HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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THE GOVERNMENT IN HISTORY – 20th Century

Contents

The Contemporary State: developments in the past century

Overview In many ways, the world history of government since about 1914 emphasizes the growing conversion to the general industrial features that had been taking shape earlier (particularly in the West and Japan), now simply applying to a larger number of regions, and with greater intensity. More and more governments began actively striving for industrialization, and introducing many of the reforms needed toward this end. Thus the Turkish state, under new nationalist leadership, managed a host of changes that the Ottoman Empire had simply failed to consider seriously. Further advances in relevant technology – for example, the introduction of radios and telephones, both speeding communication among various levels of government and allowing new forms of contact between state and citizens – worked toward the same end. However, the past century also ushered in a number of additional factors that must be considered along with the industrialization of the state.

Revolutions The 20th and early 21st centuries have experienced an important new round of revolutions. In contrast to the earlier Atlantic revolutions, these did not feature liberal goals so prominently (some exceptions for the Mexican revolution and the Arab spring). Rather, they placed greater emphasis on the importance of the state not just to assure the revolution, but to remake society in a number of fundamental respects. This statement applies both to Marxist risings, the most common kind, and to Iran's Islamic revolution. In other words, contemporary revolutions have not only changed the state, they have tended to expand its functions.

Monarchy and its alternatives A combination of revolutions and defeats in war have devastated monarchy as a form of government, beyond figurehead level. This process began in the 19th century, but now has become virtually universal. Emperors yielded in the wake of World War I and II defeats. This eclipse has widened the global debate over what form of government should replace monarchy. Democracy was a popular option briefly after World War I, somewhat more durably after World War II (Japan, Italy, Germany, India), and then in the major wave from the 1970s onward (the whole of the European Union; most of Latin America; key parts of Southeast Asia; a number of African countries including post-apartheid South Africa; and then much of the former Soviet Union). However, various kinds of authoritarianism have also been a popular option (particularly in the 1930s; in the wake of postwar decolonization; and again during the second decade of the 21st century). Tensions and alternations between these government forms play a vital and ongoing role in contemporary political history.

Total war The two world wars have often been called "total wars "—really the first in human history. That is, they involved government mobilization of most sectors of society. Consumer choices yielded to government rationing. Labor was commandeered, with new government cooptation of unions. Business decisions were at least partly supplanted by government mandates; some key services were nationalized, at least temporarily. Also under government auspices, new planning occurred concerning postwar welfare measures and race relations (this was truer in the second world war than in the first). From the government also came a barrage of nationalist propaganda, painting the enemy in the harshest terms.

And finally, police powers were extended, with many freedoms at least temporarily suppressed. Total war clearly demonstrated the kind of organizational capacity the industrial state now possessed. And some of these models persisted outside of war itself – thus Lenin notoriously admired Germany's World War I measures and sought to incorporate some of them in his revolutionary Russian state. Fascist leaders did the same. The United States would adopt some partial "total war" measures in response to the Cold War and then terrorism. Here was another new ingredient in the nature of the contemporary state.

Decolonizaton One of the most important shifts in the 20th century political framework involved the replacement of imperialism with decolonization. A few hints of this occurred after World War I. While European holdings expanded in the Middle East, they were now technically provisional mandates. Not colonies. A few imperialist giants made some moves toward liberation, as the British did with Egypt and the American promised for the Philippines. But for the most part the interwar period features more confrontations between imperialists and nationalist forces. After World War II, however, the situation changed quickly, with independence for South and Southeast Asia and the Middle East coming fairly quickly and then Africa from the late 1950s to the 1990s. Some important colonies remain, as in Oceania and the Caribbean, though in some cases with apparent popular acquiescence. And semi-imperialist interventions have continued periodically, as in the Middle East and West Africa. But the number of new nations has soared massively, with a number of familiar opportunities and problems attached. Here is a huge change in the framework for contemporary government.

Globalization Political globalization began in the later 19th century, with the variety of international conventions dealing with the treatment of prisoners of war, postal service, patent protection and the like. This trend continued after World War I. While the League of Nations managed no real constraints on government foreign policies, individual agencies, like the International Labor Office, did work for new agreements in key areas of social policy. However, disarmament conferences really did influence naval policies. Several historians point to the Kellogg-Briand pact of 1928, outlawing war, as a milestone in international law: obviously it has no effect on policies leading up to World War II, but it may have become more influential in recent decades in dramatically curtailing aggressive war and territorial acquisition. More obviously, global political developments after World War II became an important element in the conduct of individual governments, without of course displacing national sovereignty. Thus public health agencies interact seriously with the World Health Organization. Governments collaborate in designation world historical sites. By the 21st century government begin to shape some policies around global environmental agreements, though this is at best a work in progress. United Nations human rights declarations are routinely incorporated into national constitutions, and sometimes have real effect. All of this is complemented by other aspects of global governance. The rise of International Non-governmental organizations like Amnesty International (1961) or Greenpeace put real pressure on government policies concerning the treatment of political prisoners or labor abuses. Finally, other agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank profoundly influence national economic policies, particularly among some of the less developed nations. The General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT, 1947ff) and then the World Trade Organization (1995) seriously condition national economic policies. And major regional agreements, most notably the European Union, also modify national sovereignty. Political globalization is also contested: many nations seek to block the INGOs, several refuse to sign international agreements (the United States is notorious in this regard, the only country not to sign the convention on the rights of the child for example). Nevertheless, globalization becomes a serious new factor in characterizing contemporary governance.

Study questions

1. What does "total war" mean and how does it affect government even beyond wartime?
2. Why has the 20th-21st century period seen so many changes in government forms around the world?
3. How can globalization be factored into the political history of the past century? Is it a serious factor, or mainly window-dressing?

Further reading

Raymond Aron, *Century of Total War* (Praeger, 1981)

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Western Europe and the United States

Interwar crisis Most Western governments performed badly between the wars. They did not handle the economic Depression constructively, and they failed to respond to the growing threat posed by Nazi Germany. Several factors were involved. World War I had created massive economic problems, and it also killed many potential young leaders; fatalities were highest in the rank of lieutenant. Many governments became more defensive, as in the United States which retreated to isolationism. Many government officials lacked adequate training in economics. Further, particularly in the 1930s, increased partisanship paralyzed decision-making. Centrist political parties declined, and at the extremes communist and far right parties added to confusion. All of this complicated responses to the Depression, which often centered on government retrenchment and new tariffs barriers, both counterproductive. Aggressive acts by Nazi Germany drew no vigorous reply, only a futile hope for compromise. Some exceptions involved Scandinavia and the United States, where governments did begin to expand welfare protections and other economic efforts to deal with some effects of the Depression. Overall, however, it would take World War II to galvanize Western governments into more constructive action.

Fascism From key parts of the West came the experiment with fascist governments, first in Italy, then Germany and to an extent Spain. Fascism involved a vigorous renunciation of the premises of liberal government. Instead, the state and its leader were to become to sole focus for popular loyalty, and the source of most policy direction. As Benito Mussolini put it, “Everything within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.” Fascist governments practiced what the Nazis called *Gleichschaltung,* or leveling, subjecting virtually all institutions to state control – particularly, political parties and trade unions. School curricula were revamped to emphasize loyalty and nationalism, and youth groups provided additional guidance. Some church activities were limited. Political police intimidated potential opposition, and many protest leaders were imprisoned or worse. At the same time, the state maintained constant propaganda, using radio, films and mass meetings, railing against potential enemies. (Fascism depended on a variety of new technologies, particularly in media.) Voting occurred, but only for official political parties. Government intervention in the economy increased, for example in the automobile industry, and increased armaments production added in. Governments also began to organize mass leisure for workers, building cheap resort buildings for example on the Baltic coast. And of course in Germany the government began to organize systematic oppression, and ultimately extermination, of the Jews. This kind of government has been called totalitarian because of the effort at total state control. The term is no longer current, partly because it became part of dbious Cold War rhetoric, partly because we increasingly know that even the fascist states did not try for total control. They were cautious, for example, with the Catholic Church, and gave considerable latitude to big business and the landed aristocracy. Still, this was a distinctive innovation in the history of government, largely defanged by the losses of World War II but with some potential legacy later on.

Postwar Western governments: form Throughout the West after World War II, parliamentary democracies were revived or restored. This trend included Germany and Italy, now reconstituted under allied supervision. It would later spread to Spain, Portugal and Greece, giving the West the most homogeneous political structures arguably since the Middle Ages. Differences remained in particulars: France, for example, was far more centralized than federal Germany or the United States.

Postwar functions Here the big development was the emergence of the full welfare state, with governments providing an increasingly elaborate safety net with protections for the elderly, the unemployed, the ill; state-run medical systems or medical insurance became the norm except in the United States. Family protections increasingly included provision of day care centers, legislation providing periods of parental leave, and direct payments to families with young children. Government sponsored housing programs expanded, a major feature in Britain. Economic intervention increased, including reliance on trained economists (as in the United States with the establishment of the Council of Economic Advisors). Many states launched formal economic planning; many took over sectors such as railways and mines. State-run universities expanded, giving qualified students considerable support. These

developments depended on increased taxation, including new devices such as value-added taxes. Bureaucracies expanded, and many governments were increasingly operated by highly specialized officials called technocrats. These developments provoked some pushback, and in the United States the full welfare/planning state apparatus did not emerge at all. By the 1980s as economic growth slowed, some states cut back a bit on welfare arrangements (this was most notably true in Britain, where free university tuition for example was replaced by considerable fees). But in most cases the basic apparatus held up, and often seemed to contribute to considerable popular wellbeing.

Foreign and military policy Headed by leaders in countries like France, postwar European states made a concerted effort to correct the tensions that had led to two world wars. The big effort centered on constructing systems of economic coordination that would reduce nationalist impulses and anchor Germany in a European concert. The result was a series of moves ultimately yielding the European Union, embracing most European countries and providing policy coordination not only in economic matters, but in free movement of labor and even (for some members) a common currency. The Union developed its own technocratic bureaucracy, centered in Brussels, issuing regulations in a variety of domains. European states also, in some cases reluctantly, abandoned most of their colonial holdings and, particularly after the Cold War, dramatically reduced military expenditures, often to well below 2% of Gross National Product. Leaders boasted that they were creating a new kind of civilian state, focused on domestic prosperity. In this regard the United States was quite different. It participated actively in helping to create new international agencies after World War II, abandoning isolationism. It encouraged greater European unity. But, pressed by the Cold War (which its leaders may have exaggerated), it became increasingly militaristic, with high levels of military expenditure, recurrent weapons innovation, and frequent participation in war. For better or worse, these policies helped excuse European allies from comparable military commitments, an odd and possibly precarious balance.

Environmental policy By the 21st century many Western governments were beginning, though hesitantly, to add a new function: intervention toward environmental protection. (Sweden was the first country to call for international action in this area, in the 1970s). To some extent this extended earlier responsibilities, for example in maintaining parks and developing public works. But it also involved new forms of regulation, as in rules regulating automobile fuel emissions and even projecting a complete end to gasoline-powered vehicles by some future date. Individual governments, as in Holland, were also developing new approaches to managing the impact of rising ocean levels. Here, clearly, was an important if uncertain new frontier for governments.

Study questions

1. What were the major innovations of the fascist state?
2. What were the main symptoms of government failure in the interwar West?
3. What were the principal innovations in the Western state after the war?
4. What were the main differences between Europe and the United States in postwar government policy?

Further reading

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Robert Paxton and Judith Hessler, *Europe in the Twentieth Century* (5th ed., Wadsworth/Cengage, 2011)

Francis G. Castles et. al., *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State* (Oxford University Press, 2010)

Soviet Union, and Russia/ Eastern Europe

Revolution and early steps The Russian Revolution of 1917 ended the tsarist regime for good, another huge move in the establishment of new republics. Despite a period of civil war as the revolutionary government consolidated, the new regime took quick steps to expand government functions in several ways. New clinics provided medical care, especially for pregnant women and children, as the state began to take new responsibility for health. School systems expanded at all levels, as the government aimed for

universal educational requirements. True to communist principles, the state also seized businesses and private property, aiming at government direction of the economy. Faced with resistance, the regime stepped back, and in the New Economic Policy provided greater leeway for some private enterprise. Vigorous discussion occurred also about changes in law, including immediate provisions for gender equality and greater access to divorce. Finally, older personnel were replaced by new communist loyalists, some from worker or peasant backgrounds. Throughout the Soviet period, many people of humble origin managed to rise to positions of political power – including the last major leader, Mikhail Gorbachev.

The Soviet regime: form of government The constitution of 1924 set up in principle of federation of republics, designed to represent the major regions and nationalities. Beneath them were local soviets based in towns, villages and factories. Each constituent republic sent representatives to the All-Union Congress of Soviets, in theory the sovereign legislative body. It was however dominated by the Communist party, which in turn received its direction from the central Politburo in Moscow (restored as capitol city). The 1936 constitution replaced the Congress with the Supreme Soviet. It also established an array of human rights and democratic procedures in principle, including regular national elections based on full universal suffrage. Rights included a variety of social measures such as care in old age, housing and cultural benefits – not included in the standard Western rights category – along with proclamations of freedom for religion and press. In practice the regime tightened Party control and that of its General Secretary, Josef Stalin. As to standard freedoms, Soviet law stipulated that “before these freedoms can be exercised, any approved writing or assembly must be approved by a censor or licensing bureau” – to assure ideological leadership. The constitution was widely cited in propaganda as a pinnacle of democracy. In its later stages, after Stalin’s death in 1953, the Soviet system was also noteworthy for negotiations and disputes within the Politburo around selection of sometimes rather lackluster successors, a weak point of the system particularly by the 1970s.

Functions Under Stalin, from the late 1930s onward the state seized control of the entire economy. It issued detailed Five-Year plans, focused primarily on advancing industrial growth, which did indeed proceed rapidly. The state directed factories, setting production quotas. It ran the major department store chain. It seized the land from peasant proprietors, establishing collective farms again under Party direction and with production goals; this measure required brutal suppression of peasant resistance. The Party also regulated cultural life, producing many public monuments and supporting a new Socialist Realist style that glorified workers and peasants. More modern artistic styles were outlawed as Western and decadent. Although scientists received many benefits, they too were regulated for orthodoxy. In schools, workshops and propaganda the regime worked to reduce religious adherence, though it was somewhat cautious in dealing with the Muslim minority. As in Nazi Germany the government also arranged vacations spots for workers, particularly along the Black Sea coast. The overall result was probably as total a state as had yet been constructed.

Repression Along with masses of positive propaganda and injunctions against enemies of the state, the communist system revived and greatly expanded the tsarist network of secret police. Police informants were even stationed in hotels to monitor visitors; foreigners were carefully accompanied by official guides. The regime made wide use of Siberian prison camps for political dissidents. And it executed large numbers or real or imagined opponents outright, particularly under Stalin, who conducted a number of purges even within the Party, often after elaborate forced public professions of guilt. After Stalin’s death the system loosened somewhat, with fewer executions but more confinements to psychiatric hospitals.

Foreign policy Policy in the 1920s and 1930s was somewhat circumspect, though the regime harbored major grievances about East European territories that had been lost in the postwar settlement. Eager to oppose Nazi Germany, which had vowed eastward expansion, the Soviets tried to win Western cooperation in the 1930s but finally gave up and formed a brief alliance with Hitler, hoping to regain territory in Poland and elsewhere, only later to engage in the major national struggle of World War II. Postwar, the Soviets set up a buffer zone of controlled communist states in Eastern Europe, most of whom adopted government structures and policies similar to those of the USSR. (Between the wars, most East European nations, in a roster of newly-independent states, had fallen back to conservative authoritarian regimes after brief experiments with parliamentary democracy.) Cold War conflict with the United States brought massive investment in new weaponry, including a new space program, as well as

ambitious diplomatic initiatives in other parts of the world. Often accused of aggressive tendencies, the regime was actually fairly cautious, engaging only in one (abortive) military effort in Afghanistan. However, it did intervene forcefully to retain its hold in Eastern Europe, putting down several protest movements in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Collapse Despite huge successes in industrialization and in improving public health and educational levels, the regime was in trouble by the mid-1980s. Military expenditures were an inordinate burden in a still-industrializing economy. Bureaucratic control limited economic initiative, and production quotas led to no small about of deceptive reporting. Hoping to shake things up a new General Secretary in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev, sought to allow somewhat greater political openness and freedom, while decentralizing economic decision making. New armaments agreements with the United States reduced Cold War tensions. But the new measures overall simply opened the door to new protests, particularly in the East European states which began, in 1989, to declare independence – with no Soviet response. A military coup against Gorbachev failed, but he resigned in 1991 and the Soviet Union itself broke up.

Post-Cold War Eastern Europe Most of the new or newly-freed East European states became parliamentary democracies, and many ultimately joined the European Union. Only Belarus held out under "Europe's last dictator". However, by the second decade of the 21st century some East European states – most notably, Hungary and Poland – demonstrated more autocratic tendencies, reducing freedom of the press and judiciary, commandeering the major media, and limiting political protest. Opposition to immigration and to gay rights, along with greater support for religion, marked the new approach – making the region something of a political question mark. In the Balkans, the collapse of another communist regime led to a number of small new states and considerable military and ethnic conflict in the 1990s, still not fully resolved in the early decades of the 21st century.

Post-communist Russia Reduced in territory and resentful of its lost power, Russia suffered through considerable economic hardship and political uncertainty in the 1990s, as it established, technically, a democratic system with competing political parties. Many state businesses were sold off, creating however a new economic oligarchy. Under a new president, Vladimir Putin, from 1999 onward the regime became steadily more authoritarian while technically preserving democratic forms – one of the great examples of what seemed to be a new style of elected authoritarians capable of generating considerable public support. Control over the major media and use of the secret police were combined with attacks on political opponents, with many jailed or murdered. No longer communist, the regime touted its role as a bastion of Christian conservatism, supporting the Orthodox Church, limiting gay rights, supporting a conservative family structure with new laws making protest against domestic abuse more difficult. Military spending went up (at the expense of pledges toward economic development), and the regime began engaging in new (often highly popular) foreign policy ventures – particularly in the Middle East – while also seizing the Crimea from Ukraine. Not a few observers were remined of elements of the pre-Soviet Russian political tradition.

Study questions

1. What were the main functions of the Soviet state?
2. What were the main accomplishments of the Soviet system? What were the principal weaknesses?
3. What have been the main features of East European (including Russian) states since the fall of communism?

Further reading

Joseph Rothschild and Nancy Wingfield, *Return to Diversity: a political history of Eastern Europe since World War II* (4th ed., Oxford University Press, 2007)

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Latin America

Overview Generalizations about political patterns in recent Latin American history are quite difficult; different countries have had different experiences. On the whole the first half of the 20th century tended to highlight authoritarian rule, often populist in tone, though there were major exceptions. Since the 1970s more democratic, parliamentary forms have prevailed, though again with exceptions. Through the century Latin American governments (under various regimes) tended to expand their functions, particularly in adding new welfare efforts and greater involvement in economic development. Despite the frequent importance of the military in politics, aggressive policies were rare, and a number of regional trade and human rights agreements emerged from the interwar period onward. United States interference in Latin America was an important political constraint, involving direct intervention against a number of leftist governments.

Particular episodes A number of small revolutions occurred, in a variety of Latin American countries (Brazil, the Andes). The Mexican revolution of 1910 was a particularly important rising, featuring liberal protests against a longstanding authoritarian regime along with considerable peasant and urban worker unrest. By 1917, a partial compromise was reached with reduction of the power of the Church and partial but not nationwide land reforms. In 1920 a single political party, the National Revolutionary Party, gained control: independent political activity was repressed, but a single six-year term limit on the president avoided the drawbacks of more traditional one-man rule. The new regime highlighted popular culture, including indigenous culture. The revolution had some influence on political movements in other Latin American countries. The Cuban revolution in the late 1950s, again against a dictator, ultimately led to a communist regime that emphasized education and public health advance, across racial lines, while repressing political dissent. Some linkage developed with Marxist protest efforts in the Andes region and later in Venezuela. A somewhat different transformation occurred in Costa Rica in 1948. After a brief civil war the government abolished the military and declared a policy of peace. This led to decades of stable civilian rule and a leading role in global human rights discussions, along with considerable economic development.

Major populist regimes A number of Latin American countries expanded their manhood suffrage in the period between the wars, though property or literacy requirements remained in some cases, and there was a certain amount of oscillation. Several stable parliamentary governments emerged, for example in Uruguay. But there was a strong tendency to form authoritarian, populist regimes, often after a period of instability or radical protest. In Brazil Getulio Vargas served as president for most of the period 1930-1951, seizing power as a provisional president and then holding on either through elections or simple assertion of authority. Opponents were handled through a mixture of negotiation and imprisonments. Under Vargas a host of new social measures included child labor laws, pension support for the elderly plus disability insurance, and regulations on workers' vacations –all giving him a reputation as the "father of the poor". The state began to take a more active economic role, supporting coffee prices and agricultural diversification; introducing a policy of "import substitution", where tariffs protected local manufacturing operations; and promoting a major steel industry. In Argentina Juan Peron, an army officer, held power frequently in the 1940s and 1950s, sometimes by fiat, sometimes through popular election. Here too, new measures sought to tackle poverty and protect workers, while opponents were violently suppressed amid severe limits on freedom of expression Several industries were nationalized, and the regime also sought to update the nation's infrastructure. At the same time the Peronist political movement (which would outlast Peron himself) took on some fascist trappings.

Democratization From the 1970s through the 1990s, the vast majority of Latin American countries became multi-party democracies, in many cases replacing previous military regimes. Mexico abandoned its one-party system in the 1990s. Support from the European Union and the United States contributed to the trend, which was also based on a belief that liberal regimes would promote economic growth. Several governments experimented with Truth and Reconciliation commissions, to call earlier regimes to account and promote national healing. On the whole the liberal-democratic trend continued into the 21st century, but more authoritarian regimes returned in a few cases, most notably Venezuela. And governments in some parts of Central America experienced new problems in controlling criminal gangs and cartels, many associated with drug trafficking. The overall political influence of the Church continued to decline – a few nations even legalized abortion, despite Catholic opposition; and a more socially-conscious movement

emerged within the Church itself. State-run education systems brought nearly universal literacy, while governments successfully sponsored other movements, for example to promote birth control.

Women's political role Postwar Latin American government also began to include strong participation by women. A few countries had granted women's suffrage between the wars, as with Ecuador in 1929, but now it became standard. Several countries, including Mexico, added provisions requiring that a certain proportion of elected officials be female. A number of women gained top political office (Chile, Nicaragua, Brazil, Argentina). Even more impressive was the high rate of officeholding in legislatures and local governments. By the 21st century women were holding over a quarter of all political positions, well above the global average and easily surpassing levels in the United States.

Study questions

1. What were the characteristics of populist authoritarian regimes.
2. How did the Mexican revolution compare to revolutions in China and Russia in the same period?
3. What were the main functions of the Latin American state in the 20th century?

Further reading

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Sub-Saharan Africa

Independent states Independence came to subSaharan African nations in various ways from the 1950s onward, though active nationalist agitation was always involved. Many colonies saw nationalist leaders arrested in the years following World War II, only to emerge as heads of new states as decolonization took hold. A few bitter struggles were involved, particularly in southern Africa where White settler minorities tried to retain power. On independence, most new nations issued constitutions assuring elections and a variety of human rights. However, these systems usually crumbled fairly quickly in favor of one-man, one party, or military rule. For the new governments faced a variety of severe problems. Economies were not robust, and Western economic interests continued to wield great power (though some nations, in policies known as "indigenization", tried to promote local ownership); many countries, trying to advance industry, neglected the larger agricultural sector. National boundaries had been defined by imperialists, not by historical communities; a number of countries, such as Nigeria, faced break-way civil war, put down only with difficulty. Many of the new nations also had few leaders with extensive political experience. Hence the tendency to assert more authoritarian control, sometimes with dictators who clung to power for decades. In the 21st century Islamic terrorist groups posed a problem in parts of West and East Africa.

Democratization By the 1990s, a number of key countries moved toward greater democracy, allowing some competitive elections and even transfers of power. Western influence played a role here. So did United Nations human rights campaigns, for example in the area of women's rights, which sometimes elicited more liberal government policies. Nigeria and Kenya were two countries where democracy took greater hold. Some countries, like Liberia (which chose the region's first female president) even recovered from a period of civil war to establish an elected government. Transformation was particularly dramatic in South Africa. A long period of deeply repressive White minority rule, from the 1920s to the 1990s, yielded to a peaceful transition and the election of Nelson Mandela as first democratic president. The nation proclaimed a "rainbow coalition" in an effort to encourage new racial harmony. With all this, however, the subcontinent remained divided; many countries had "elected" presidents who held on for one term after another, despite constitutions that stipulated term limits. Repression of opposition candidates and rigged elections were common.

Truth and reconciliation Though the concept had been pioneered in Latin America (though some claim it was actually first attempted in Uganda in the 1970S), several African nations followed periods of conflict with "truth and reconciliation" commissions, in which representatives of past regimes could admit their misdeeds, clearing the air, often without subsequent punishment, while previous victims could reclaim some dignity. South Africa under Mandela provided the most striking example, after the racist repression of the White minority, but Rwanda undertook a similar effort after a brutal genocide episode in the 1990s.

Failed states At various points, and well into the 21st century, some African nations became what began to be called failed states. The problem occurred in some other regions, but was most pronounced in parts of Africa. Essentially, because of economic weakness, frequently compounded by droughts and famines, but above all because of bitter civil strife, central governments ceased to exercise any real power. Their military and police power was matched or surpassed by factional forces. A host of services, including public health, essentially collapsed. In the worst cases, turmoil was so severe that even international humanitarian agencies had to abandon their efforts. Refugees fled into neighboring countries and beyond. The failed state was not a new problem in history – parts of Western Europe after the fall of the Roman empire showed similar symptoms – but it was striking in an age in which, generally, governments were taking on a central social as well as political role.

Coordination Soon after decolonization began, many new nations began to collaborate toward promoting democracy and human rights. The Organization of African Unity formed in 1963, with a grandiose goal of "eradicating imperialism and colonialism from the continent". The institution transformed in 2001, as the African Union, with a sharper focus on the promotion of democracy. In both its manifestations the organization helped arrange, often in cooperation with the United Nations, a number of policing efforts to try to promote stability in member nations after internal civil wars.

Functions Not surprisingly, African nations generated no major functional innovations in the decades after independence. Efforts focused on public health, the judiciary, public works and military defense. Few countries undertook significant external aggression, though there a few areas of inter-state conflict. South Africa, notably, after apartheid, drastically scaled back its military forces and became the only country in the world to abandon nuclear weaponry once achieved. Several governments experimented with land reform, a delicate issue in southern Africa given extensive White ownership. A number of governments managed considerable success in expanding school systems and also promoting birth control (often in tandem with efforts to combat the AIDs epidemic) – Kenya was a prime example.

Study questions

1. What were some of the principal "new nations" problems in many new African countries?
2. What is a failed state?
3. What were some of the leading successes of key African governments?

Further reading

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The Middle East/North Africa and Central Asia

Overview The various countries in this region had diverse political experiences in the century after World War I. A fairly consistent thread, though with important exceptions, was the absence of commitment to multi-party democracy. Key parts of the region were held as European mandate territories after the war, with boundaries that were arbitrarily determined between the British and French without great regard for political viability – an ongoing problem. Full decolonization was completed after World War II, though in the case of Algeria only after bitter struggle. Political patterns in the region were also strongly affected by outside interference, drawn by the importance of oil and more general Cold War, or post-Cold War, rivalries. Finally, a number of major internal wars affected key parts of the region: several wars pitted the

new nation of Israel against neighboring Arab states; a major conflict in the 1970s involved Iran and Iraq; after 2014 Saudi Arabia and Iran conducted a brutal proxy war in Yemen. Generally, nations in the region maintained unusually high military budgets, urged on by arms exporters in the United States, Russia and elsewhere.

Forms of government This was the only large region where monarchy persisted strongly, and in some cases, as with Jordan, the monarchies themselves were new. Saudi Arabia, the Arab Emirates and other Gulf nations, and Morocco were the key cases in point. Egypt however cast off a rather weak monarch in the 1950s, and earlier the collapse of the Ottoman Empire completed the end of hereditary rule in Turkey. The new nation of Israel committed to democracy quickly after World War II, but amid huge complications concerning the political rights of many Palestinians; Turkey, authoritarian between the wars, gradually moved toward greater democracy. The Arab Spring risings in 2010 aimed at greater democracy and commitments to human rights, but they quickly failed except in Tunisia. During most of the period most countries in the region were ruled by an authoritarian strongman and/or a single party; this was the form of government reestablished in Egypt after the Arab spring, and preserved amid bitter civil war in Syria. In Iran, ruled by a monarch during much of the 20th century, the 1979 revolution established an authoritarian theocracy but with somewhat competitive elections for officials operating under the supervision of the leading Ayatollah. In the central Asian nations that gained independence with the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, authoritarian regimes emerged quickly, often in continuing cooperation with Russia. Finally, internal strife and outside interference combined in the 21st century to create essentially failed states in Lebanon, Yemen and Libya.

Religion Religion and religious strife continued to play an outsize role in many of the region's governments. This was a key theme in the unusual Iranian revolution of 1979, where opposition to a failing autocrat initially included liberal and Marxist elements that were simply overwhelmed by Islamic conservatives. The regime would go on to enforce a moderately strict version of Islamic law, for example in matters of women's dress. The Saudi Arabian government continued to sponsor a religious police, regulating dress and habits and severely limiting entertainment options; this approach began to ease slightly in the second decade of the 21st century. Saudi officials also underwrote Islamic initiatives in other countries, in the region and also in South Asia. Over time Israel, initially rather secular, committed increasingly to Judaism. Lebanon was bitterly divided among Christians and Sunni and Shiite Muslims. Iran after the revolution supported Shiite movements in a number of countries, including Lebanon and Yemen. In contrast, in several countries authoritarian leaders worked to control Islamic political movements, often providing important protections for religious minorities: this was true in Iraq before the 2003 American invasion, where a Sunni leader presided over a majority Shiite nation; in Egypt; and in Syria. Here the religious thrust was an important factor as an opposition movement – as with the Muslim Brotherhood, established In Egypt in 1928. Finally amid the chaos of American invasion of Iraq plus civil war in Syria, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) emerged in 2014, briefly ruling a considerable stretch of territory and subjecting it to a particular version of Islamic law, with great cruelty to many women and religious minorities. Movements of this sort also sponsored recurrent terrorism in the region and beyond.

Important markers Western powers had planned to carve up Turkey after World War I along with the rest of the defunct Ottoman Empire, but this was thwarted by a powerful Turkish military movement under Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk). Turkish majority rule was established, amid some bitter strife with Greek and other minorities and considerable forced population relocation. Ataturk then proceeded to set up a strong authoritarian government bent on "revolution from above". Under government leadership, a secular school system expanded rapidly; the Turkish language was shifted to a Latin alphabet; decrees altered styles of dress, with men required to wear Western-style hats; and the state sponsored a number of new factories while setting tariffs to protect national industry. Ataturk set up a parliament and introduced women's suffrage, in 1927, but a single People's Party effectively excluded any opposition. Islamic influence was curtailed, though not suppressed. Over time, Turkey would evolve toward greater political openness, with competitive elections in the later 20th century alternating with periods of secular military rule; but in the 21st century Islamic influence began to increase and a new leader introduced more authoritarian measures – one of several examples of this trend in the world at large. Other major developments in the region included the "Suez crisis" of 1956: a new regime in Egypt seized control of the Suez Canal from British and French authorities and, with backing from the United States and the Soviet

Union, held off a threat of attack. Egyptian management of the Canal proved quite successful from that point onward. Another important milestone involved the creation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting States (OPEC) in 1960. During the first half of the twentieth century, the region's oil resources had been dominated by Western companies. New or stronger national governments after World War II managed to wrest control away from foreign ownership; oil revenues began to flow back into the region, with huge results in places like Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. The formation of OPEC (predominantly though not exclusively Middle Eastern) introduced greater ability to manage supply and pricing. Governments in oil-rich countries began to utilize oil revenues to expand urban development and create new universities, along with a great deal of personal enrichment for the upper class.

Study questions

1. What factors contributed to the pervasiveness of authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa?
2. What was the role of Islamic movements in the politics of the region?
3. How did Ataturk's Turkey represent a revolution from above?

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South and Southeast Asia

Overview Decolonization, taking hold in these regions from 1946 onward (Philippines), led to a variety of government forms, and diversity has persisted. Straightforward authoritarianism has faded in the region, except in Myanmar where a brief democratic episode has given way to renewed military rule and political suppression. Religion is a less important factor in the region than is true in the Middle East, though Pakistan is an exception, and Brunei is essentially an Islamic monarchy. Several other majority-Islamic countries, such as Indonesia, pay some attention to religious rules but with less intensity. Southeast Asia is also characterized by an important regional institution, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Formed in 1961 as a Cold War grouping, the organization has evolved to manage a number of regional issues with a distinctive spirit of compromise, called the ASEAN way; it also has taken a firm stance against the presence of nuclear weapons. South Asia, in contrast, is more involved in regional conflict.

Authoritarianism to democracy. Several countries emerged from colonial rule with a brief pledge of parliamentary democracy, only to give way to an authoritarian ruler. This was the pattern in both Indonesia and the Philippines. In turn however, in the 1980s, substantial democracy returned, with genuine political competition – part of the larger democratic wave of the late 20th century. Malaysia in fact introduced a parliamentary system partly modeled on Britain from independence onward, though freedom of the press has been an issue. The Philippines, after toppling its dictator in the 1980s, did elect a more authoritarian president in the 21st century, but he pledged to step down of his own accord. Pakistan is something of an intermediate case. The nation began in 1947 as a secular republic, after the biter split with India; but it declared itself an Islamic republic in 1956, with increased pressure from Islamic political groups. Periods of democratic rule have alternated with military control. The nation of Bangladesh split away from Pakistan in 1971, as a result of democratic protest; this country, a secular republic, has a democratic parliamentary form of government. Singapore offers another distinctive case. The city-state

has had an elected government since independence in 1965. However the government exercises tight control over the political process. Singapore also has been a leader since the 1990s in protesting the unduly Western slant of international human rights efforts, arguing that regional definitions should allow for greater emphasis on community cohesion and prosperity, less on individualism.

Vietnam This is a nation forged through a combination of anti-colonial national independence movement and communist revolution, winning through finally in the 1970s. After a brief adjustment period the government introduced a policy similar to that of China, with strict political control but considerable latitude for private enterprise in business though under overall state guidance. The neighboring country of Cambodia went through a post-independence period under a brutal dictator responsible for substantial genocide until Vietnamese intervention and a period of United Nations administration led to a new but milder form of authoritarian rule.

India: government form Indian nationalists still debate the many shortcomings of British rule (though many Indians partially disagree), including the grudging and slow inclusion of Indians in the actual administration under the Raj. Nevertheless, when India actually set up its own government in 1947, it quickly replicated many features of the British system. A two-house legislature was established, based on universal suffrage, with an independent executive and a separate, often powerful, judiciary. The elected prime minister serves as principal executive True to Indian tradition, and regional realities, the government was set up on a federal basis, with 25 states and a few other territories. In the states, as well, a parliamentary system operates. Law codes continue to be based heavily on British precedent, though important modifications have been introduced including a measure repealing the outlawing of homosexuality.. India's basic government structure has survived quite well, with a particularly impressive capacity to organize elections for up to 900 million voters with a minimum of corruption or violence – maklng the nation by far the largest democracy in the world, and by now one of the more stable.

Functions Government functions have been fairly standard for a modern regime (qualified of course by the federal system). Basic infrastructure has received great attention, including a recent initiative to expand access to sanitary toilets. The government has worked hard to expand education and promote industrial development, including establishing an import substitution policy to limit imports of items like automobiles in favor of national manufacture. Government support for the "Green revolution" was also an important move. Early on, the new nation abolished the caste system – a huge reform– and over time the government has attempted to support opportunities for the former lowest caste, the *Dalits,* through access to higher education and some government posts – with mixed success. Promotion of women has also been important, with measures taken to protect their independence in voting (seeking to prevent interference by fathers or husbands) and more recently to assure a certain percentage of elected posts for women. Legislation has also sought to limit child marriage while the judiciary has attacked domestic violence – though in both cases with qualified success. In other words, the government has taken an active hand in social issues and even social restructuring. At the same time, limitations have also been important: an effort in the 1970s to promote birth control had to be modified in face of popular opposition. In religion, the nation was established as a secular republic, with religious freedom. However, Hindu-Muslim tensions have been a recurrent problem and in the 21st century, under a new Hindu Nationalist prime minister, government measures against Muslims, including police raids at Muslim universities, have become more common (along with growing restrictions on the freedom of the press). On another front, while the government has historically tried to avoid foreign entanglements, it has maintained a large military force while also establishing nuclear capacity, refusing to sign onto the international non-proliferation agreement. Recurrent clashes with Pakistan and China have fallen short of major war. In the 21st century India has lagged behind Chinese military and economic expansion, creating a growing issue for the future. Finally, the government has yet to establish a very clear position on the environment, a crucial issue in a huge nation that burns a great deal of coal and faces considerable atmospheric pollution.

Study questions

1. What are the varying roles of religion in the governments of South and Southeast Asia?
2. What is the Singaporean argument on human rights?

3. Why have a few countries in the region, headed by India, had distinctive success in maintaining democratic political forms?

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East Asia

Overview The nations of East Asia have had diverse political experiences over the past century. North Korea, freed from Japanese control but under Soviet influence, developed a strongly authoritarian family dynasty, which also managed to create a powerful military apparatus. South Korea and Taiwan underwent a somewhat familiar transition from authoritarian to democratic. Japan, after loss in war and American occupation, became a stable democracy. China came under communist control in 1949 and has maintained a strongly authoritarian regime, but with a number of shifts in policy and governance. The region may despite diversity display some core unity around a residue of Confucian values that emphasize stability and community cohesion – on strong display in the well organized regional response to the Covid pandemic of 2020-1. In another interesting similarity, in the 21st century regimes in the region struggled against population stagnation or decline without permitting much immigration.

Japan After authoritarian military rule during the 1930s and World War II years, Japan under American occupation became a democracy, with female suffrage. Emperor worship was banned, and the emperor became a ceremonial figurehead. Parliamentary democracy proceeded in Japan without major disruption, with considerable freedom for press, religion and the like. During much of the postwar period, while there was political competition, the Liberal Democratic Party dominated, meaning that negotiations within the party were often more important than inter-party transitions. The Japanese system was also noteworthy for the close relationship between government and business – what some competitors referred to as "Japan, Inc." Government support for business helped propel the economy forward, making Japan at one point the world's second largest economy. By the 1980s, government measures helped the nation deal with considerable environmental pollution, with air quality improved in major cities. The government also renounced militarism: Article 9 of the new constitution disavowed war, and while Japan did ultimately build a military force it was clearly defensive in nature, with public opinion (for the most part) firmly resisting fuller military development. By the 21st century Japan was facing new problems of population decline; here, government measures to encourage more female participation in the labor force and provide assistance in child care had more inconclusive results.

"Pacific Rim" Taiwan came under control of the Chinese Nationalist government in 1949, as it was forced out of China proper – though the People's Republic continued to claim Taiwan as part of its territory. Initially, the new regime established authoritarian controls. Similarly in South Korea, its independence reestablished, an authoritarian regime took hold; this extended past the period of the Korean War, when North and South Korea clashed (with great power participation) with ultimately inconclusive results (though military expenditures remained high on both sides). Strong governments in both South Korea and Taiwan helped support rapid industrial growth, as the Pacific Rim became one of the world's most dynamic industrial regions. By the later 20th century and into the 21st, both countries evolved toward functioning democracies, with multi-party competition and considerable protection for individual rights. The city-state of Hong Kong, under British rule, also established a functioning democracy. The British ceded Hong Kong back to the People's Republic of China in 1997, which in turn pledged to maintain the existing structure – "one country, two systems". However increasing repression within China spread to Hong Kong by 2020, and competitive democracy effectively ended.

China: government form The Chinese communist party won out, establishing the People's Republic of China after prolonged civil war, in 1949, and quickly launched the process of building an authoritarian state. Competing political parties were banned, with a few token exceptions. As in the Soviet Union, party control extended widely; party representatives even oversaw each university. Mao Zedong, the

revolutionary leader, maintained his ascendancy until his death , with a number of purges of potential opposition. After his death, the system changed to some extent: leaders served for fixed terms, with an orderly transfer of power. To be sure, a major democratic protest in 1989 was put down with great force, in what is sometimes referred to as the Tiananmen Square massacre. Early in the 21st century, however, there were some indications that the regime was informally loosening its hold, with more open political discussions on social media. However, a new president, Xi Jinping, took over in 2013 and quickly imposed greater controls. Anti-corruption campaigns put new pressure on top officials and business leaders alike, with a few imprisoned outright. Access to international social media was curbed through what was called the "Great Firewall", and media systems within China were carefully monitored. Propaganda increasingly emphasized nationalist themes, along with abundant praise for the leader. The tradition of limited terms was scrapped, as Xi set up the possibility of ruling for life; and Xi's political writings were elevated to the status of those of Mao himself. Most notably, the regime began to utilized advanced technology, including facial recognition systems, to increase the monitoring of ordinary citizens and "private" life.. This was an important (possibly ominous) extension of the powers of the authoritarian state.

China's government: functions Immediately on taking power, like the Soviet Union before it, the new regime began extending school systems and public health facilities, quickly establishing an effective government role in these areas – ultimately including rapid expansion of the university network. Other reforms were introduced: the government finally ended footbinding once and for all, and it also moved against arranged marriage, in favor of more individual choice. Building on but extending earlier traditions, the regime also worked to establish careful controls over culture. Government propaganda extolled the regime and its leader. Movies and other media were carefully monitored, initially to avoid Western influences. In the 1960s, Mao orchestrated the so-called Cultural Revolution (1966-76), forcing many intellectuals and professionals to do rural labor, limiting the universities, attacking traditional cultural monuments, all designed to assert power and undermine the Confucian tradition. By the 1970s this disruptive effort ended, university prestige was reestablished, and selected Confucian traditions were treated with greater respect (the regime even established a "Confucius Institute" to extend soft power operations abroad, teaching Chinese language and literature). Over the longer term, considerable cultural supervision remained. Religion was carefully monitored: a new Buddhist-like movement, the Falun Gong, was persecuted; Christian groups needed government approval to function publicly (this included a special agreement with the Catholic Church); in the 21st century the regime cracked down on the Muslim Uighur ethnic group in the northwest, setting up compulsory reeducation camps and blocking traditional religious practices (while also moving Han Chinese settlers into the region). The new regime was characteristically fairly cautious in foreign and military policy, though it intervened against United States involvement in the Korean War. Mao did insist on a nuclear role, claiming that otherwise China would be "bullied". And under Xi, military expenditures increased considerably; a network of bases was established in the South China Sea; aggressive moves on the frontier with India increased, as did threast to Taiwan. Under Xi as well the Chinese launched a "Belt and Road" initiative in 2013 to extend infrastructure into central and southeast Asia, plus parts of Africa and Europe, to extend Chinese economic operations and, arguably, expand political influence as well. Finally the regime began to crack down on adverse publicity in other countries, using economic sanctions to counter what it saw as dangerous criticisms in areas like human rights policies.

Economic and demographic policy Mao attempted several different economic policies, aimed at industrialization and self-sufficiency. Initially, government support for heavy industry imitated the Soviet approach. Then a "Great Leap Forward" policy sought to take advantage of the huge population by emphasizing small manufacturing operations. The effort failed (though many Chinese may have gained useful new experience), which is one reason Mao then turned to the Cultural Revolution as distraction. In the later 1970s, however, the regime moved to a new approach. While state controls over the economy remained tight, private enterprise and even foreign business gained new latitudes (along with unprecedented openness to international visitors and advisors, with many Chinese allowed to study abroad). China seemed to be pioneering a combination of authoritarian politics and a relatively open economic system, even joining the World Trade Organization. The results were spectacular, in rapid economic growth, urbanization, and reduction of poverty. Along with this the regime imposed a unique system of demographic control, to end excessive population growth and its drag on the economy: many

families were limited to a single child, and some women were forced to abort or were even sterilized as part of this process. In the 21st century the regime encountered growing problems with choking pollution and began haltingly to develop a new environmental approach. It also faced population ageing; birth rate limitations were eased, but it was not clear that the regime could actually motivate a significant increase in the birth rate. Here, along with the effort to extend great power status, were clear issues for the future.

Study questions

1. Did government systems and policies in East Asia demonstrate any common features?
2. What have been the many changes in the governance system in communist China since 1949?
3. Do government systems help explain the unusual economic success of most East Asian nations in the past half-century?

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