This article reviews four decades of scholarship on political development. It contends that the theoretical ambitions of the early political development literature to frame the comparative inquiry of politics and political change in less developed countries were undermined by intellectual challenges to the paradigms of modernization and structural functionalism and that the literature’s teleological dimension was contradicted by real-world events. Nonetheless, in subsequent decades, the field made great advances in the study of political institutions, democratic stability and breakdown, state structures, civil society, and the uneven character of political development itself. The article argues that amid manifold evidence of plural forms of political development and decay at the century’s end, the field should avoid relapses into neomodernization theory and instead focus on such issues as state reform, democratic governance, political representation and accountability, and the organization of civil societies. Such an expansive and fluid research agenda will enable the field of political development to generate important theoretical advances in comparative politics.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, REVISITED

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In the past half century, the field of political development virtually belonged to comparative politics alone, and there was no area of comparative politics that lay legitimately outside its scope. At midcentury, political culture and political institutions, and political order and political breakdown, all came under the scrutiny of the best and the brightest of a generation of post-war comparativists. Indeed, when the field of political development was new in the 1960s, it constituted the conceptual frontier of comparative politics.

In its heyday, the intellectual terrain of political development was geographically circumscribed and anchored to a particular moment in 20th-century history. Although it was certainly possible to study the formation of nations and states across continents and time, political development as a field came to be associated with the new states of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, and somehow, the older states of Latin America—even if the paradigm of modernization that sprang from and blurred the concept of political devel-
opment never fit that region as well. Political development was viewed as a teleological process, applied in a context of decolonization and stretched to those areas of the globe on the path toward economic development. The aims of U.S. Cold War foreign policy meshed almost perfectly with the most exciting intellectual trends of the time, and a generation of comparative political scientists turned themselves loose on places as far afield as Turkey, Burma, Mexico, and India.

What was the intellectual justification for a geographic focus among theoretically driven, leading comparativists? Because developing countries were building new nations, states, and political systems out of the remnants of colonial rule, they faced such distinctive challenges as making society cohere and developing state capacity (although these challenges had presumably been faced at some earlier point in time by old states). Scholars presumed that the study of the problems and challenges that followed from modernizing political trends constituted a qualitatively different intellectual project from studies in First World democracies of constitutional structures, developed ideologies, public policy, and even the new field of political behavior. To address the form that political participation took among new citizens in new states, scholars eschewed the concerns that motivated the voting studies of the advanced industrial democracies—partisan identification, the determinants of voting behavior, and issue salience—in favor of a focus on political loyalty, values, and identities. However, they also believed that the framework for the new study of political development that they were generating based on these Third World cases would be applicable everywhere—across time and place. A comparative politics based on the systematic, cross-national study of such areas as education, communications, bureaucracy, and political culture would be superior to one that presented a smorgasbord of regionally specific approaches.1

In hindsight, the political development literature of the 1960s was a grand and bold experiment that failed in the crucial sense that younger scholars rejected rather than advanced the project that inspired it. Modernization as a paradigm was discredited by countless intellectual challenges, and its teleological dimension could not be sustained in light of real-world events that contradicted its predictions. Structural functionalism, moreover, did not take root as a foundational approach to comparative politics. This failure raises the serious question of whether this contribution to this special issue of Com-

1. See Pye (1965, pp. 5-6), who decried the practice of stressing some factors in the study of certain countries and others with different countries. Interestingly, the different lines of inquiry of different area studies that he identified 35 years ago, such as the anthropological tradition in African studies and the emphasis on political movements and nationalism in south and Southeast Asian studies, are still evident today.
Comparative Political Studies should be little more than an intellectual history, another retrospective critique of a field that generated intense criticism over a period longer than that of its most prolific contributions. Indeed, whereas comparative scholars may still debate how to study political institutions or political economy, at the century’s end, they might more appropriately ask whether they should be studying political development or whether studies of political institutions, political economy, citizen politics, and regime transition might not be better suited to address the questions traditionally raised by political development.

Paradoxically, these questions about the field’s future surface at a moment when the field is poised to revisit the grand debates of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The two great trends at the century’s end—globalization and the third wave of democratization—have led scholars to return to the large question of the nature of the relationship between economic and political development and even to revive modernization theory. Relentless globalization appears to be making world politics as homogenous as popular culture, to the point where one may reasonably wonder today whether distinctions between the First World, Second World, and Third World retain any conceptual validity. International norms (and blue-bereted troops), moreover, are making the world safer for democracy than at any time in history. Indeed, it would be difficult not to be tempted to see in the growth of middle classes, the dissemination of new technologies bringing more information more quickly to more of the globe’s inhabitants than ever before, and in the toppling of dictatorships, some connection between socioeconomic change and the march of so many nations toward Western-style democratic governance. If the field of political development depends on the success of political development, then these trends that dominated the 1990s may have breathed new life into political development.

As tempting as such a development might be to anyone attempting to resuscitate the field, any success thus achieved is certain to be tenuous. If all countries are now democracies, there would be nothing distinctive about political participation in Peru, political representation in Brazil, and ethnic identities in India, and there would be no compelling reason to reserve a separate domain of inquiry for political development. The greater danger, however, would not be that modernization theory would fall victim to its own success but that it will still be incapable of addressing too many anomalies to anchor political development studies. Now, as a quarter century ago, there exists manifold evidence of plural forms of political development and decay that belie the notion that modernizing forces will level political differences and engender uniform institutions and norms modeled after the Anglo-American democracies. The resistance to globalism, the resurgence
of ethnic conflict, and the rapid shifts of political loyalties and identities in the year 2000 suggest that it would be as serious a mistake to assume now, as it was in the year 1965, a homogenous global politics founded on a universal victory for democracy. Indonesia’s and Russia’s agony over whether to remain single nations, Venezuela’s self-inflicted mortal wounds to its democratic institutions, and the emergence in Mexico of a postmodern rebellion among the descendents of an ancient civilization are developments that could hardly be more incongruous with what modernization theory would expect.

Paradoxically, these startling developments that render the concept of modernization somewhat problematic at the same time help to make the case that political development deserves to survive as a legitimate subfield of inquiry of comparative politics. At its best, the field of political development will study questions that other subfields would eschew, in an encompassing political context that other subfields might judge overly ambitious. The new and renewed roles of states in development, the resurgence of ethnic identities and conflict and the challenges they pose to the integrity of nations, and the establishment of new democratic political institutions in former authoritarian countries all constitute compelling reasons to revitalize the field of political development.

This article contends that if the field is to be more successful in the future than in the past, it must not bet that future on a teleological view of the development process as one that leads to a more just, effective, and enduring political order; an assumed uniformity of political, economic, and social organization; or the failure or success of any particular development path taken. If political development as a field is to flourish, moreover, it would also be wise to reject any effort to discover structures and functions that would serve as requirements for a shared political future of democratic order and economic development and even the adoption of socioeconomic modernization as the key independent variable explaining political outcomes. Rather, I endorse an approach that leaves open and subject to inquiry the independent influences on political development and that disaggregates the component parts of political development—the rise and fall of regimes, the establishment and decay of the most important institutions of a political system, the connections between the political and social order, and the role of states in development. Viewed as a dependent variable, political development is not an approach but a subject area to which any number of approaches—culturalism, structuralism, or rationalism, or political economy, historical institutionalism, or regime analysis—can be brought to bear.

The article is organized as follows. In the first section, I review the major debates, assumptions, and impasses of the period from 1958 to 1975. In the second section, I identify some of the most important scholarship of the latent
period of political development studies from approximately 1975 to 1989, when arguably some of the most exciting research in the comparative politics of the development of political institutions, states, and societies took place. In the third section, I examine the resurgence in the 1990s of an intellectual faith in modernization and democratization, and I return to the question of what political development should and should not be. Finally, I look ahead toward a new agenda for political development and its potential contribution to theory building in comparative politics.

THE HEYDAY OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ITS CRITICS

In its most prolific decade—the 1960s—the field of political development was led by the Committee on Comparative Politics of the Social Science Research Council. A series of nine volumes sponsored by this committee examined the connections between political development and a variety of influences, including communications (Pye, 1963), bureaucracy (LaPalombara, 1963), education (Coleman, 1965), political culture (Pye & Verba, 1965), and political parties (LaPalombara & Weiner, 1966); modernization in Japan and Turkey (Ward & Rustow, 1964); crises and sequences in political development (Binder et al., 1971); the formation of states in Western Europe (Tilly, 1975); and crises of political development in Europe and the United States (Grew, 1978).

It was in fact a less homogeneous body of scholarship than is commonly assumed. Most scholars will probably remember political development as “the extent to which patterns of behavior identified as ‘modern’ tend to prevail over those considered to be ‘traditional’” and as taking place when “achievement considerations replace ascriptive standards, when functional specificity replaces functional differences in social relations, and when universalistic norms supersede particularistic ones” (Pye, 1965, p. 12). However, this was only one of several approaches; Pye (1965, pp. 11-13) recounted at least six additional definitions that ranged from the creation of political and governmental conditions necessary for realizing higher economic performance to the development of democracy. One goal was to study from a theoretical perspective the development of states and institutions and the transformation of subjects into citizens, in which case, there was no reason to exclude studies of the advanced industrial societies. Another was to study the politics

2. Indeed, Japan, along with Turkey, was the subject of a separate volume (Ward & Rustow, 1964). Pye and Verba (1965) included chapters on Japan, England, Germany, and Italy, and the
of the so-called developing areas. Yet, even when the latter dominated their agenda, political development scholars self-consciously and explicitly rejected an idiographic, area studies approach in favor of one based on the systematic and comparative study of political systems that arguably aimed to produce a nomothetic theory of comparative politics.

**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AS SOCIOLOGICAL DETERMININISM: MODERNIZATION AND STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM**

The approach adopted in this first decade of political development studies was unabashedly sociological, with social theory rather than political philosophy inspiring the vision and research agendas of the study of the developing world. Sociological and even anthropological theories and concepts were consciously employed in the comparison of political systems because the legal and institutional concepts of extant political science, with an excessive influence on formal governmental institutions and laws, were deemed inadequate for analyzing and comparing new political systems that differed so radically in scale, structure, and culture. Almond (1960) contended that political scientists could better understand politics in these countries through studying society rather than government:

Constitutions and formal governmental institutions in these areas change so frequently and typically bear so remote a relation to actual performance that detailed description would be of little help in predicting the behavior of these systems…. It is more important to analyze their traditional cultures, the impact of Western and other influences on them, their political socialization and recruitment practices, and their political “infrastructures”—interest groups, political parties, and media of communication. (p. viii)

With its focus on society, the literature on political development was profoundly influenced by the behavioral revolution. However, in its approach, scholars brought three sets of lenses not shared by other branches of comparative political science: modernization, structural functionalism, and a teleological view of development.

**Modernization.** The paradigm of modernization, inspired by Weber, departed from the premise that from economic development would flow a series of changes in the social order that would transform political systems. With urbanization, migrants would shift their orientations toward politics,
away from parochial loyalties to their villages and their strongmen and toward their nations and the legitimate state bureaucracies that governed them. The spread of mass communication to literate peoples would be part and parcel of this process—the guarantor of a modern citizenry (Deutsch, 1961; Lerner, 1958). These transformations of traditional subjects into modern democratic citizens were deeply personal, did not appear to involve a redistribution of power, and were apparently not subject to being suppressed. Although modernization literature had a dichotomous view of society as either traditional or modern, the political development literature of the 1960s also exhibited ambivalence about precisely how separate the traditional and modern spheres were and even how beneficial or detrimental each was to political development.3, 4

Structural functionalism. The second major strand of the first decade of political development studies, borrowed heavily from Durkheim, was a structural-functional approach to politics. With the goal of establishing common categories that would make possible comparisons across vastly different nations, this was the most theoretically ambitious strand of the political development literature. Structural functionalism was based on the notion that all political systems had political structures and that the same functions needed to be performed in all political systems. Structures included formal institutions—parliaments, executives, bureaucracies, and courts—and more informally structured political parties and interest groups, kinship and lineage, status and caste groups, and even riots and street demonstrations (Almond, 1960, p. 8). Knowing which structures to compare across political systems would come from understanding functions that every political system needed to perform: on the input side, the functions included political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication, and on the output side, they included rule making, rule application, and rule adjudication. Structural functionalism shifted analytic categories from state to political system, powers to functions, offices to roles, institutions to structures, and public opinion and citizenship training to political culture and political socialization (Almond, 1960, p. 4). Although it is often elided with modernization, structural functionalism represented a quite

3. Lijphart (1977, p. 21) criticized much of the literature for forcing societies into one or the other model.
4. As Pye (1965) noted, based on the experiences of England and Japan,

Strong and effective traditional systems may provide the ideal basis for subsequent development if they provide a people with a firm sense of identity, but the strength of the traditional order will impede development to the degree that it makes impossible the infusion of any new or modern elements of political culture. (p. 21)
distinctive approach to political development, “not the political consequences of modernization, but the political requisites for an effectively functioning modern society” (Huntington & Domínguez, 1975, p.5).

*Political development as teleology.* In its most controversial formulation, political development was viewed as a movement toward one or more goals for the political system, most often but not necessarily as part of the more general process of modernization (Huntington & Domínguez, 1975, p. 4). Conceptually, this approach implied that there could be political development and economic development. This was the most overtly normative of the strands of the political development literature. For Pye (1965, p. 11), the risk of confusing objective analysis with advocacy and idealistic preferences was justified because the leaders in the new states themselves were at least as intensely concerned with political development as they were with economic development. One can only imagine how inhabitants of former colonies received these analyses, however well intentioned, of the movement of their societies toward the ideal, Western type.

These multiple conceptions of political development betrayed, as Pye (1965) once freely admitted, that the field tried not to adhere to a “rigid definition of political development” (p. 13). They were also not above self-criticism. Coleman (1971) critiqued the teleological and modernization dimensions of political development for (a) suppressing the enormous diversity of initial institutional patterns, (b) implying that the movement between the two poles of tradition and modernity was irreversible and unilinear, and (c) having an “ethnocentric, Western-parochial normative bias” (p. 74). Eventually, members of the Committee on Comparative Politics did seem to accept the definition of political development advanced by Coleman (1971, p. 74) as consisting of the rising demands for equality, a greater need for capacity, and an inexorable tendency toward greater differentiation. However, this consensus came too late to provide coherence to a field that Eckstein (1982) charged as being a “muddle” that “exhibited all the traits of a too-rapid, jerry-built growth” (p. 451). By the time that Coleman sounded a call for an evolutionary notion of political development, political development had already been so buffeted by criticism that no one was present in the woods to hear it.

5. Years later, Almond (1987) vehemently denied that the primarily American political development literature presented either a monolithic or unilinear model of political development or projected Anglo-American and capitalist values on the outside world. Such a claim, he charged, could not survive “an even casual reading” (p. 447).
Dependency. The most flamboyant criticism of political development and its dominant modernization paradigm came from a generation of Latin Americans who questioned that the First World way was best and that their countries were on the postulated path toward getting there.6 Their eclectic set of writings, popularly known as dependency theory, prompted a shift in the categories and levels of analysis from the national to the international system.

Dependency theory had its intellectual antecedents in the work of United Nations economists working in Chile, who contended in the late 1940s that Latin American countries were underdeveloped because of the uneven terms of global trade. The Prebisch doctrine of unequal exchange—named for its author, the Argentine economist Raúl Prebisch—maintained that exporters of raw materials were disadvantaged in global trade relative to exporters of manufactured goods because the ready possibilities of substituting raw materials drove down the prices of commodities relative to manufactured goods (Love, 1980). Dependency theorists extended this argument to claim that the international system ensured permanent underdevelopment (Frank, 1967). They posited that the obstacles to economic development did not lie in factor endowments or in an absence of entrepreneurial spirit (as Hagen [1962] and McClelland [1961] had argued) but rather in such structural features as constraints on the supply of intermediate inputs and finished goods, grossly unequal patterns of land tenure, and coercive rural labor relations (Dos Santos, 1970; Valenzuela & Valenzuela, 1978). Insisting that the allegedly modern half of their societies needed and exploited the rural areas and urban informal labor markets of the traditional half for cheap food and labor, these theorists rejected the modern-traditional dichotomy of the political development literature and predicted that the traditional part of society would not readily become modern.7

The more well-known (and caricatured) view of dependency theory constituted an attack on transnational corporations, multilateral financial institutions, governments of center countries, and local aristocrats as agents of imperialism. Another, potentially more promising, critique of modernization

6. Almond (1987) devoted more space to answering his dependency critics than any other in his retrospective look at political development.

7. This insight about the uneven and combined development of the system, like other aspects of dependency theory, owed its inspiration to the Russian Marxists. See Trotsky (1932) for an account of Russia’s journey toward development that had drawn together different stages of the journey, combined separate steps, and represented an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms.
did not dispute that development was possible in situations of dependency but claimed that dependent development engendered very different patterns of social and political development than that which modernization theory anticipated. The extension of the franchise to middle and working classes did not follow automatically from economic growth and differentiation but rather was contingent on class alliances shaped by patterns of ownership of the export sector (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). In either case, peasants most everywhere were not free to read newspapers, organize unions, and join political parties.

Dependency critique was compelling in the field of Latin American and, to a lesser extent, African studies for a time. Its credibility was undermined, however, by its critique of foreign investment, which after World War II in fact contributed to robust growth in manufacturing industry in such places as Mexico and Brazil. Although foreign investment in primary sector commodities elsewhere did stunt both industrial and political development and investment in technologically advanced industries in the region’s larger economies rigidly segmented the labor market, these difficulties were not captured by empirical tests of international influences on economic growth. Its founders (Cardoso, 1977, 1989) charged that these tests also could not capture the effects of dependent development on society and politics.8 Dependency theory nevertheless was discredited for its conceptual and methodological fuzziness, and it lost favor in comparative politics.

**Political order and its breakdown.** The more ultimately consequential critique of the modernization literature—indeed, the turning point in the field—came with the 1968 publication of *Political Order in Changing Societies* (Huntington, 1968). Huntington devastated the notion that economic development would lead to political development and stable democracy or that all good things go together. Rather, he demonstrated that socioeconomic modernization could lead to rising demands, which in turn could destabilize political systems and cause the political order to break down. Political development, in short, could stall and even be reversed, and modernization was just as likely to lead to political decay as to political development. Military coups d’état in Africa and Latin America and the failure of regimes in east Asia and the Middle East to evolve into stable democracies bore out Huntington’s notions.

8. Unrepentant 20 years later, Cardoso (1989) asserted that it was hardly surprising that authors “who confused dependency with stagnation” could “knock down their poorly constructed theoretical house of cards,” and that in point of fact, “nothing has shaken the foundational observations of Raúl Prebisch and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA)” (p. 300).
In his seminal *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism*, O’Donnell (1973), too, challenged Lipset’s (1959) maxim: “The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances it will sustain democracy” (p. 75). O’Donnell attributed the breakdown of democracy in Latin America’s most urbanized, literate, and modern countries, including his native Argentina, to structural economic factors. Stagnation and inflation, brought on by the limited opportunities for the expansion of the domestic market for existing industries, profligate state spending, and the trade imbalances inherent in the drive to industrialize via import substitution, triggered distributional conflicts and what Huntington (1968) had called “mass praetorianism.” To achieve the social and political order required to reduce inflation and attract foreign investment to build local capital goods industries, an alliance of military officers, technocrats, and internationally oriented business imposed a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime. Thus, modernization could lead to political instability and nondemocratic outcomes. O’Donnell’s thesis was vulnerable on the question of whether all opportunities for profitable expansion short of entering into capital goods production were really exhausted (see the essays in Collier [1979]). Nevertheless, ever since its publication, theories that have held onto the notion of a positive relationship between development and democracy have exempted the middle range of development (e.g., Huntington, 1984).

By the late 1970s, the field of political development was in a low-level crisis. Modernization as a paradigm had been largely discredited by the spate of military coups that swept the second wave of democratizers, by turmoil in Iran occasioned by the apparent lack of societal conversion to modern, Western practices, and by revolutionary peasants in Vietnam, who “underscored traumatically” that agrarian societies were not “passive and inert” (Bates, 1987, p. 163). Indeed, rural radicalism had violated the expectations generated by the dominant theories in development studies, and as Bates (1987) puts it, “Peasant rebellion overthrew not only governments but also intellectual traditions” (p. 160). In the next two decades, advances in comparative political development indeed shunned socioeconomic modernization as the foundation for understanding political development and instead turned to studying political institutions, states, and societies.

**THE POLITICS OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: INSTITUTIONS, STATES, SOCIETIES**

With the project under heavy fire, the giants of the field retreated into the study of narrower (but still ambitious) research agendas in their areas of...
expertise. Myron Weiner became a major scholar of international migration and child labor. Sidney Verba solidified his status as the preeminent scholar of comparative political culture and political participation of the second half of the 20th century. Joseph LaPalombara (1970) even went so far as to suggest that the middle-level theory was inherently superior to the grand theory whose weaknesses had been so unceremoniously brought to light.

Yet, if the larger project appeared to flounder during the late 1970s and the 1980s, one might contend that the best work in political development—on such topics as political institutions, democratic breakdown and stability, state capacity, civil society, and the uneven character of political development itself—was produced just at this time. This was perhaps not a coincidence. The research agendas of students of comparative politics were inspired by the theoretical developments of the 1960s, but these younger scholars leaned on conceptual challenges from dependency, other critics, and their own extensive field work to identify fruitful new theoretical directions. Although many did not pretend to present an alternative vision of political development as grand as the original, their confrontations with the central questions of the political development literature produced both incremental steps toward intellectual progress and great paradigmatic shifts and a collective literature richer in many ways than that which had appeared to hold such progress only a few years earlier.

These works challenged the teleological and normative assumptions of the literature on political development. Political development was now generally seen to proceed unevenly across sectors and regions, to be subject to reversal, and to permit the apparently indefinite coexistence of plural forms of social identification and political organization. It was understood to be influenced either in the direction of greater stability or instability, equality or inequality, capacity or incapacity, not mainly by the international and domestic forces of modernization and urbanization alone but rather by political institutions, state structures, and the power of political ideas. Some strands of the literature of the 1970s and 1980s even questioned many of the normative assumptions of the literature on the political development of the late 1950s and the 1960s. Some scholars argued that urbanization might not always be a good thing and that public policy should find some way to encourage underemployed rural workers to remain in their communities of origin. Others, like Huntington and Nelson (1976), came to view political participation as a force that is potentially more destabilizing than democratizing.9 The scholarly

9. The formula—too many demands, an overstretched state—would also be applied to the advanced industrial democracies (Crozier, Huntington, & Watanuki, 1975).
agenda was set in large part as a reaction to dictatorships and authoritarian regimes.

From an analytic standpoint, the literature on political development in the late 1970s and the 1980s shifted its focus away from structures, functions, and roles and back to concepts and institutions that modernization and structural functionalism in the 1960s had disdained as less relevant for the new states—-institutions, powers, and offices.10 Scholars for a time subordinated the study of society to that of the state, and when they did refocus their attention on society, their vision of the way people identified themselves and associated politically could hardly have been more different than the notions of modern urban and traditional rural citizens inherited from the early political development literature.

GEOGRAPHY AGAINST THEORY—THE UNEVEN CHARACTER OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT REVEALED

In 1977, Lijphart (1977) condemned much of the literature on political development for its “fundamental error” (p. 21) of exaggerating the degree of homogeneity of the Western democratic states. He insisted that the Western model, exalted by the political development literature but appropriately decried by its critics as excessively parochial, was in fact not a Western-parochial model (as Coleman [1971, pp. 73-74] had admitted) but a British-parochial model. Other students of advanced industrial societies, who seized the opportunity to test in First World cases the assumptions of prominent political development studies, questioned whether that single model was even right. Moore’s (1966) classic work had already revealed that there was clearly more than one route to modern society. Tilly (1975) and Grew (1978) could not marshal convincing evidence to confirm that the European historical experience conformed to and provided support for the model of political development sketched out for the Third World. In addition, late industrialization in the southern periphery of Europe had apparently generated tendencies toward authoritarianism more similar to those in Latin America described by O’Donnell than to the portrait painted by the political development literature (Kurth, 1979).

The critique of the political development literature based on the Western European experience was not confined to historical sequences of state building, economic development, and democratization. Building on her earlier discovery that Breton peasants had survived modernization (Berger, 1972),

10. This shift is evident not merely among Almond’s radical critics but also among those he later (1987) identified as being in the political science mainstream—Linz and Stepan (1978), O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Berger (1981), and Lijphart (1977).
Berger, along with the economist Michael Piore (Berger & Piore, 1980), argued that advanced industrial society was lumpy and uneven and not likely at any time soon to evolve in the direction presumed by modernization theorists. For Berger and Piore, the modern economy and polity preserved their traditional sectors for economic flexibility and the votes of small farmers and shopkeepers. Hechter (1975) discovered an unexpected persistence of ethnicity in the politics of industrial societies, in particular, the maintenance of an ethnic identity opposed to England on the part of the inhabitants of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, which could not be reconciled with diffusion models that predicted that intergroup contact would lead to ethnic homogenization. If such patterns persisted in advanced industrial society, then why was it possibly reasonable to expect that they should disappear in developing countries?

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Arguably, the most productive theoretical development in comparative politics in the 1970s was the rejection of sociological determinism and the rediscovery of the centrality of politics and political institutions to political development. This movement was given powerful force by such scholars as Sartori (1969), who insisted that politics was not a projection of society or an epiphenomenon of sociology but rather that political organizations gave meaning to social forms and shaped identities and ideologies.

Both modernization theorists and their most important critics, such as Huntington and O’Donnell, had shared a view of political outcomes—be they stable democracies or authoritarian dictatorships—as substantially determined by socioeconomic processes of modernization. However, Huntington parted company with other political development theorists in recognizing that even if the origins of destabilization lay in modernization, political systems were prone to break down when political institutions were weak and lacked the capacity to process growing social demands and political mobilization. In arguing that economic and social forces were indeterminant and that their influence on political outcomes might have been filtered through political institutions as intervening variables, Huntington (1968) made a bold start toward reinserting the study of political institutions into political development.

Lijphart (1977, p. 24) developed this line of reasoning a step further in claiming that political institutions might not just be part of the problem but also a most promising solution for achieving democracy in many societies. Lijphart rightly doubted that the primordial loyalties that divided society would inevitably disappear and saw any attempts to eradicate them as potentially unsuccessful and counterproductive. Such sociologically determined
divisions were politically problematic because majoritarian democracy simply could not be superimposed on a fractured society. For societies lacking national identities, Lijphart proposed consociationalism as a means for attenuating conflict and permitting ethnically or linguistically divided groups to submit to the uncertainty of the democratic process. Lijphart’s view that societies divided by ethnicity and language might always remain so and his advocacy of constitutional engineering to solve that problem could not be easily reconciled with political development as modernization theory. Now political development would not entail the transformation of personal values and identities but rather the creative design of political institutions to guarantee minority rights and a democratic peace.

If political institutions could mediate society’s intractable divisions and make democracy possible, the wrong design or the wrong use of institutions by political leaders (probable given design flaws) could also bring it down. This insight provided the foundation for Linz and Stepan’s (1978) four-volume project on the breakdown of democratic regimes. In an intellectual world that had been so heavily influenced by the structuralism of both Right and Left, Linz and Stepan’s unabashedly political argument was that political processes actually precipitate democratic breakdowns and that certain types of individual and institutional actors confronted with similar situations would have a high probability of responding in ways that contribute to the breakdown of regimes. They identified winner-take-all presidentialism and polarized and fragmented party systems, to name just two, as flawed institutions that at best could not resolve, and at worst might exacerbate or even create, destabilizing socioeconomic conflict.

As promising as these developments were, the study of political institutions entered a quiescent period in the early 1980s. This happened not because the precepts of this line of inquiry had been proven wrong but because of real-world political events. With political parties and legislatures in much of the world in recess, scholars turned their attention to the locus of political action in authoritarian regimes—the state.

FROM SOCIETIES TO STATES AND BACK AGAIN

While scholars in many fields of political science represented in this collection built on the behavioral revolution, critics of political development led a virtual counterrevolution. Frustrated that the early political development literature treated the state as little more than a black box that generated assumed policy outcomes, these researchers set out to demonstrate not only how states actually operated internally but also how they shaped opportunities for economic development, the distribution of material resources, the
bases for political association and representation, and even political identities. Free association and plural forms of political representation could no longer be assumed.

Rediscovering the state. One of the most curious weaknesses of the earlier studies in political development was that their concern for the development of the administrative and extractive capacities of states did not translate into stronger studies of the state. It was almost assumed that the successful rationalization of the bureaucracy and differentiation of state functions would follow from the modernization of society. Beginning in the late 1970s, studies of the state’s capacity to promote development experienced a renaissance. Evans (1979) drew attention to the role of the Brazilian state in organizing alliances with international capital and domestic enterprises that had changed fundamentally the basis of international economic relations and made possible economic development. Hamilton (1982) and Waterbury (1983) contended that states in Mexico under Cárdenas and Egypt under Nasser had achieved a measure of autonomy from both international actors and their own domestic elites, which had enabled them to pursue significant developmental and redistributive policies.

In the 1970s and 1980s, states were seen as leviathans, capable not only of promoting economic development, redistributing resources, and managing transnational relations but also of patterning social conflicts (Evans, Rueschemeyer, & Skocpol, 1985) and political representation (Schmitter, 1971; Stepan, 1978). Unlike in advanced industrial society, where states benignly facilitated cooperation between labor and capital, in less developed countries, the state organized and regulated political representation with a much heavier hand. Through the institutions of corporatism, the state chartered and licensed interest groups, supported them financially, granted them representational monopolies, and reserved the right to select their leaders (Schmitter, 1974). Even students of Western Europe adopted the notion of the state as the shaper of societal representation (Berger, 1981; Katzenstein, 1985). Oi (1989) found that the Chinese Communist state organized consent among peasants through clientelism. Students of Africa argued that states had shaped not only the way in which interests came to be associated in and organized for action in political society but also the way in which citizens identified themselves. Laitin (1985) argued that the state even formatted to a degree hitherto unappreciated ethnic divisions in society; although states did not create different languages, religions, and ethnic groups, they (and their colonial forebears) often played a major role in whether those identities became politically salient and divisive.
**Back to society.** Just when studies of the state looked to how the state intruded on society, Migdal (1983) led a charge back to a society-centered focus. For Migdal (1988), Third World states did not at all look like the autonomous and all-powerful beings of the statist literature of the late 1970s. He reversed the premise of the statist literature, asking instead how societies with their persistent plurality constrained the capacities of states. As he argued (1988), “For the Third World, at least, a state-centered approach is a bit like looking at a mouse trap without at all understanding the mouse” (p. vxi). Migdal’s counterattack was well timed. In the late 1980s, states in the less developed countries began to collapse.

When scholars returned to studying society, they altered their visions of how societies developed and organized themselves for political action. The early critics of the political development literature rejected the notion that the most important bases for collective political action were rooted in kinship networks or villages and instead analyzed the political behavior of citizens largely along class lines. In the 1980s, scholars observed that citizens retained identities and beliefs that modernization should have obliterated and that citizens organized themselves and participated politically in ways that were unanticipated and novel. The social realm appeared to be somewhat autonomous from both the state and political society, and social networks and organizations were presumed to exercise as important an independent impact on political development as had industrialization and political institutions in earlier models.

*Political participation. The Civic Culture* (Almond & Verba, 1963) and the behavioral revolution that it helped usher into comparative politics seemed to promise that political participation was fundamental to a strong democracy. In the 1970s, the general concern of comparative scholars that social demands were overloading states caused scholars to question the advisability of political participation, and the simple fact that voting was not permitted in much of the world prompted them to look for different forms of political participation. As Nelson (1987, pp. 104-105) aptly puts it, the key shift in studies of political participation became possible when scholars shed the vision that political participation was inherently possible only in democratic settings and that it was a good thing, in favor of one that decoupled participation from democratic competition, permitted a wider variety of forms of participation from voting to rebellion, and maintained neutrality over the desirability of participation.

With much of the developing world in the 1970s under the boot of dictatorial regimes, one intriguing line of inquiry examined the impact of urbanization on citizen attitudes and behavior. Perlman (1976), Cornelius (1975), and
Eckstein (1977) went into the urban shantytowns of Latin America in less than democratic circumstances to investigate the political culture of the urban poor. They found that recent migrants were neither rebellious (as much of the Left of the era had hoped) nor passive. In fact, despite often living in precarious housing, they were not marginal to political and economic life but were hardworking citizens who aspired to hold good jobs, provide education to their children, and build a more secure home. Belonging to community organizations that were subject to manipulation by state authorities, at times they deferred to authority willingly, and at other times, only apparently.

Researchers also studied the political behavior of rural dwellers. Even if Bates’s claim (1987, p. 160) that these studies caused political development to become a subfield of political economy may be a combination of overstatement, exaggeration, and wishful thinking, they did inspire theoretical advances in comparative politics. Two radically different intellectual traditions—rational choice and Geertzian thick description—devastated the view of peasants as the irrational and primordial cardboard figures of modernization theory (Bates, 1981; Popkin, 1979). For Bates, peasants in tropical Africa, who were grossly disadvantaged by state policies that favored industry at the expense of agriculture and who lacked political organizations with which to defend their interests due to official repression, responded rationally in pursuing their private rather than collective interests. Scott’s (1985) highly nuanced portrait of peasants in Southeast Asia as shrewdly capable of negotiating their interests in the most lopsided of power matchups with their landlords not by engaging in dramatic revolutions but by failing to show up for work, dragging their feet in the fields, and cleverly concealing their contempt for their masters to all but one another became the conventional wisdom.

Civil society. After a decade of focusing on state structures, Latin Americanists in the 1980s rediscovered civil society (East Europeanists would soon make the same discovery). Abandoning a long love affair with the state, scholars turned with renewed purpose to charting the bases for collective political action and in particular how citizens chose to identify themselves and organize for political action in response to state repression. They found that civil society organized itself along lines that expressed new and old horizontal solidarities—in grassroots religious organizations, women’s groups, neighborhood associations, and indigenous groups. A spate of works contended that in Latin America, ordinary people who engaged in heroic, daily efforts to discover the whereabouts of disappeared loved ones or simply survive in hard economic times hastened the departure of dictators. Based largely on participant observation in small, voluntary groups, scholars made an additional, extraordinary claim. They argued that by socializing their
members in participatory democratic practices and even offering leadership opportunities to the previously politically uninitiated, these new, voluntary groups spread throughout society a new, democratic political culture.

When scholars mapped out the myriad of new and newly reinvented ways in which citizens associated politically, one of the most important subjects became the persistence of ethnicity as a salient organizing principle of politics. Whether these could be managed or became politicized to the point of genocidal wars was now viewed as less dependent on the presence or absence of modern and secularizing socialization and more attributable to the manipulation of such political entrepreneurs as the colonial powers (Laitin, 1986; Newbury, 1988) and to whether systems of ethnicity were ranked (ethnic groups stand in clear relations of superordination and subordination to one another) or unranked (each ethnic group spans the whole available range of occupations and statuses) (Horowitz, 1985).

Virtually none of the authors of the studies of political institutions, states, and societies discussed here considered that they were contributing to political development as a field. Almost all distanced themselves explicitly from political development’s roots in modernization theory. In name, there was nothing to distinguish such themes as the role of the state in development as building on political development studies, per se. In the late 1980s, it appeared that political development was a moribund field.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990s: RENEWAL OR OTHERWISE

Just as it appeared that the field of political development, battered by the lapse into authoritarianism by most of Latin America and the failure of most of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East to develop in democratic directions, would be laid to rest, the world suddenly changed. From Greece, Portugal, and Spain to Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, and Brazil, dictatorships began to fade and democracies proliferated. With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact Communist regimes, the third wave became a tidal wave that washed away much of what had been learned by the field in the preceding 15 years. The return of democracies held out the possibility that political science had rushed to judgment in declaring moderniza-

11. For example, Migdal (1988) began Strong Societies and Weak States with a rejection of “the teleological, unilinear assumptions of modernization theory.” He faulted modernization theory for its “preoccupation with the effect of center on periphery and its lack of interest in the impact of the periphery on the center” (p. xv).
tion a dead paradigm in 1975, economic development had led to democracy after all, and the original studies heralding this achievement were not wrong, only premature.

MODERNIZATION, AGAIN

Transitions to democracy reopened the longstanding debate in comparative politics about whether the bases of political change were socioeconomic or political, determined or probabilistic. O’Donnell and Schmitter’s (1986) influential project depicted democratization as a political process fraught with uncertainty, a result of a series of fortuitous choices on the part of political actors. By contrast, Huntington (1991) attributed the global trend toward democratization after 1974 to a combination of international, cultural, and structural factors, including U.S. support for democratic regimes and the withdrawal of Soviet protection for Eastern European dictatorships, the transformation of the post-Vatican II Catholic Church, the economic crisis aggravated by rising levels of external indebtedness, and economic development. He boldly claimed that countries in the middle-income range ($1,000 to $3,000 per capita GNP in 1976) were the most likely to democratize or liberalize significantly (Huntington, 1991, p. 63).

Huntington’s contribution was but one of a series of important works in the 1990s that returned to the connection between economic growth, religious change, and democracy. An updated version of modernization theory—one that rested its arguments about the social foundations of a stable and effective democracy not on the abandonment of traditional values and parochial loyalties but on the depth of commitment to democracy and its necessary trappings—gained acceptance. This view was supported by the emergence in southern Europe, Latin America, east Asia, and Eastern Europe of middle classes spawned by decades of growth who rejected the corporate organization of political parties and interest groups, clamored for a free press and the rule of law, and insisted on their rights as citizens to elect their leaders freely. Indeed, when Diamond (1992) revisited modernization theory, he mounted a strong argument that it was essentially correct.

A further examination of the record revealed mixed results. Based on a data set of 135 countries over a period of 40 years, Przeworski and Limongi (1997, p. 165) found little support for the claim that socioeconomic modernization spurs the establishment of democratic regimes. In their view, the causal power of economic development in bringing dictatorships down appeared paltry, and even if most economically successful authoritarian regimes eventually become democracies, no level of income predicted when that would occur. On the other hand, they did find convincing evidence of the
corollary proposition—that the more well-to-do a nation is, the more likely that a democracy (which could be established independently of economic development) would survive (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, pp. 165-166). In fact, from 1950 to 1990, no democracy fell in a country with a per capita income higher than $6,066 in 1975.

Even if modernization cannot be satisfactorily demonstrated to precipitate democratization, if it were true that sustained growth in much of southern Europe, east Asia, and Latin America could keep democracy safe, then modernization theory’s remarkable enduring power might be justified. We would not want to discard this paradigm because of one known outlier, Argentina, and it might be interesting to test some of its original hypotheses, such as the effects of mass communication on democratization, in light of accelerated development and new technologies. After all, if the spread of mass communications had democratizing potential in 1958, imagine what the fax machine and the Internet could do today for supporting democracy worldwide.

Before scholars rush to pick up the mantle, however, a note of caution should be sounded. First, for many of the same reasons that modernization was discarded in the 1970s, its explanatory power may be more limited than first appears. In a very recent work, Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñan (2000) demonstrated that by whatever measure of modernization employed—wealth, education, literacy—socioeconomic development cannot account for the survival of democracies cross-nationally and diachronically in Latin America over the past 50 years. Moreover, constraints imposed by the international economy are still real, particularly at a time when billions of dollars of portfolio investments can flood into and out of a country in the flash of a computer function—as they did in Mexico in December 1994. Now as in the 1970s, such economic instability can lead to political instability. The notion of political development without a role for political institutions and state structures, and the conceptual space to acknowledge perpetually fragmented societies, is still an inherently flawed idea.

WHAT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT WAS AND SHOULD NOT BE

We may recall that political development as a field began with and advanced along four main currents: structural functionalism, modernization, the politics of the developing areas, and a teleological view of political progress. At this point, we may wish to consider whether any of these currents, even in a revised form, might serve as a basis for the field’s future renewal. Structural functionalism, although the most theoretically ambitious, was proven over time to have been the least fertile. The other three could more
plausibly revitalize studies of political development but nonetheless present serious shortcomings.

In a best-case scenario, in which modernization was not Janus faced and did always lead to political development, this paradigm would still be a poor candidate to frame future literature on political development. It preassigns its independent variable, precludes the possibility of the primacy of politics, and assumes rather than establishes causal mechanisms and influences. Socioeconomic modernization could be one factor influencing political development, but others might include international events (e.g., the fall of the Berlin Wall), constitutional engineering, and even the actions and beliefs of civil society that may not be due to industrialization and urbanization but conceivably to political repression, to the spread of new ideas (such as a theology of liberation), or even to an economic crisis occasioned by deindustrialization. A second problem with studying the effects of modernization is that some, and possibly the most interesting, of these effects need not even be about politics.

It would also be extremely problematic to treat political development simply as the study of the politics of the less-developed countries. A quarter of a century ago, Huntington and Domínguez (1975) characterized an inherent problem in this approach, “A survey study of the attitudes of citizens toward their government in Tanzania would often be called a study in political development while the same questionnaire applied in Great Britain would not be” (p. 4). Although these countries are useful as cases of political development simply because they provide greater variation in episodes of political change, there is no particular justification for excluding studies of advanced industrial democracies from the field. We have seen that historical and contemporary studies of these societies have generated theoretical advances in political development. Such an approach would also leave uncertain the basis on which countries should be included in the field. Geography might be a simple decision rule, but it is intellectually indefensible. Moreover, although levels of wealth could be a possible criterion, a nation’s economic prospects can shift quickly, with relatively wealthy countries becoming destabilized and today’s poor countries rapidly growing themselves out of eligibility for inclusion. Indeed, cases of political development are intrinsically a moving target. In 1978, who could have imagined that scholars would be studying Argentine courts and legislative behavior and that their counterparts in Venezuela would be wondering if these same institutions would survive? The most fertile case studies for political development in the next decade may not be from the areas that contributed so much to the field’s growth but, as I suggest below, from the post-Communist and other countries undergoing market-oriented reform.
Finally, if we return to study political development as a process of political change, we must exercise strict caution not to assume that political development implies progress toward any particular set of goals. The most important reason to shun such an approach is not necessarily, as Huntington and Domínguez (1975) argued, that progress toward a combination of goals can often be contradictory (e.g., stability could come at the price of equality) and hence untenable. A more compelling basis to reject any teleological view of political development is that there simply are no iron laws of political development. Four decades of political development literature should have persuaded us, for once and for all, that political society is lumpy, uneven, and yes, contradictory, with parts of political systems developing at different rates and in different directions. Today, not only are countries not on the path toward a single type of democracy but an amazing plurality of forms of vibrant and ailing democracies are emerging again around the globe. If we acknowledge, as we should, that political institutions can arise independently of socioeconomic processes, then we should expect to see appear in societies with similar productive structures and social influences diverse degrees of political centralization, patterns of state strength, and institutional design.

If the geographic and temporal reach of political development is to be thus extended to include any and all countries, and we purposely do not limit the scope of inquiry to developments along a narrow path but examine change on more than one political dimension, then we must find a means to circumscribe the parameters of a field that could include literally anything.

**WHAT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE: TOWARD A NEW AGENDA**

To begin with, political development could be viewed as the growth in (or shrinkage of) the capacity of societies to organize for political action and for states to govern. Political development studies could focus on the development of patterns of political association, channels of political participation, formal and informal institutions of political representation, and governance. If governance is conceived as the organization of consent, as well as the formulation of public policy and the administration of a society’s resources, then we would want to know about emerging patterns of political competition, accountability, and legitimacy, as well as the distribution of power between levels and branches of government.

*New research on democracy and markets: Changes in state form and the new political economy of development.* Central to progressive political development as it was understood in the 1960s was state building—the process whereby states grew, took on new functions, and extended their administra-
tive, extractive, and repressive capacities. In the 1990s, the empirical trend is obviously in the other direction. The shrinking of the area of state-owned property (Waterbury, 1993), the retreat of the regulatory state, and political and fiscal decentralization all suggest that a fundamental redrawing of the boundaries between public and private authority and resources is in progress across the developing world.

The retreat of the state from its interventionist role in the economy and society poses compelling conceptual challenges to students of political development. To begin with, how states carry out such monumental economic transformations deserves to be explained. It is possible, as Przeworski (1991) and Haggard and Kaufman (1995) have argued, that their capacity to reform may be related to the nature and strength of political institutions. From these changes in economic organization might also follow changes in political institutions and forms of political representation. O’Donnell (1994), Weyland (1996), and others have contended that the economic disorganization that followed from the turn to neoliberalism strengthened the executive at the expense of other branches of the state and spawned such perverse political forms as delegative democracy and neopopulism. More recently, Chalmers, Martin, and Piester (1997) speculated that relatively fluid associative networks, which can rapidly reconfigure themselves, link societal actors to decision-making centers in the state through interpersonal, media, and/or interorganizational ties, and “process and reshape contending political claims through relatively open-ended and problem-focused interactions” (p. 545), may have taken the place of such familiar representative structures and organizations as corporatism, clientelism, and populism.

If the development of political institutions, markets, and new ways of organizing and mobilizing societies represents what is most exciting in political development, then the conceptual frontier of political development may lie at the border of the post-Communist states of Eastern Europe and central Asia. Just as it made theoretical sense in the 1950s and 1960s to focus on the new states because they were traveling the road from tradition to modernity, it now makes sense to watch the post-Communist societies develop new identities, patterns of political competition, and political representation, and decentralize government decision making—from the public to the private spheres, from the center to the periphery, and from a select few ministries to a broader range of governmental agencies and institutions.

Continuing research on states and societies. Although some scholars continue to innovate the study of state building (Ertman, 1997), many students of political development have diverted their emphasis to studying regimes and their transformation (see Bunce, 2000 [this issue]). Collier and Collier’s
majestic study showed how the manner in which states and parties recruited the working class into politics had profound consequences for the shape of the entire political arena. In an innovative recent work, Gould (1999) has demonstrated how different patterns of religious cleavages and peasant mobilization in 19th-century Europe produced varying success in the development of liberalism.

As studies of the state evolve beyond being primarily concerned about capacity (a concern of the 1960s) and efficiency (the concern of the 1990s), they should consider whether the state itself is democratic. Is the state capable of fulfilling society’s demands for equality that is understood not in terms of the distribution of material resources but in terms of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship? O’Donnell’s recent work on undemocratic enclaves in the state that democratic regimes apparently cannot obliterate, particularly those that fall from what he calls the “(un)rule” of law (O’Donnell, 1999), is a stellar example of the possibilities of such an approach.

However, in returning to studying state transformation, scholars should also avoid lurching unproductively from state-centered to society-centered approaches. In the mid-1990s, scholars began to stop this pendulum by examining how the interactions between the state and society contribute to a broad range of phenomena in political development. Evans (1995) contended that states that were most successful in leading industrialization efforts were not in fact the most autonomous from society but those whose agencies most effectively penetrated society and gathered information—those that enjoyed embedded autonomy. For Putnam (1993), democratic governments were most effective when independently organized citizens demanded it. The essays in Migdal, Kohli, and Shue (1994) demonstrated that the nature of state-society interactions is recursive and mutually transforming. In sub-Saharan Africa, according to Chazan (1994), the periods when the institutions of civil society were most robust and autonomous from the state coincided with those of the most vigorous state building on the African continent. In India, by contrast, where an authority structure based on patronage links forged in the 1950s between the Congress party and influential regional and local leaders had eroded and new authority links between the state’s apex and the vast social periphery had not been formed, Kohli (1994, p. 89) contended that the state became estranged from society, control over government decisions tended to centralize in leaders who found it difficult to translate their personal power into a problem-solving resource, and a governability crisis loomed. If how states and societies interact in democracies and nondemocracies is fundamentally important, then political representation, which lies at the nexus of state and society, is certain to be a growth area in political development studies.
In the next decade, there will also surely be manifest exciting new possibilities to study societies, and two separate intellectual traditions that have gained ascendency in comparative politics will most likely render class a less significant analytical category than at any time in recent memory. The new institutionalists (such as Geddes, 1994) claim that political outcomes are not determined by collective actions on the part of social groups organized along class lines but rather by the incentives faced by politicians, which are derived from the institutional milieu in which they operate. Those who study grassroots movements contend that class is far less significant today than are race, ethnicity, or religion as a political identity and basis for collective action. Such a thesis has support not merely in India or Ecuador but also in the United States and the Balkans. The salience of religion in particular has been stressed as a basis for not only the cleavages of electoral politics but also for foreign policy and even world peace (Huntington, 1996).

Finally, students of political development today have available to them virtually unprecedented opportunities to put to the test many unexplored hypotheses about political behavior in developing countries. As survey techniques become more sophisticated and public opinion polling a more commonplace occurrence around the globe, far richer studies of society are possible than at any time since the onset of the behavioral revolution. For instance, observing a large vote for the electoral Left in the shantytowns ringing Lima, as well as certain logistical support for the Maoist-inspired guerrilla movement, Shining Path, Stokes (1994) employed survey research techniques to revisit the debate about the radicalism of the urban poor. Domínguez and McCann (1996) used election surveys to chart no less than the emergence of the lines of political contestation in one new democracy, Mexico.

CONCLUSION: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPARATIVE THEORY

In this article, I have attempted to show that at its best, political development is capable of generating important theoretical advances in comparative politics. One enduring reason for its capacity to do so is its nature as an expansive field with a fluid research agenda. New states and new democracies created the field, but dictatorships and military coups in the 1970s forced it to shift gears to explain the failure of democracy. Confronting the new theoretical challenge of how to conceptualize political development in a dictatorship also broadened the field’s research agenda. With legislatures and parties in recess, scholars asked how interests were represented. If citizens could not
vote, then how did they participate? More recently, democratization and marketization, globalization and national diversity, and human rights and ethnic cleansing will all likely sustain the need for a field such as political development to address fundamental questions that are not easily addressed during normal times. In other words, just as politics becomes normal in some countries and scholars there may feel it safe to study legislative behavior or social security policies, megapolitical change elsewhere will continue to fuel the need for political development studies.

What should be clear by now is that political development, as a field, has intellectually imperial objectives. It is not content to leave the study of political institutions to the institutionalists, of citizens to those who study citizen politics, and of the constraints and opportunities nations face in attempting to foster economic development to students of political economy. Scholars who work on political development purport to say something about each of these areas in a manner that is distinct from those who specialize in any one of them. To the extent that they see the whole picture and the mutual interactions of institutions and citizens; state and society; and region, nation, and supranational body, they may just be able to do so.

The future of the political development field will depend on its ability to chart the process of political change, including but not limited to moments of extraordinary changes of political regime. Scholars of political development will always be present at the window of North American political science, opening the possibility of letting in fresh intellectual breezes from other disciplines and countries. The development of economic resources, democratic norms and institutions, and the integrity of the nation state will always have an honored place in the field. Recent and innovative studies of state economic policy making, politics, and culture suggest that the most exciting time for political development may lie ahead of and not behind us.

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