

Approaches to Comparative Politics

Section 1

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Fall 2024

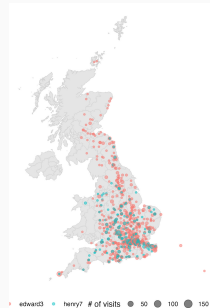
Gov 20: Foundations of Comparative Politics

- 1 Introductions
- 2 Review of section syllabus
- 3 Discussion

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About me

- Sima
- 3rd year in the Government Department
- Grew up in the Bay Area in California
- State building in 19th-century Egypt and Iran using statistical and computational methods



Introduce your partner

Turn to your partner, and say hello! Learn their:

- Name
- School year
- Hometown
- Why are they taking the class
- Movie they saw this summer or favorite song they listened to

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Review of section syllabus

Section website

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This week's readings

- David Samuels, *Comparative Politics* (Pearson, 2013), pp. 4-25.
- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Penguin 2002), pp. 1-36, 67-87, 105-122.
 - As Professor Levitsky noted, this is a complex reading! So focus on the main argument and don't get bogged down in the details.

How to read (speed version)

These questions help us decide what's important to identify in readings:

1. What question is the author trying to answer? [*question*]
2. Why is this question important? [*so what?*]
3. What is the author's answer? [*hypothesis*]
4. How does the author support their answer? [*evidence*]
5. What are the main arguments that the author is arguing against? [*counterclaims*]
6. Are you convinced by their argument? Why or why not? [*analysis*]

How to contribute to discussion

Students can participate by being a:

- *Text Reviewer*: What does the text say?
- *Analyst*: What do you think about what the text says?
- *Respondent*: What do you think about your classmate's analysis of the text?
- *Synthesizer*: Where is this discussion going? What are we missing?

Let's write them! Turn to your neighbor and brainstorm a couple of ideas:

- Section 1
- Section 2

1. Why do we study comparative politics? What are the goals of the comparative method?

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 - To describe and explain **“who gets what, when and how”** (as cited in Samuels 2013, p. 4) in different places around the world

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2. What are the components of a good hypothesis? How do we synthesize and evaluate one?

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2. What are the components of a good hypothesis? How do we synthesize and evaluate one?
 - **Falsifiable:** we can test it (and potentially refute it) with empirical evidence
 - **Linkage between cause and effect:** provides an explanation or description of the phenomena we are trying to understand

Discussion

1. Why do we study comparative politics? What are the goals of the comparative method?
2. What are the components of a good hypothesis? How do we synthesize and evaluate one?
3. What are the methods that comparativists apply to the questions of comparative politics? What types of cases do we study?
 - There are many different methods that comparativists use to answer questions. The readings emphasized the “**method of agreement**” and “**method of difference**” as well as different ways you could go about supporting your arguments (**qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods**).

The goals of section this semester are:

1. thinking critically about complex and important ideas, and
2. writing persuasive arguments that marshal concrete evidence.

Important links

- Section website
- Section syllabus
- Week 1 recap

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