

Graduate Liberal Studies

SOCS 630

Wesleyan University

The Evolution of Government: The Rise of the Modern Nation-State

Spring 2014
Thursday 6-8:30
PAC 422

Giulio Gallarotti
Office Hours:
Th 5-6, F 1-2
Office: 309 PAC
Ext. 2496
Email: ggallarotti@
wesleyan.edu

I. Course Description

This course will analyze the principal movements and processes which have led to the rise of the modern nation-state. The theoretical focus will be oriented around the main factors which account for the rise and legitimation of the state, while the historical focus will be on the political evolution across differing systems of governance from the prehistorical to the modern period and beyond. We begin with an analysis of the foundations of the theory of the state. Here we will compare and evaluate differing theories of the rise, consolidation, and legitimation of political communities. This will be followed by a theoretical and historical assessment of the rise and fall of differing systems of governance across time. This evolution will be considered within an interdisciplinary framework which is oriented around the political adaptation to social and economic modernization. We will start with an analysis of governance in pre-industrial societies and then proceed to governance in ancient societies. We will look at the emergence of feudalism from the ashes of the Roman Empire, and then the political transition toward the absolutist state. We analyze the democratic challenge to the absolutist state, and then consider the 20th century political movements embodied in Fascism and Communism. We go on to consider present-day challenges to the modern nation-state, and then speculate on possible forms of political organization beyond the nation-state.

II. Topics

1. The Rise of the State: The Social Contract and Escape From Anarchy
2. Legitimation Crisis of the State
3. Governance in Pre-Industrial Societies
4. The Ancients
5. Feudalism and the Political Tradition of the West
6. The Emergence of the Democratic State and Differing Routes to Democracy
7. Democratic Culture and Institutions
8. Communism and the Revolution From Below
9. “Il Fascismo” and the Revolution From Above
10. Challenges to the Nation-State: Globalization
11. Presentations on Research Essays

III. Food

Since the class will occur during dinner hours, I will ask for volunteers to bring in some light foods and beverages to snack on. The food assignments will be distributed evenly and will be completely voluntary. If anyone has any special dietary needs, please bring it to our attention.

IV. Requirements

Assignments will consist of two essays of six to eight double-spaced pages. The papers will be on topics you select and will be due on the dates: March 27 and May 1. Grades will be based on the two essays plus class participation (each will account for 1/3). Readings are accompanied by questions and suggestions which will underscore important topics in the readings. These topics will serve as a focus both for discussion and the essays. All of the weekly readings listed (except the books recommended for purchase) are required and have been placed on electronic reserve. I have recommended for purchase those books which will be most extensively used, hence it would be convenient to own these books. These books can be purchased at Broad Street Books, they are:

Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State*

Sam Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*

Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*

Vladimir Lenin, *What Is To Be Done*

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael*

Mark Breault and Martin King, *Inside the Cult* (is only available at Amazon for about 4 dollars with shipping)

V. Course Sections

1. The Rise of the State: The Social Contract and Escape From Anarchy (January 30)

How did the state come about? Locke, Rousseau, and Hobbes talk about the emergence of the state from anarchy. Each sees a specific set of conditions that lead individuals to create political communities (“social contracts”). These communities require individuals to give up the right to pursue their desires in an unconstrained manner (i.e., giving up the natural freedom they had under anarchy). Compare and contrast their accounts of anarchy and the process whereby individuals escape anarchy through the creation of the contract. In a less idealized context, Herz, Deutsch, and Poggi account for the origins of the state. What are these explanations, and how do they relate to the views marshaled by Locke, Rousseau, and Hobbes?

Readings:

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 13, 17

Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book I

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, Chapters 2, 8, 9

Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State*, Chapter 1

John Herz, “The Rise and Demise of the Territorial State”

Karl Deutsch, “The Growth of Nations”

2. Legitimation Crisis of the State (April 6)

Once states form and are consolidated, they invariably face (to a greater or lesser extent) a legitimation crisis (i.e., challenges to their political authority). The sources of this crisis can be numerous and varied. What are these sources, and what can states do to preserve their authority? These questions touch upon central issues involved with the study of the theory of the state. De Jasay talks about the endemic legitimation problems caused by the “adversary state.” What is the adversary state and what special problems does it create? Huntington talks about the legitimation problems created by the “political gap”: what is this gap and how does it threaten the state? What special legitimation problems does Nisbet see in the modern western world? What prescriptions for confronting the legitimation crisis can be derived from Machiavelli and Gallarotti?

Readings:

Anthony de Jasay, *The State*, Chapter 2

Robert Nisbet, *The Twilight of Authority*, Chapter 1

Giulio Gallarotti, “Legitimacy as a Capital Asset of the State”

Sam Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Chapter 1

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

3. Governance in Pre-Industrial Societies (April 13)

What were the earliest forms of governance which accompanied humankind’s initial attempts at communal life. Anthropologists and political scientists have, in answering this question, found it useful to study non-industrial societies of both the past and present. A look at such societies and the governments they chose suggest various interesting findings. For one, governments were extremely simple and exhibited many democratic elements. Contrary to what many believe today, early government was neither

as primitive nor autocratic as generally supposed. What were the most common characteristics of this pre-industrial governance? In what forms did democracy manifest itself? How did the style of governance fit the physical and social environments in which these societies functioned? What common roles did political leaders play?

Readings:

Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael*

Michael Finkel, “The Hadza”

Ronald Cohen and John Middleton, *Comparative Political Systems*, “Introduction”

E.M. Weyer, “The Structure of Social Organization Among the Eskimo”

Lorna Marshall, “Kung Bushman Bands”

Claude Levi-Strauss, “The Social and Psychological Aspects of Chieftainship in a Primitive Tribe: The Nambikuara of Northwestern Mato Grosso

Robert H. Lowie, “Some Aspects of Political Organization Among the American Aborigines”

4. The Ancients (April 20)

Ancient civilizations show an interesting political diversity: from the highly democratic governance of classical Athens to the absolutism of the Egyptian Pharaoh. What are the keys to understanding this diversity? Rome presents itself as an interesting case study since its style of governance changed across time: from autocratic, to democratic, to autocratic once more. How can we understand this evolution in historical perspective? How did the styles of governance fit the peculiar circumstances facing each specific civilization?

Readings:

The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, “The Athenian Citizen”

O.R. Gurney, *The Hittites*, Chapter 2

F.E. Adcock, *Roman Political Ideas and Practice*, Chapters 1-3

Jill Kamil, *The Ancient Egyptians*, Chapter 3

5. Feudalism and the Political Tradition of the West (February 27)

Feudalism represented a system of political organization that emerged from the ashes of the Roman Empire. It is difficult to understand the origins of modern democratic state without understanding the specific institutions of governance introduced by feudalism. At the most general level, feudalism was founded on pluralism and constitutionalism. The contract between government and governed, which is at the heart of liberal democracy, is a manifestation of the reciprocal rights and duties between free persons under feudalism. What are the main factors accounting for the rise of feudalism? In terms of political organization, was it an optimal response to the turbulent conditions created by the disintegration of the Roman Empire? What were the major problems which feudalism came to face? How did feudalism create the seeds of its own destruction? How did feudalism contribute to the character of the modern democratic state?

Readings:

Dirk Heirbaut, “Not European Feudalism, but Flemish Feudalism”

Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State*, Chapter 2

A.D. Lindsay, *The Modern Democratic State*, Chapter 2

Otto Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, Chapter 8

6. The Emergence of the Democratic State and Differing Routes to Democracy (March 6)

The political organization of feudalism was replaced by the nation-state. With the territorial consolidation of the nation-state came wide-ranging attempts at absolutist governance: monarchs claiming authority over large sovereign territories. Absolutism in turn came to face a democratic challenge as elements emerged from society to demand greater political voice. The success of the political challenge to the absolutist state formed the modern democratic state. While this transition occurred across various nations, it differed in terms of style and timing (i.e., differing routes to democracy). How do you account for the transition from feudalism to absolutism? How, in turn, did absolutism give way to democracy? What were the differing routes to democracy taken by France, the U.S., Germany, and England.?

Readings:

Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State*, Chapter 4

Sam Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Chapter 2

Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Chapters 1, 2

Otto Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, Chapters 1, 4

7. Democratic Culture and Institutions

(March 27)

Scholars who have studied political transition in the early-modern period argue that with the advent of democracy came a democratic mind-set: unique ways of thinking that characterize democratic societies. Individualism and a belief in equality, for example, are two of the principal elements in this mind-set. This mind-set was a necessary precursor to the institutional changes that led from feudalism to democracy. Lindsay sees its roots in the emerging intellectual traditions of the early modern period, as well in the economic and scientific transformation of that period. De Tocqueville identifies a unique American mind-set and traces it to the particular forces shaping institutional and demographic patterns in colonial America. What are the components of this democratic mind-set? Are these components as unique to democratic nations as many believe? What are the origins of this mind-set?

Readings:

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*,

Volume I, Part I Chapters 2-4, 7,8

Part II Chapters 1,2, 4-8

Volume II, Part I, Chapters 1-10

Part II, Chapters 1-12

Book III, Chapters 1-4, 13, 19-22

A.D. Lindsay, *The Modern Democratic State*, Chapters 3-5

8. Communism and the Revolution From Below

(April 3)

Huntington defines a revolution as not only a transformation of political institutions, but of political ideologies as well. Such pervasive political changes within nations are rare. While political change through insurrections, revolts and coups has been common in history, many fewer instances of political revolution have occurred. Communist revolutions have effected pervasive changes within various nations in the 20th century. For Huntington, these leftist transformations would not have been possible without Lenin's theory of revolution. Lenin took the a-political ideology of Marxism and infused it with a practical political orientation (i.e., revolutionary organization through the Party). How would you describe Lenin's theory of revolution, and what special role does the Party play? What are the major strengths and weaknesses of this theory? In terms of weaknesses, what elements of the theory encouraged totalitarian regimes? Why, according to Huntington, do revolutions occur? Huntington talks about two styles of revolution: East and West. What are they, and how do they differ? According to Huntington, what are the pre-conditions for a successful revolution?

Readings:

Vladimir Lenin, *What Is To Be Done*

Sam Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Chapter 5

Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Chapters 4, 9, and Epilogue

9. "Il Fascismo" and the Revolution From Above (April 10)

Fascism (il fascismo) was originally an Italian political movement. The term comes from the verb "fasciare" which means "to bind together." In its general manifestations this movement (which has been referred to as an elite revolution--"revolution from above") represented the old power elite aligning with peasants to maintain traditional social structures through a powerful state bureaucracy. This was a reaction to capitalistic modernization which was shaking the old political order by bringing new groups into the political nexus and adversely affecting old groups. What specific factors led to the rise of Fascism in Italy, Germany, and Japan? How would you describe the Fascist system of governance? What is the Fascist ideology? What is the role of the state in the Fascist doctrine? As a system of governance, what do you think are the major strengths and weaknesses of Fascism?

Readings:

Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, Chapters 1,2,8

Mark Breault and Martin King, *Inside the Cult*

Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, passages

Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism"

Alfredo Rocco, "The Political Doctrine of Fascism"

Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Chapter 8

10. Challenges to the Nation-State: Globalization

(April 17)

LeFeber talks about the advent of a global culture based on the spread of common images and values (capitalism, the Swoosh) through the media. Is this the origin of the new global civilization, or will nationalism and other forms of restricted identification (ethnicity, religion) keep the world from making the leap to one community? Will we have one world, or will we be faced with what Huntington calls the "clash of civilizations"? Khor and Sklair portray the impact of globalization on the nation-state in a very negative light. Barnett and Cavanagh consider whether there is emerging in modern nation-states a new global culture oriented around Western ideas. How is globalization affecting the nation-state?

Walter LeFeber, Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism, Chapters 2, 6

Jeff Chang, "Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation"

Sam Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations"

Leslie Sklair, "Sociology of the Global System"

Martin Khor, "The Global Economy and the Third World"

Richard Barnett and John Cavanagh, "Homogenization of Global Culture"

11. Presentations of research projects

(April 24, May 1)