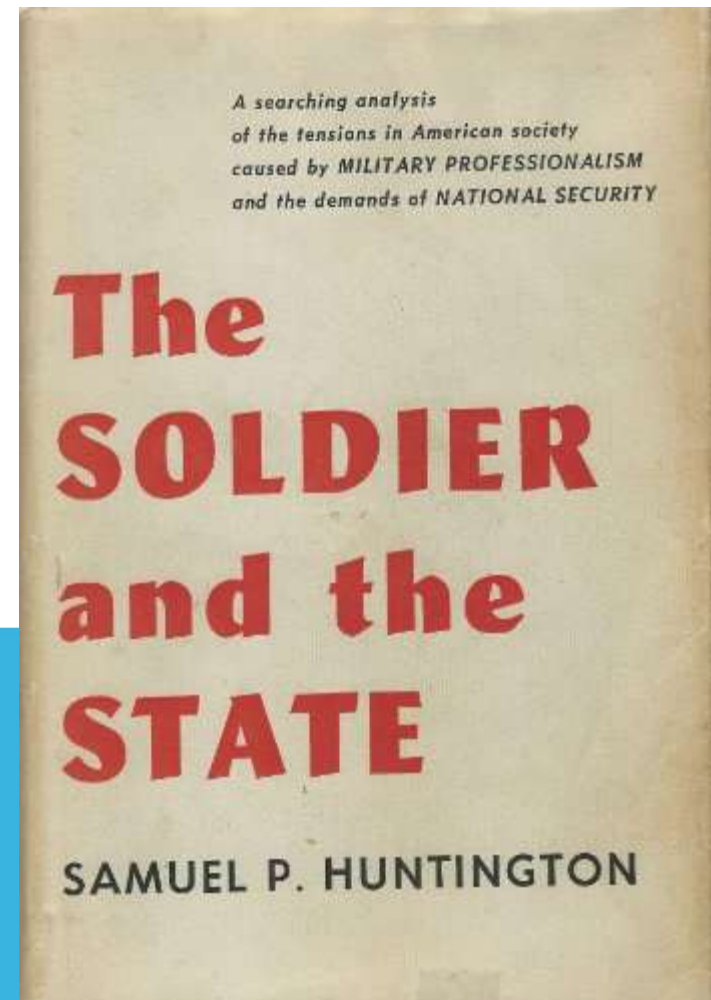
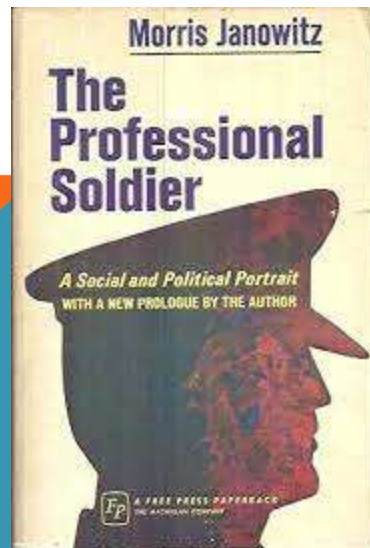


Samuel Finer in his 1962 book *The Man on Horseback*, made a political culture argument: countries with political cultures that do not highly value nonmilitary means of transferring power and civil society are more prone to coups.



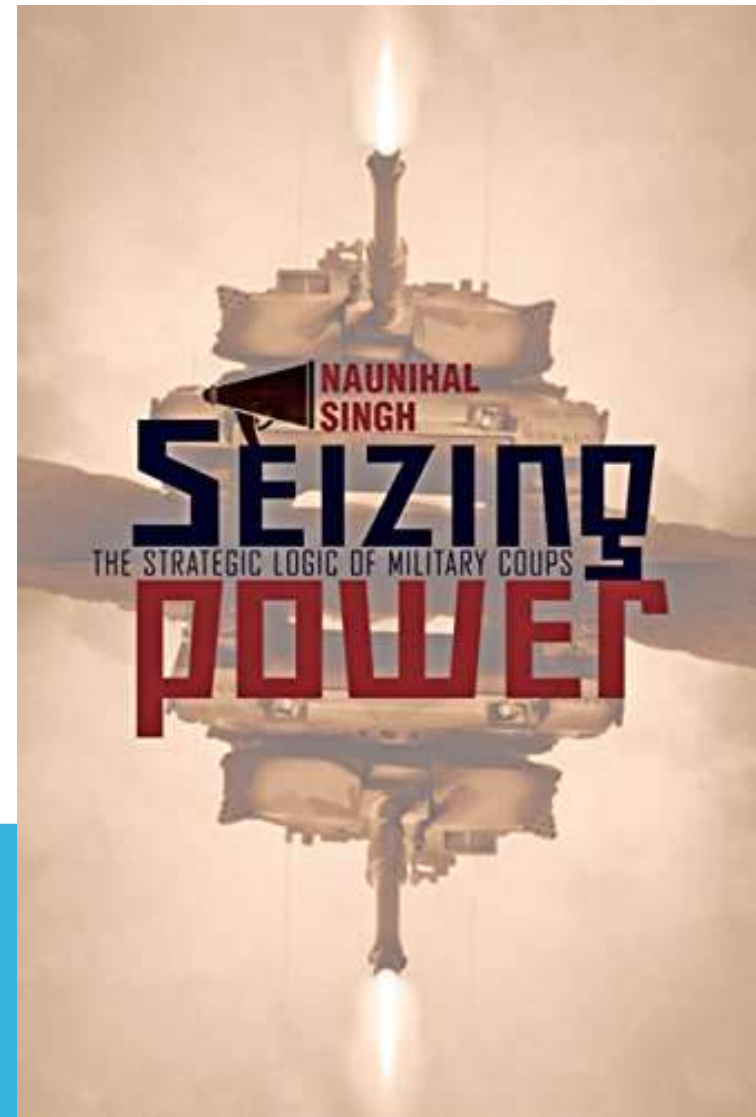
# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

A second school of thought looks not at society but within military organizations themselves. These theorists argue that a military engages in a coup to advance its own institutional interests, such as getting larger budgets, higher pay, or better equipment (Huntington 1964; Janowitz 1964).



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

A third major explanation for coups looks at them as part of the political logic characterizing particular political systems more generally.

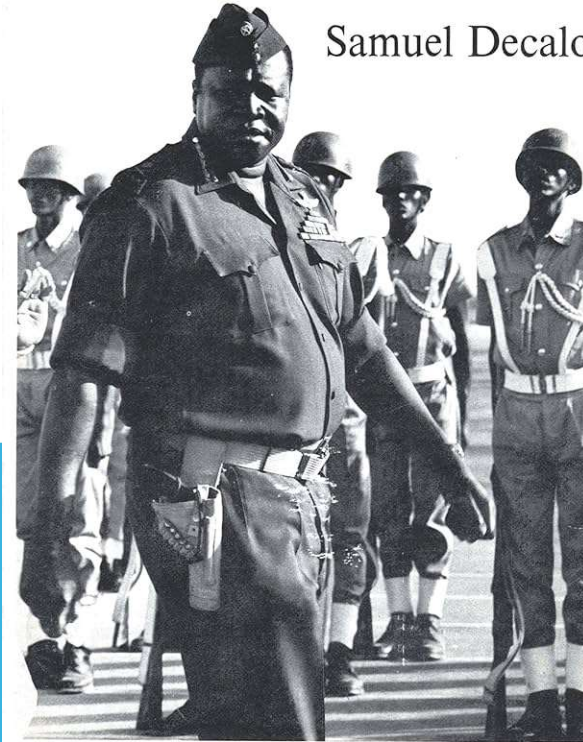


## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Samuel Decalo (1976) drew on ideas of neopatrimonialism to argue that the first two schools of Thought misunderstood the nature of many African (and other postcolonial) militaries and therefore failed to recognize the true motivations for the coup.

COUPS AND ARMY RULE  
IN AFRICA Studies in  
Military Style

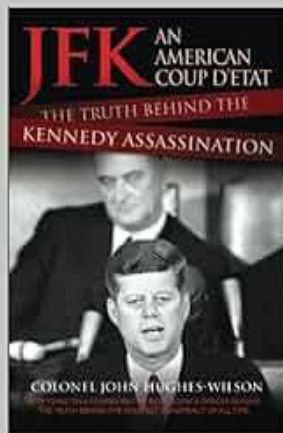
Samuel Decalo



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## What Are the Results of Coups?

Whatever the reasons behind coups, different kinds of militaries and different kinds of coups tend to produce different kinds of military regimes.



Beard How You Want

16




Coup d'état.

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## Revolution

Military coups change governments and regimes, but **revolutions** can change the entire social order.



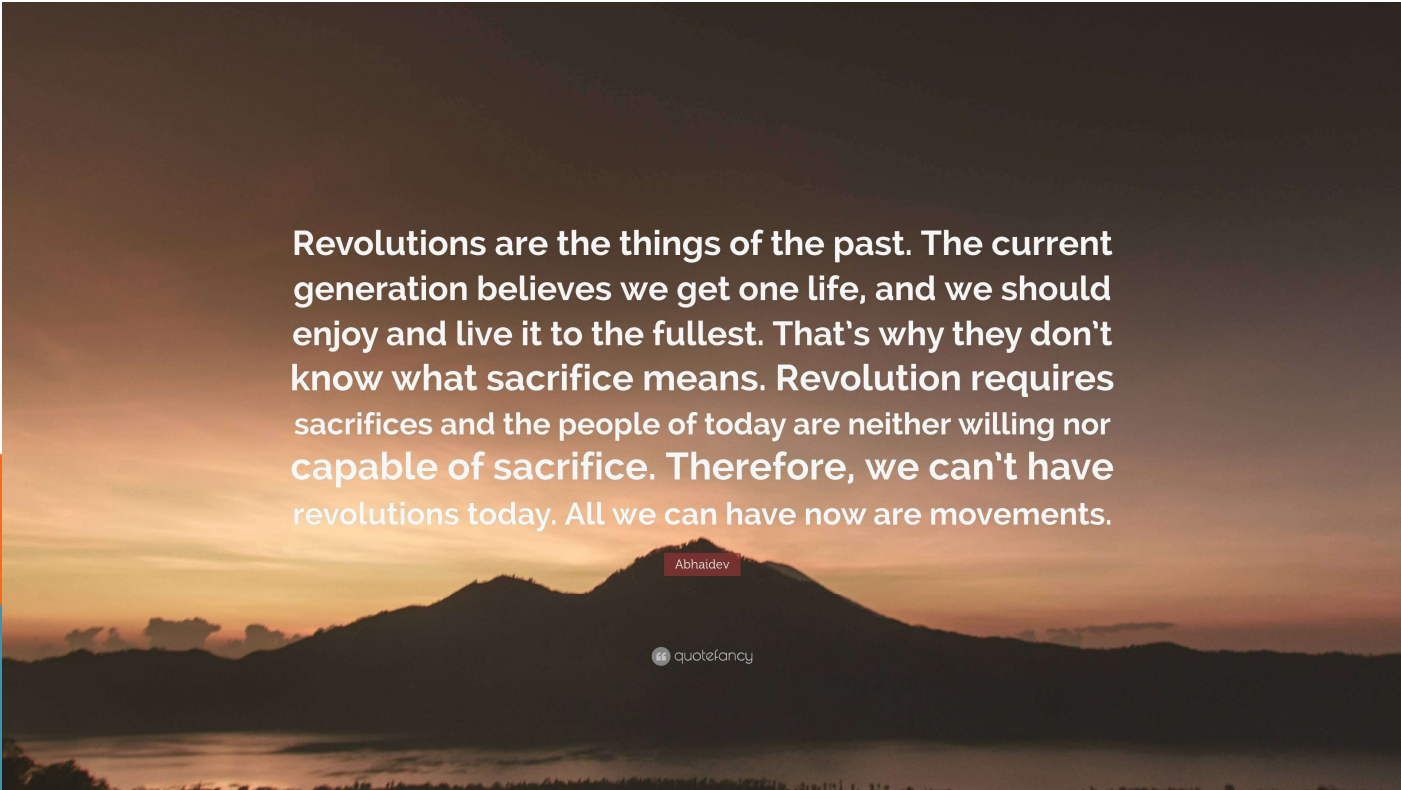
Revolutions are  
the locomotives  
of history.

Karl Marx

BrainyQuote®

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

**Revolutions** are rare events that mark major turning points not only in the lives of the countries in which they occur but often in world history as well.



Revolutions are the things of the past. The current generation believes we get one life, and we should enjoy and live it to the fullest. That's why they don't know what sacrifice means. Revolution requires sacrifices and the people of today are neither willing nor capable of sacrifice. Therefore, we can't have revolutions today. All we can have now are movements.

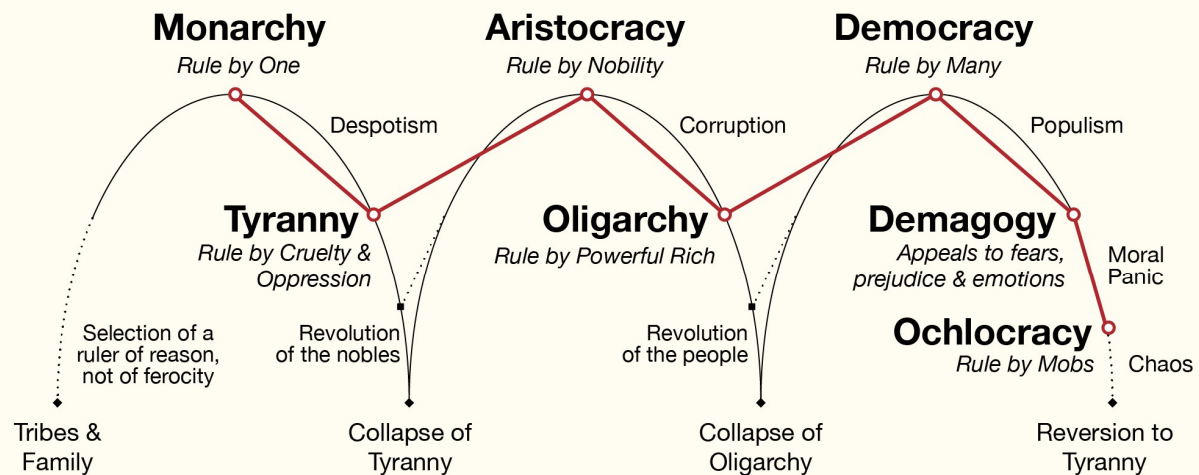
Abhaidev

quote fancy

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

*Social revolutions* that overturn the entire social order are extremely rare, but even *political revolutions*, which only change regimes, are infrequent.

## Cycles of Political Revolution Polybius, *Anacyclosis*, *Histories*, ~160 BCE



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

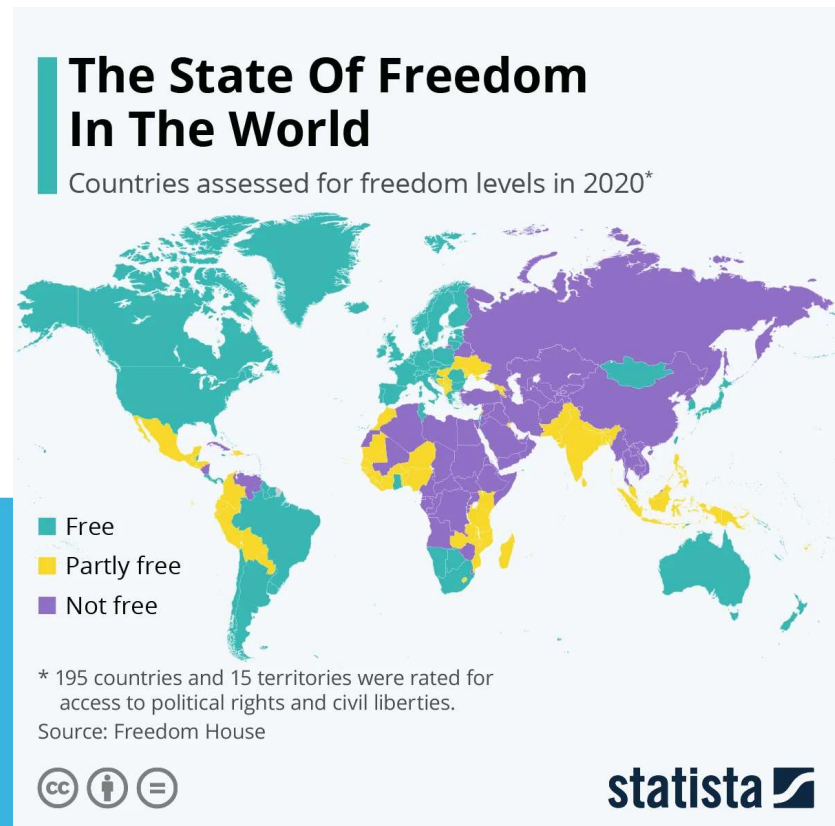
## Democratization

Freedom House's calculations of "free" (as in fully functioning liberal democracies) countries since 1972:

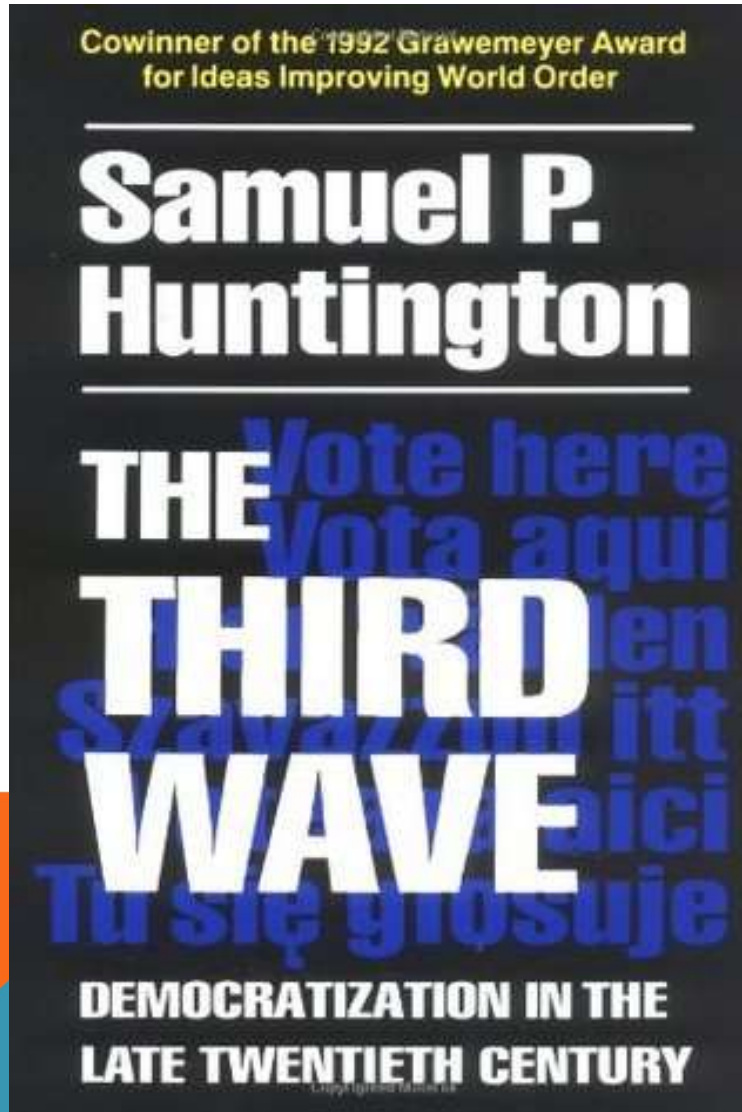
1972 - 44

1990 - 61

2016 - 86



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS



This third wave of democratization (the first two waves having followed each of the world wars) was a dramatic process.

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## Transitions to Democracy

A **transition to democracy** is a regime change typically involving a negotiated process that removes an authoritarian regime and concludes with a founding election of a new, democratic regime.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## Pact

In a transition to democracy, a consciousness among the most important political actors in the authoritarian regime and those in civil society to establish a new form of government.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## Founding Election

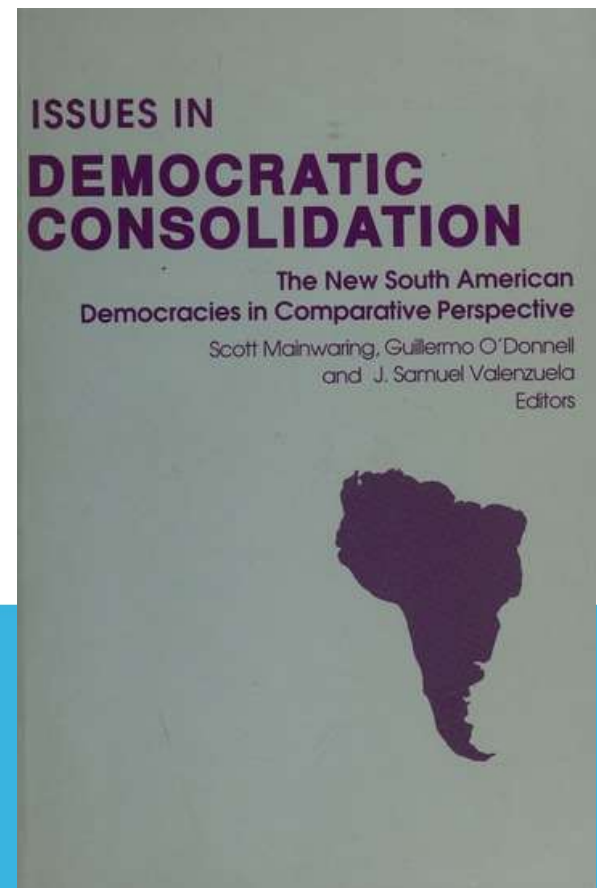
The first democratic election in many years (or ever), marking the completion of a transition to democracy.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## Democratic Consolidation

The widespread acceptance of democracy as the permanent form of political activity; all significant political elites and their followers accept democratic rules and are confident everyone else does as well.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

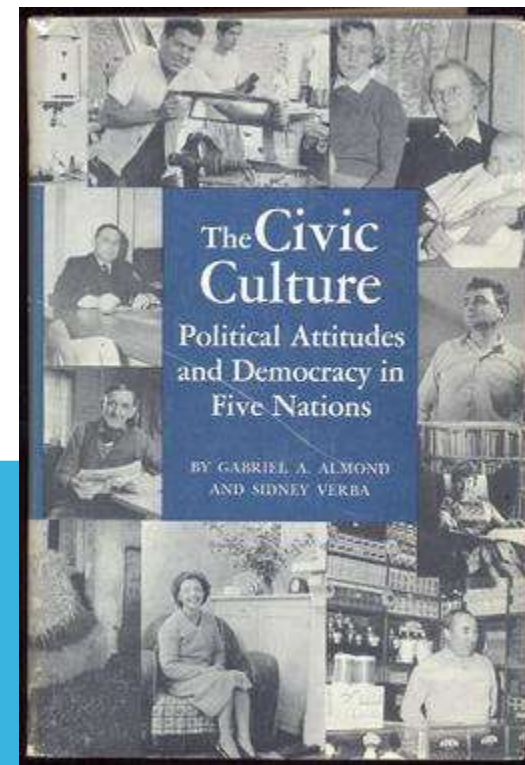
## Explaining Democratization, Consolidation, and Breakdown



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## Structures

Almond and Verba's book *The Civic Culture*, argues that democracy can thrive only in countries that have democratic political cultures ("civic culture") in which citizens value participation but are willing to defer to elected leaders enough to let them govern.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Other modernization theorists debated not just the effects of economic growth on democratization but also the effects of inequality.



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

One school of thought argues that relatively unequal societies were unlikely to democratize because elites fear that if the impoverished majority gains the vote, they will use it to redistribute income [oh my!], so the elites will fight to maintain authoritarian rule.



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS



The type of prior authoritarian regime and strength of political institutions are additional possible structural sources of democratic transition or breakdown.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## Culture and Beliefs

A study by **Fish** and **Brooks** (2004) across 160 countries found no correlation between ethnic diversity and the strength of democracy.

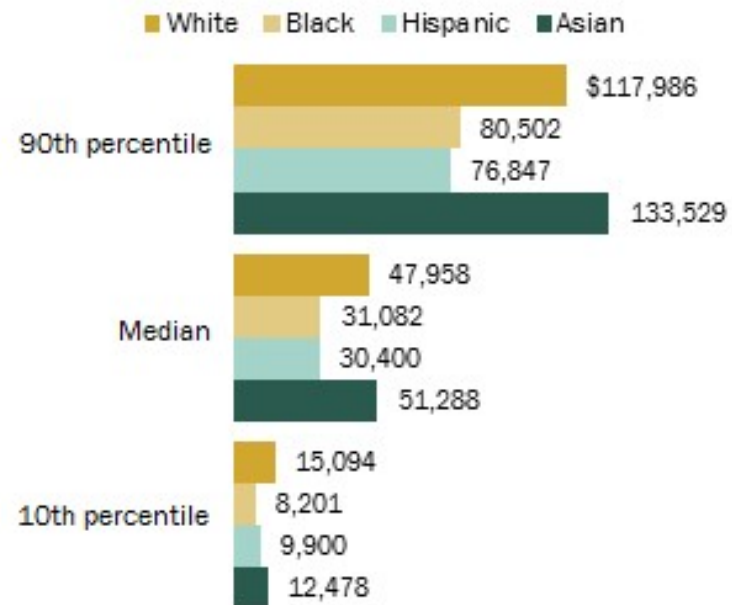


# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Houle (2015) found that economic inequality between ethnic groups, especially when each is relatively equal internally, harms democratic consolidation.

## Asians have the highest earnings, except among lower-income adults

*Incomes at selected percentiles, by race and ethnicity, 2016*



Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only single-race non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Income is adjusted for household size and expressed in 2016 dollars. See Methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2016 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

"Income Inequality in the U.S. Is Rising Most Rapidly Among Asians"

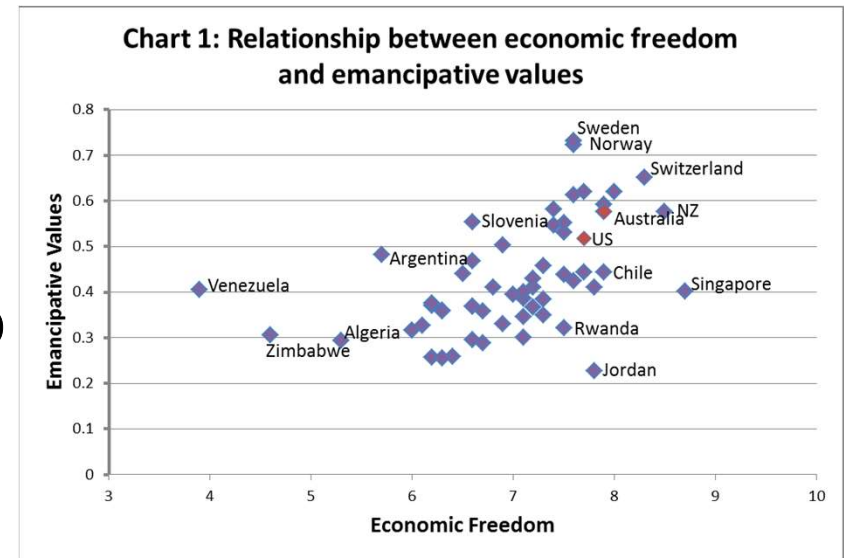
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Inglehart and Welzel (2005) used data from a global survey of citizen beliefs to examine the effect of culture on democracy.

Findings?

That “emancipative values” (i.e. freedom of expression, equality of opportunity) help to sustain democracy.

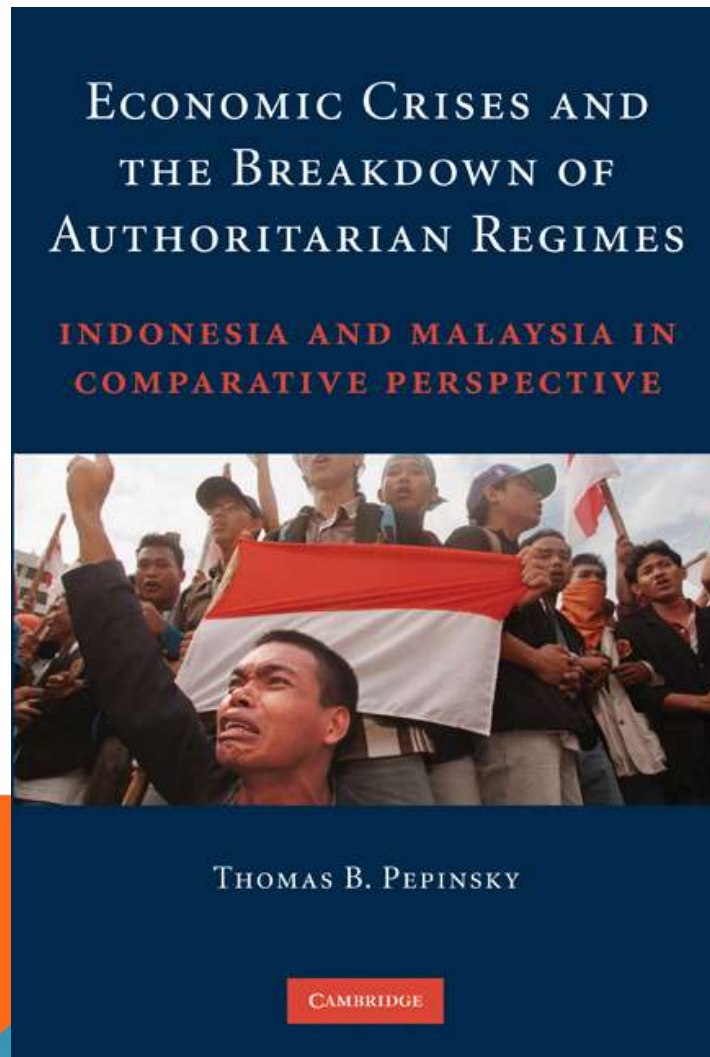


# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## Individual Action

As the third wave of democratization took place from the 1970s to the 1990s and modernization theory seem less relevant, a new generation of democratization theorists influenced by rational choice theory argued that democracy could emerge in any country if the major political elites came to see it as a set of institutions that could serve their interests, whether or not they or the citizenry actually believed in democratic principles.

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS



Transitional paradigm theorists argued that transitions begin when an authoritarian regime faces a severe crisis of some sort – economic downturn or succession were common crises out of which democracy could emerge.

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

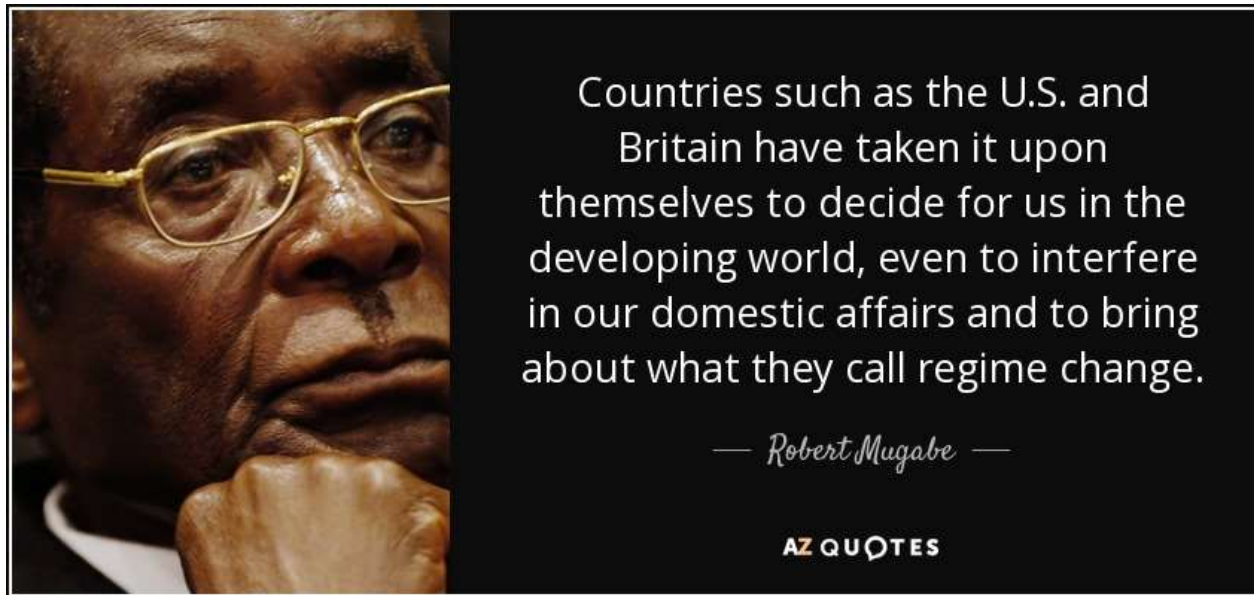
According to **Orvis** and **Drogus**, the 1990s were the halcyon days of democratization, when it seemed that democracy was spreading to nearly every corner of the globe.

Why did dictatorships fall during the 1990s?

- Withdrawal of support from USSR & West
- Example of overthrows in E. Europe
- Aid conditional on democratization
- Miscalculation – sycophants tell dictators they can win multiparty election, then they lose
  - Kaunda in Zambia
  - Obasanjo in Nigeria
  - Suharto in East Timor (independence vote)

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

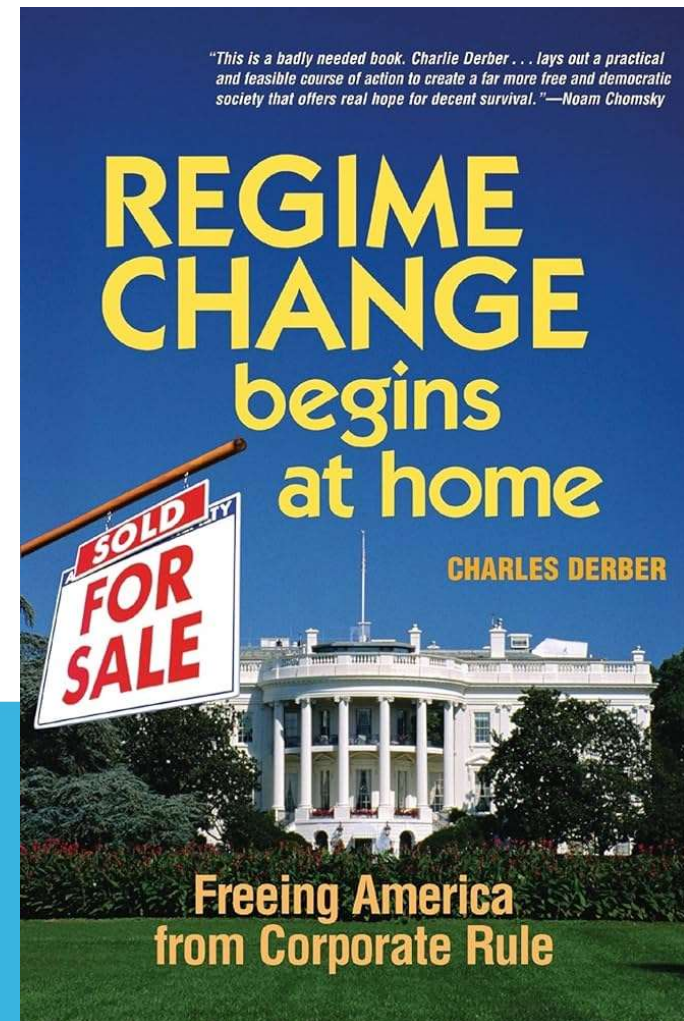
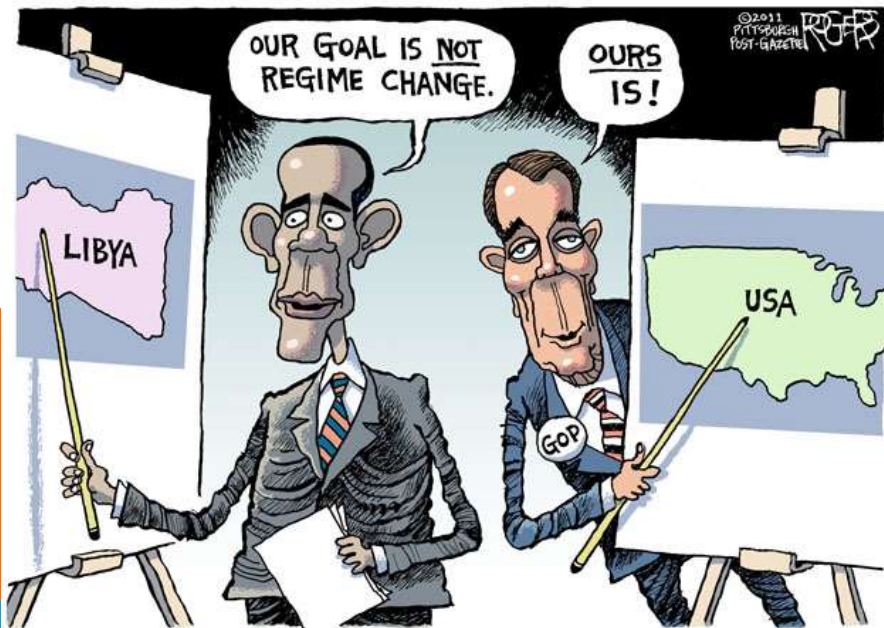
## Concluding thoughts and questions...



Regime change is a difficult process to understand and predict. By definition, it lies outside the realm of “normal” politics.

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Instead, it is a period of intense politicization and rapidly unfolding events.

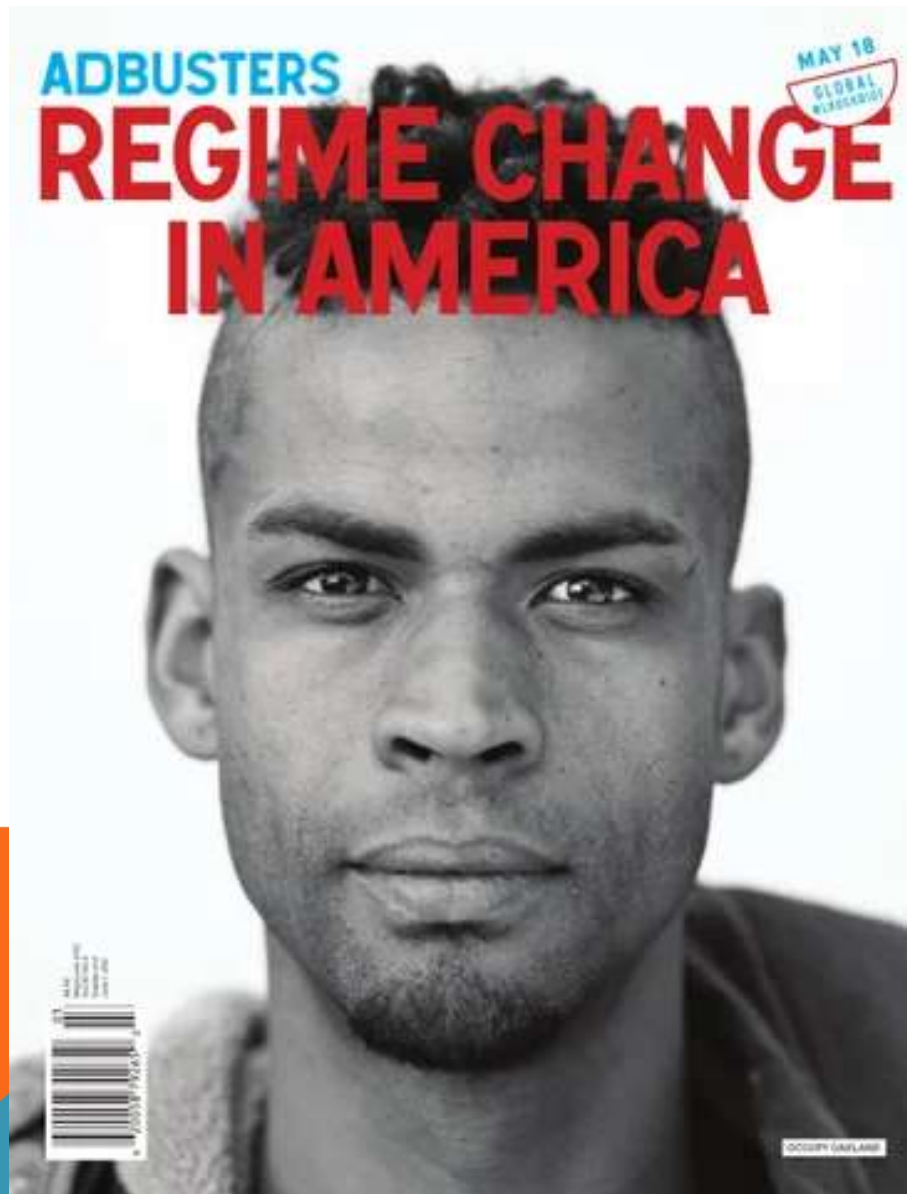


## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Regime changes affects who rules, but only in the ways that might be expected. At least in theory, democratization produces regimes in which the citizens rule.



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS



The often chaotic process of regime change continues to limit comparativists' predictive powers.

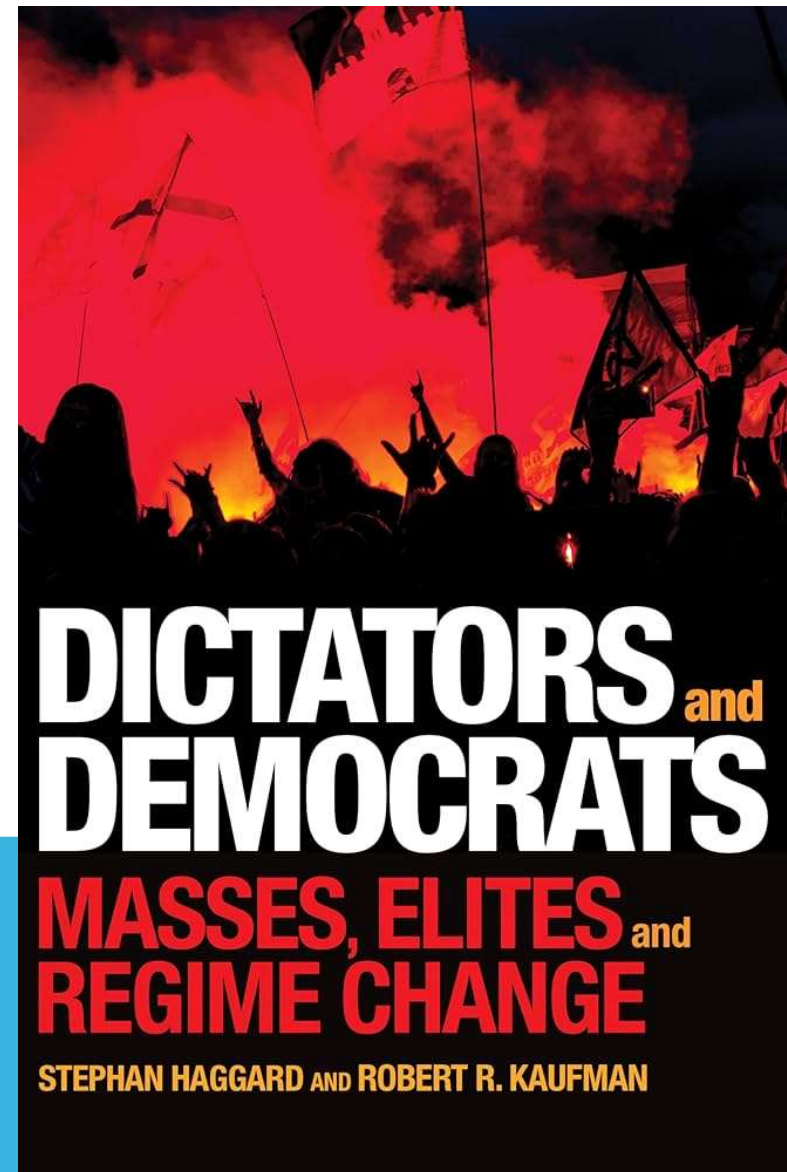
## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Military coups are the most common and quickest form of regime change.

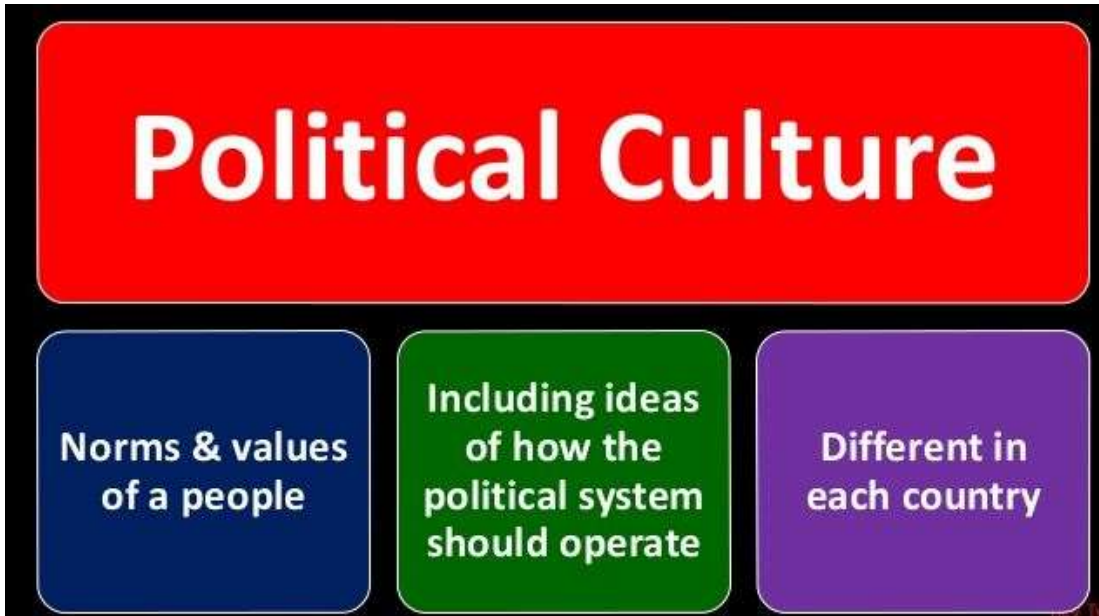


## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Regime change is such a large and important topic that virtually all major theories of comparative politics have been used to explain it.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS



*Political culture theorists* argue that attributes of particular cultures set the stage for particular kinds of regimes. Therefore, and individual actors' belief in democracy matters.



## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

As influenced by rational choice theory, the *transition paradigm* argues that neither culture nor ideology is particularly important in understanding when a transition will occur; transitions take place when political elites see the acceptance of democratic institutions to be in their rational self-interest.



# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

## RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

### Basic Principles of Rational Choice Theory

01

**Individuals are rational.**

- They can Think logically.

02

**Individuals have Interested.**

- Different People have different interests.
- The Interests of a Person define her utilities.

03

**Individuals make choices.**

- The choices people make Influence their utilities.

04

**Individuals rationally make choices to increase their utilities.**

- A person does not have full control over the results of her choices.

# COMPARATIVE POLITICS

*Modernization theorists* have responded, with growing evidence, that even if transition is possible, either culture or a structural condition – such as economic development – is necessary to preserve democracy in the long run.

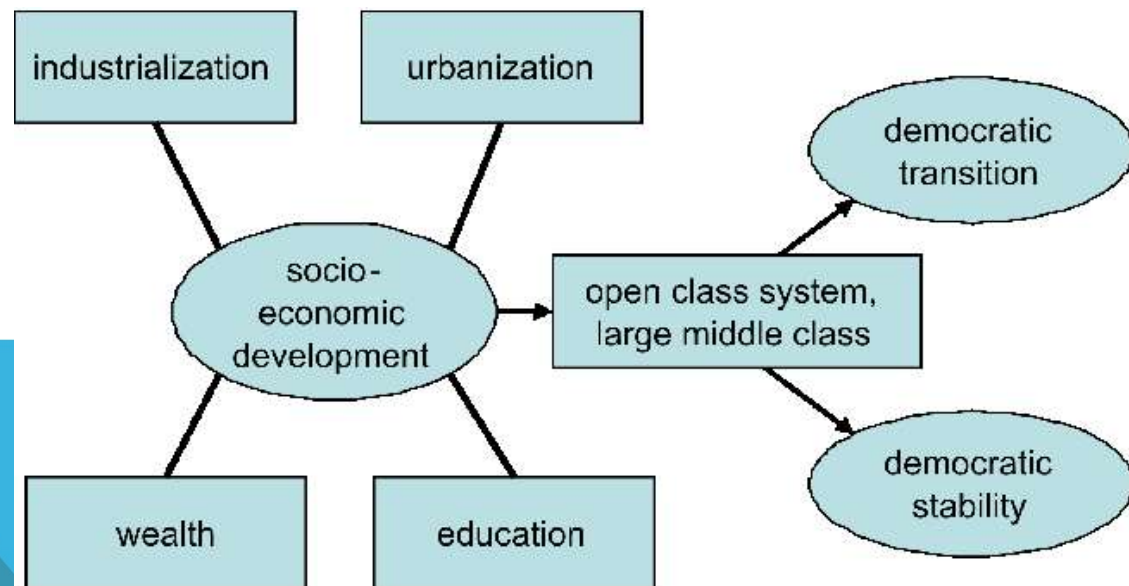


Figure 1: Modernization Theory according to Lipset