



Map of the World Based on Population Size

MAP 1.2

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BUILDING COMMUNITY

One of the most important challenges facing political systems worldwide is to build a common identity and a sense of community among the citizens. The absence of a common identity can have severe political consequences. Conflicts over national, ethnic, or religious identities are among the most explosive causes of political turmoil, as we have witnessed in Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and elsewhere. But while building community is a pervasive challenge, some countries are in a much better situation than others. Japan, for example, has an ethnically homogeneous population, a common language, and a long national political history. A large majority of the Japanese share in the religions of Buddhism and Shintoism, and the country is separated by miles of ocean from its most important neighbors. Nigeria, in contrast, is an accidental and artificial creation of British colonial rule and has no common precolonial history. The population is sharply divided between Muslims and Christians; the Christians are divided equally into Catholics and Protestants. There are some 250 different ethnic groups, speaking a variety of local languages, in

addition to English. Obviously, the challenges of building community are much greater in Nigeria than they are in Japan. Although few countries face problems as complicated as those of the Nigerians, the community-building challenge is one of the most serious issues facing many states today.

States and Nations

The word *nation* is sometimes used to mean almost the same as the word *state*, as in the name the United Nations. Strictly speaking, however, we wish to use the term *nation* to refer to a group of people with a common identity. When we speak of a "nation," we thus refer to the self-identification of a people. That common identity may be built upon a common language, history, race, or culture, or simply upon the fact that this group has occupied the same territory. Nations may or may not have their own state or independent government. In some cases—such as Japan, France, or Sweden—there is a close correspondence between the memberships of the state and the nation. Most people who identify themselves as Japanese do in fact live in the state of Japan, and most people who live in Japan identify themselves as Japanese.

In many instances, the correspondence between the nation and the state is not so neat. Nor is it obvious that it should be. In some cases, states are *multinational*—consisting of a multitude of different nations. The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia were multinational states that broke apart. In other cases, some nations are much larger than the corresponding states, such as Germany for most of its history, or China. Some nations have split into two or more states for political reasons, such as Korea today and Germany between 1949 and 1990. Some groups with claims to be nations have no state at all, such as the Kurds, the Basques, and the Tamils. When states and nations do not coincide, it can cause explosive political conflict, as discussed later. At the same time, the presence of several nations within the same state can also be a source of diversity and cultural enrichment.

Nationality and Ethnicity

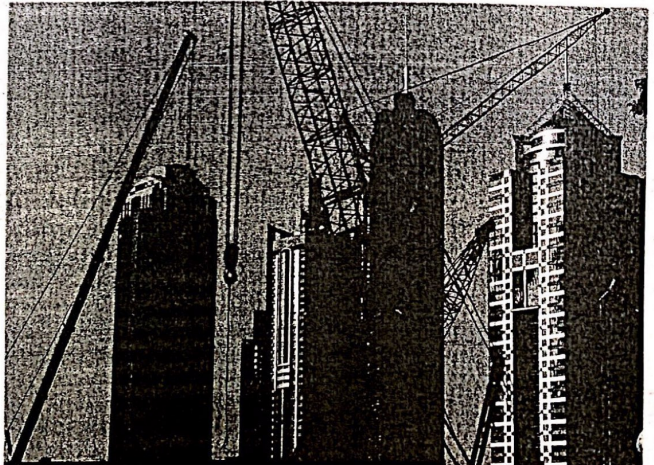
There is a fine line between nations and *ethnic groups*, which may have common physical traits, languages, cultures, or history. Like nationality, ethnicity need not have any objective basis in genetics, culture, or history. The German sociologist Max Weber defined ethnic groups as “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because

of similarities of physical type or of customs or migration.... [I]t does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.”⁸ Similarly, groups that are physically quite similar, but differ by language, religion, customs, marriage patterns, and historical memories (for example, the Serbs, Croats, and Muslim Bosnians) may believe they are descended from different ancestors and hence are physically different as well. Over centuries, originally homogeneous populations may intermix with other populations, even though the culture may continue. This is true, for example, of the Jewish population of Israel, which has come together after more than two millennia of global dispersion.

Ethnic differences can be a source of political conflict.⁹ Since the end of the Cold War, many states of the former Soviet bloc have come apart at their ethnic and religious seams. In the former Yugoslavia, secession by a number of provinces triggered several wars. The most brutal of these was in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where a Muslim regime faced rebellion and murderous “ethnic cleansing” by the large Serbian minority. Intervention by the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United States contained Serbian aggression and led to an uneasy settlement, but considerable tension remains. Similar tensions and violent aggression occurred in Kosovo as well.

With the Chinese government encouraging economic growth and foreign investment, the Shanghai skyline is now a mix of highrises and construction cranes.

www.gettyimages.com/The Image



In many developing countries, boundaries established by former colonial powers cut across ethnic lines. In 1947 the British withdrew from India and divided the subcontinent into a northern Muslim area—Pakistan—and a southern Hindu area—India. The most immediate consequence was a terrible civil conflict and "ethno-religious" cleansing. There still are almost 100 million Muslims in India. Similarly, thirty years ago the Ibo "tribe" of Nigeria fought an unsuccessful separatist war with the rest of Nigeria, resulting in the deaths of millions of people. The Tutsi and Hutu peoples of the small African state of Rwanda engaged in a civil war of extermination in the 1990s, with hundreds of thousands of people slaughtered, and millions fleeing the country in fear of their lives.

The migration of labor, forced or voluntary, across state boundaries is another source of ethnic differentiation. The American descendants of Africans forcefully enslaved between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries are witnesses of the largest coercive labor migration in world history. In contrast, voluntary migration takes the form of Indians, Bangladeshi, Egyptians, and Palestinians seeking better lives in the oil sheikhdoms around the Persian Gulf; Mexican and Caribbean migrant workers moving to

the United States; and Turkish and North African migrants relocating to Europe. Some migration is politically motivated, triggered by civil war and repression. Two scholars refer to the contemporary world as living through an "Age of Migration,"¹⁰ comparable in scale to that of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Table 1.1 provides examples of politically significant "ethnicity," broadly defined, in our selected twelve countries. Five sets of traits are included, beginning with physical differences, then language, norms against intermarriage, religion, and negative historical memories. The table illustrates the importance of each distinction to ethnic identity. The most important bases of distinction lie in intermarriage, religion, and historical memories. Language differences are of great importance in four cases and of some importance in six; and finally, and perhaps surprisingly, physical differences are of great importance in only two cases. Recent migration has made such previously homogeneous states as France, Japan, and Germany more multiethnic. Other countries, such as the United States and Canada, have long been multiethnic and have become even more so. Indeed, globalization and migration seem destined to increase the diversity of many societies worldwide.

Examples of Ethnicity: Its Bases and Their Salience

TABLE 1.1

	Physical Differences	Language	Norms Against Intermarriage	Religion	Negative Historical Memories
Brazil: Blacks	XX	O	XX	X	X
Britain: South Asians	X	O	X	XX	X
China: Tibetans	X	XX	XX	XX	XX
France: Algerians	X	X	XX	XX	XX
Germany: Turks	X	XX	XX	XX	XX
India: Muslims	O	X	XX	XX	O
Iran: Kurds	X	XX	XX	XX	XX
Japan: Buraku-min	O	O	XX	O	XX
Mexico: Mayan	X	X	XX	X	XX
Nigeria: Ibo	O	X	XX	XX	XX
Russia: Chechens	X	XX	XX	XX	XX
United States:					
African-Americans	XX	X	XX	O	
Hispanics:	X	X	X	O	XX
					X

*Salience is estimated at the following levels: O = none or almost none; X = some; XX = much importance in affecting differences.

Language

Language can be a source of social division that may overlap with ethnicity. There are approximately 5,000 different languages in use in the world today, and a much smaller number of language families. Most of these languages are spoken by relatively small tribal groups in North and South America, Asia, Africa, or Oceania. Only 200 languages have a million or more speakers, and only eight may be classified as world languages.

English is the most truly international language. There are approximately 380 million people who speak English at home, and 1.8 billion who live in countries where it is one of the official languages. Other international languages include Spanish (more than 300 million home speakers), Arabic (200 million), Russian (165 million), Portuguese (165 million), French (100 million), and German (100 million). The language with the largest number of speakers, though in several varieties, is Chinese (1.2 billion). The major languages with the greatest international spread are those of the former colonial powers—Great Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal.¹¹

Linguistic divisions can create particularly thorny political problems. Political systems can choose to ignore racial, ethnic, or religious differences among their citizens, but they cannot avoid committing themselves to one or several languages. Linguistic conflicts typically show up in controversies over educational policies, or over language use in the government. Occasionally, language regulation is more intrusive, as in Quebec, where English-only street signs are prohib-

ited and large corporations are required to conduct their business in French.

Religious Differences and Fundamentalism

States also vary in their religious characteristics. In some—such as Israel, the Irish Republic, and Pakistan—religion is a basis of national identity for a majority of the population. Iran is a theocratic regime, in which religious authorities govern and religious law is part of the country's legal code. In other societies, such as Poland under communism, religion can be a rallying point for political movements. In many Latin American countries, the clergy have embraced a liberation theology that fosters advocacy of the poor and criticism of government brutality.

Table 1.2 indicates that Christianity is the largest and most widely spread religion, which is divided into three major groups—Roman Catholics, Protestants (of many denominations), and Orthodox (e.g., Greek and Russian). The Catholics are dominant in Europe and Latin America; there is a more equal distribution of Catholics and Protestants elsewhere. While the traditional Protestant denominations have declined in North America in the last decades, three forms of Protestantism—Fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and Evangelical—have increased.

The Muslims are the second largest religious group and the most rapidly growing religion. Muslims are primarily concentrated in Asia and Africa, as well as substantial numbers in Europe and North America, and are becoming revitalized in the Asian successor

Adherents of All Religions by Six Continents (mid-2004, in millions)

TABLE 1.2

Religion	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America	North America	Oceania	Total	Percentage
Christians	401.7	341.3	553.6	510.1	273.9	26.1	2,106.2	
Muslims	350.4	892.4	33.2	1.7	5.1	.4	1,283.4	33.0
Nonreligious and Atheists	6.4	724.2	130.6	18.6	33.1	4.2	917.7	20.1
Hindus	2.6	844.5	1.4	.8	1.4	.4	851.2	14.4
Buddhists	.1	369.3	1.6	.7	3.0	.4	375.4	13.3
Jews	.2	5.3	1.9	1.2	6.1	.1	14.9	5.9
Other	107.7	693.5	3.2	17.6	6.3	1.0	828.8	.2
Total	869.1	3,870.5	725.5	550.7	328.9	32.6	6,377.6	100%

Source: Adherents as defined in *Encyclopedia Britannica* 2006.

states of the Soviet Union. Muslims have been particularly successful in missionary activities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Religion can be a source of intense antagonism, since beliefs may take the form of deep personal convictions that are difficult to compromise. Religious groups often battle over such issues as the rules of marriage and divorce, childrearing, sexual morality, abortion, euthanasia, the emancipation of women, and the regulation of religious observances. Religious communities often take a special interest in educational policies in order to transmit their ideas of nature and humankind, right and wrong. On such issues, religious groups may clash with one another as well as with more secular groups. Although religious groups can coexist peacefully, and are often the source of exemplary acts of compassion and reconciliation, they may also commit acts of violence, cruelty, and terrorism.¹²

Even societies in which most people supposedly belong to the same community of faith may be split by conflicts between "fundamentalists" and those who are more moderate in their beliefs. Religious fundamentalism has recently emerged in some form in all major faiths in reaction to social modernization. Fundamentalists have frequently been technologically adaptive, even while militantly rejecting some elements of modernity (see Box 1.3).

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all "religions of the book," although not exactly the same book. The Jews believe only in the Old Testament; the Christians add on the New Testament; and the Muslims add the Koran to these two. While each religion disagrees over

the interpretation of these texts, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, fundamentalists all believe in the truth of their respective sacred books and attack some of their own clergy for lukewarm defense of these sacred texts. There are also Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalists. The rise of fundamentalism has affected the entire world.

The extremist wings of fundamentalist movements employ violence in many forms: from threats and property destruction to assassination and destructive suicide, as young people turn themselves into bombs. The terrorism of these acts lies in their enormity. They stagger the imagination and are intended to weaken the will. From this point of view, the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were acts of mega-terrorism, involving not only suicide pilot-hijackers but also aircraft filled with volatile fuel and innocent passengers converted into immense projectiles. (See Box 19.1 in Chapter 19.) These attacks were followed by terrorist assaults in Bali, Madrid, London, Riyadh, and other cities. Dealing with international terrorism by religious fundamentalists is now a challenge that faces many nations worldwide.

FOSTERING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Two major forces are transforming political systems and nations, and the lives of their citizens; they provide major sources of comparison across the nations in this book. The first is the process of economic development, and the second is political democratization.

The Origins of "Fundamentalism"

BOX 1.3

Fundamentalism got its name in the decades before World War I when some Protestant clergymen in the United States banded together to defend the "fundamentals" of religious belief against the secularizing influences of a modernizing society. This was a reaction to new biblical scholarship at the time that questioned the divine inspiration and authorship of the Bible, and to the expansion of science and Darwinist theories of evolution. These church leaders were also distressed by the apparent erosion of morality and

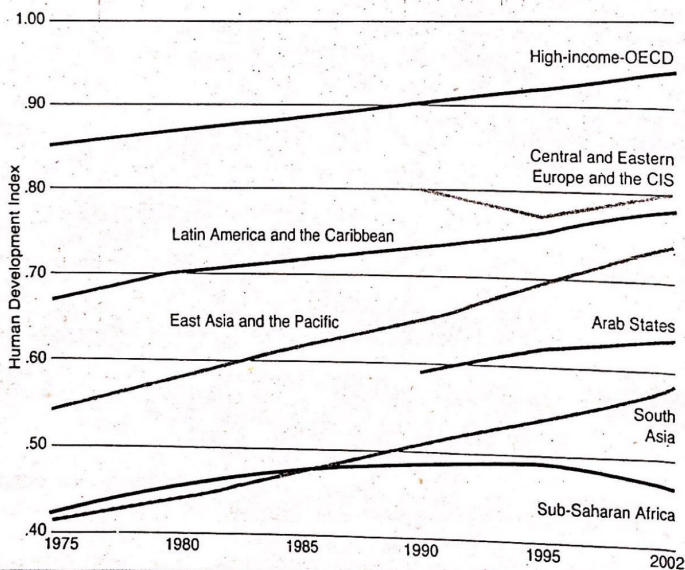
tradition in the United States. In 1920, a journalist and Baptist layman named Curtis Lee Laws appropriated the term "fundamentalist" as a designation for those who were ready "to do battle royal for the Fundamentals." The fundamentalists affirmed the inerrancy (the absolute truth) of the Bible and formed enclaves to protect themselves from error and sin. Religious fundamentalism has recently emerged in some form in all major faiths in reaction to social modernization.

A political system cannot generally satisfy its citizens unless it can foster social and economic development. Thus, as significant as nation-building may be, the level of economic and social development and the rate of economic growth are exceptionally important. Economic development implies that citizens can enjoy new resources and opportunities. Many people are primarily concerned that government can improve their living conditions through economic growth, providing jobs and raising income standards. However, development can also create social strains and damage nature. For better or worse, the social changes that result from economic development transform the politics of developing countries. The success of governments—both democratic and autocratic—is often measured in these terms.

For many affluent advanced industrial societies, contemporary living standards provide for basic social needs (and much more) for most of the public. Indeed, the current political challenges in these

nations often focus on problems resulting from the economic successes of the past, such as protecting environmental quality or managing the consequences of growth. New challenges to social welfare policies are emerging from the medical and social security costs of aging populations. For most of the world, however, substantial basic economic needs still exist, and governments focus on improving the socioeconomic conditions of the nation.

Over the past two decades, globalization, democratization, and marketization have begun to transform living conditions in many nations. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) combines measures of economic well-being, life expectancy, and educational achievement into what it calls the Human Development Index (HDI).¹³ The HDI shows dramatic improvements in life conditions in many regions of the world over the past three decades (Figure 1.2). East Asia and South Asia have made substantial improvements since 1975. For instance, in 1975 South Korea and Taiwan had



Changes in Human Development Index by Region

FIGURE 1.2

Source: United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 2004*. (New York: United Nations, 2004) 134.

a standard of living close to many poor African nations, and they are now affluent societies. Even more striking is the change in the two largest nations in the world. China improved from a HDI of .52 in 1975 (the same as Botswana or Swaziland) to .75 in 2003 (similar to the Philippines or Ecuador); India improved from an HDI of .41 to .60. These statistics represent improved living conditions for billions of people. At the same time, other regions of the world are not sharing in these advances. Living conditions have changed only marginally in Sub-Saharan Africa over this period—the poorest of the poor nations have not improved. In addition, many of the postcommunist nations of Central and Eastern Europe have suffered economically following the transition from communism to capitalism and democracy. The HDI for Russia, for instance, has stagnated since 1990.

The process of economic development typically follows a similar course. One element is a transformation of the structure of the labor force. The five advanced industrial countries in our comparisons all have agricultural employment as less than 10 percent of the labor force. The three poorest countries—China, India, and Nigeria—have more than two-thirds of their labor forces employed in agriculture. The middle-income countries—Mexico and Brazil—have about a third to a

fifth of their labor forces in agriculture. In addition, economic development is typically linked to urbanization, as peasants leave their farms and move to the cities. In nations undergoing rapid economic development, such as China, urban migration creates new opportunities for the workers but also new economic and social policy challenges for the governments.

The UNDP's Human Development Index provides a means to compare the differences in current life conditions across the twelve comparison nations in this chapter (Table 1.3). Perhaps the most striking feature of this table is the wide gap in living standards that still exist across nations worldwide. For instance, the gross national product (GNP) per capita, which is a measure of national economic development, is nearly thirty times higher in the Western advanced industrial democracies than in Nigeria.¹⁴ Similarly, there are notable gaps in life expectancy and educational opportunities between the affluent Northern societies and the developing nations in Africa and Asia. In highly industrialized countries, education is virtually universal and practically everyone over age 15 can read and write. In India and Nigeria, less than two-thirds of the adult population has this minimal level of education. Moreover, the countries with the fewest literate citizens also have the fewest radios and television sets—even

Human Development Indicators

TABLE 1.3

Nation	Life Expectancy	Percent Enrolled in School	GNP/capita (ppp)	2003 HDI	1975 HDI	2003 World Rank
United States	77.4	93	37,562	.944	.867	10
Japan	82.0	84	27,967	.943	.857	11
United Kingdom	78.4	—	27,147	.939	.845	15
France	79.5	92	27,677	.938	.853	16
Germany	78.7	89	27,756	.930	—	20
Mexico	75.1	75	9,168	.814	.689	53
Russia	65.3	90	9,230	.795	—	62
Brazil	70.5	91	7,790	.792	.645	63
China	71.6	69	5,003	.755	.525	85
Iran	70.4	69	6,995	.736	.566	99
India	63.3	60	2,892	.602	.412	127
Nigeria	43.4	64	1,050	.453	.318	158

Source: United Nations Development Program, *World Development Report 2005* (New York: United Nations, 2005) (www.undp.org).

though these devices do not require literacy. Economic development is also associated with better nutrition and medical care. In the economically advanced countries, fewer children die in infancy, and the average citizen has a life expectancy at birth of over seventy-five years. Improvements in living conditions have substantially increased life expectancy in many low-income nations, such as Mexico and China. However, the average life expectancy of an Indian is sixty-three years; and the Nigerian little more than forty years. Material productivity, education, exposure to communications media, and longer and healthier lives are closely interconnected.

In order to become more productive, a country needs the resources to develop a skilled and healthy labor force and to build the infrastructure that material welfare requires. Preindustrial nations face most urgently the issues of economic development: how to improve the immediate welfare of their citizens yet also build and invest for the future. Typically, these are newer nations that also face the challenges of building community and effective political institutions. Political leaders and celebrities, such as Bono and Angelina Jolie, have mobilized public awareness that these differences in living conditions are a global concern—for those living in the developing world, the affluent nations and their citizens, and international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank.

Problems of Economic Development

The HDI or GNP per capita measure the overall wealth, income, and opportunity in a nation, but these factors are not evenly distributed within nations. The unequal distribution of resources and opportunities is among the most serious causes of political conflict. A large GNP may conceal significant differences in the distribution of resources and opportunities. A high rate of national growth may benefit only particular regions or social groups, leaving large parts of the population unrewarded or even less well off than before. The "inner cities" of the United States, the older parts of such Indian cities as Delhi and Calcutta, the peripheral ramshackle settlements around the cities of Latin America, many rural areas in China, and the arid northeast of Brazil all suffer from poverty and hopelessness. At the same time, other parts of the countries experience growth and improved welfare. Moreover, there is some evidence that rapid economic development tends to increase such inequalities.

A country's politics may be sharply affected by internal divisions of income, wealth, and other resources. Table 1.4 displays income distributions for our twelve comparison countries. Generally speaking, economic development improves the equality of income, at least past a certain stage of economic growth. Wealthy nations like Japan, Germany, and

Poverty in Third World cities is illustrated by this scene of a back street in Calcutta, in India, where the poor make their beds in the street. Similar scenes, though on a lesser scale, are to be encountered in modern American cities where homeless people sleep on the sidewalks and in doorways.

Jehangir Gazdar/Woodfin
Camp & Associates



Income Distribution for Selected Nations

TABLE 1.74

Country	Year	Wealthiest 10%	Poorest 40%	Wealthy/Poor Gap
Germany	2000	22.1	22.2	-0.1
Russia	2002	23.8	20.9	2.9
Japan	1993	21.7	24.8	3.1
France	1995	25.1	19.8	5.3
India	1999	28.5	21.2	7.3
Britain	1999	28.5	17.5	11.0
United States	2000	29.9	16.2	13.7
Iran	1998	33.7	19.5	14.2
China	2001	33.1	13.7	19.4
Nigeria	1996	35.4	12.6	22.8
Mexico	2000	43.1	10.3	32.8
Brazil	2001	46.9	8.3	38.6

Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2005*, table 2-7 (www.worldbank.org); distribution of income or consumption.

France have relatively more egalitarian income distributions than middle- or low-income countries. Still, the wealthiest 10 percent in Japan receive about the same total income as the poorest 40 percent receive. This is a large gap in life conditions between rich and poor, but the gap is even wider in less affluent nations. In Mexico, a middle-income country, the ratio is closer to 10 to 1; and in Brazil it is more than 20 to 1. The table also suggests that a nation's political characteristics make a difference. India has consciously worked to narrow inequality, which places it higher in the table, while inequality in the United States is as great as several poor nations, such as China.

Although industrialization and high productivity may eventually encourage a more equal distribution of income, the first stages of industrialization may actually increase income inequality. As economies modernize they create a dual economy—a rural sector and an urban industrial and commercial sector, both with inequalities of their own. These inequalities increase as education and communication spread more rapidly in the modern sector, which may contribute to the political instability of developing countries. Moreover, there is no guarantee that inequality will diminish in later stages of development. In Brazil, for instance, income inequality has increased for decades, even as the economy has developed. In the United States, income inequality increased substantially from the 1970s to the mid-1990s because of changes in economic structure, the increase in single-parent families,

and a lowering of income taxes. In Russia and other postcommunist societies, the development of new capitalist markets was accompanied by new income inequalities. Inequality is an issue that many nations face.

Several studies have proposed various policy solutions to mitigate the hardships economic inequality causes in developing societies.¹⁵ Taiwan and South Korea are models showing how early land reforms equalized opportunity at the outset of the developmental process. Investment in primary and secondary education, in agricultural inputs and rural infrastructure (principally roads and water), and in labor-intensive industries produced remarkable results for several decades. A comparative advantage in cheap and skilled labor enabled Taiwan and South Korea to compete effectively in international markets. Thus, some growth policies mitigate inequalities, but it can be very difficult to put them into practice, especially where substantial inequalities already exist.

Another correlate of development is population growth. The book *The Population Explosion* drew attention to the social burden that may follow from the population growth that typically accompanies economic development.¹⁶ As health care improves, living standards increase, and life expectancies lengthen, population sizes grow. This is a positive development because it represents improved living conditions for these people, but rapid population growth also can pose policy challenges for many developing nations.

Population by Economic Development Level in 1990 and Projected to 2015 (in millions)

Economic Development Level	In 1990		Projected to 2015	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Low-income economies	1,777	33.9	2,794	39.4
Middle-income economies	2,588	49.3	3,299	46.5
High-income economies	887	16.8	1,007	14.1
Total	5,252	100	7,100	100

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report Indicators 2005*, table 2-1 (www.worldbank.org) population dynamics.

Table 1.5 puts this issue in sharp relief. The table divides the world population into three strata: low-income economies, middle-income economies, and high-income economies. In 1990 the low-income countries had a population total of almost 2 billion, or about a third of the total world population. In contrast, the high-income nations had about a sixth of the world's population.

Some projections estimate that world population in 2015 will increase to 7 billion and that the poorer countries will see a more rapid rate of growth. In 2005, Hania Zlotnik of the UN population division estimated that "out of every 100 persons added to the [world's] population in the coming decade, 97 will live in developing countries."¹⁷ Rapid economic growth in the developing world can create significant burdens for these nations.

These prospects have produced a development literature that mixes both light and heat. Economist Amartya Sen warns of a "danger that in the confrontation between apocalyptic pessimism on one hand, and a dismissive smugness, on the other, a genuine understanding of the nature of the population problem may be lost."¹⁸ He points out that the first impact of "modernization" on population is to increase it rapidly, as new sanitation measures and modern pharmaceuticals reduce the death rate. As an economy develops, however, changing conditions tend to reduce fertility. With improved education (particularly of women), health, and welfare, the advantages of lower fertility become clear, and population growth declines.

Fertility decreased in Europe and North America as they underwent industrialization. Today, in many European nations the native populations are decreasing because fertility rates are below levels necessary to sustain a constant population size. This pattern appears to be occurring in the developing world. Thus annual

population growth in the world has declined from 2.2 percent to 1.7 percent in the last two decades. The rate of population growth in India, for example, rose to 2.2 percent in the 1970s and has since declined. Latin America peaked at a higher rate and then came down sharply. The major problem area is Sub-Saharan Africa, with an average growth rate of more than 2.7 percent each year during the 1990s.¹⁹ The fertility rate in Africa has recently dropped dramatically because of the tragically rising death rate from the AIDS epidemic.

While population growth rates appear to be slowing, governments are addressing this issue in different ways. China adopted a coercive policy of limiting families to a single child, which in urban areas produced dramatic results at great costs. India followed a collaborative approach involving governmental intervention and market and education to affect family choices.²⁰ Kerala in southern India is a dramatic example of what can be accomplished by the collaborative approach, where expanding education (particularly among women) and otherwise improving living conditions has reduced fertility more than in China.

Economic growth can have other social costs. For instance, advanced industrial societies are dealing with the environmental costs of their industrial development. Despoiled forests, depleted soils and fisheries, polluted air and water, nuclear waste, endangered species, and a threatened ozone layer now burden their legislative dockets. With increasing industrialization and urbanization in the developing world, many of these environmental problems could worsen. Thus, economic development can impose serious environmental costs as well as benefits. At the same time, some environmental problems are even more acute in less developed countries, where rapid increases in population and urbanization create shortages of clean air, clean water, and adequate sanitation.²¹ Thus,



The world's increasing energy use is causing serious environmental challenges. The burning of fossil fuels—such as coal, oil, and gas—pollutes our air, water, and atmosphere, whereas nuclear power plants, such as this one in Northern Bohemia, pose the risk of nuclear radiation.

Sean Sprague/Panos Pictures

economic development generally improves living conditions of the public, but in the process it produces new policy problems that governments must address.

FOSTERING DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

The second major force transforming contemporary political systems is the process of democratization, which includes the enhancement of human rights and the expansion of freedom. Democracy is the form of government to which most contemporary countries, more or less sincerely and successfully, aspire. A democracy, briefly defined, is a political system in which citizens enjoy a number of basic civil and political rights, and in which their most important political leaders are elected in free and fair elections and are accountable under a rule of law. Democracy literally means “government by the people.”

In small political systems, such as local communities, it may be possible for “the people” to share directly in debating, deciding, and implementing public policy. In large political systems, such as contemporary states, democracy must be achieved largely through indirect participation in policymaking: Elections, competitive political parties, free mass media, and representative-

assemblies make some degree of democracy, some degree of “government by the people,” possible. This indirect, or representative, democracy is not complete or ideal. But the more citizens are involved and the more influential their choices, the more democratic the system.

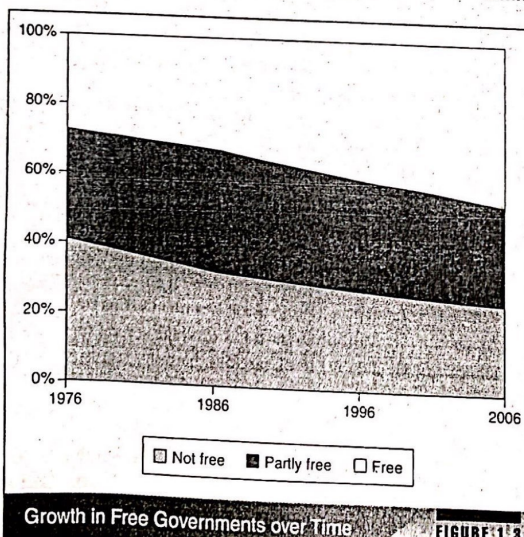
The most important general distinction in classifying political systems is between democratic systems and authoritarian systems. *Authoritarian* states lack one or several of the defining features of democracy. In democracies, competitive elections give citizens the chance to shape the policymaking process through their selection of key policymakers. In authoritarian systems the policymakers are chosen by military councils, hereditary families, dominant political parties, and the like. Citizens are either ignored or pressed into symbolic assent to the government's choices.

Authoritarian states can take several forms. (See Chapter 6.) In *oligarchies*, literally “rule by the few,” important political rights are withheld from the majority of the population. South Africa until the abolition of apartheid in the early 1990s is a good example. Other authoritarian states, such as Egypt, are controlled by an individual dictator and his party or military supporters. *Totalitarian systems*—such as Nazi Germany, or the Soviet Union under Stalin, or North Korea today—are systems in which the

government constricts the rights and privacy of its citizens in a particularly severe and intrusive manner.

As societies become more complex, richer, and more technologically advanced, the probability of citizen involvement and democratization increases. In the first half of the twentieth century most Western states were transformed from authoritarian regimes or oligarchies to democracies. After World War II, a second democratic wave—which lasted from 1943 until the early 1960s—saw both newly independent states (such as India and Nigeria) and defeated authoritarian powers (such as Germany and Japan) set up the formal institutions of democracy.²²

Another round of democratic transitions began in 1974, involving Southern Europe, East Asia, Latin America, and a number of African states. The most dramatic changes came in Central and Eastern Europe, where in a few short years the Soviet empire collapsed, the nations of Eastern Europe rapidly converted to democracy, and many of these nations have now joined the European Union. The people power revolution in the Philippines, the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, and the public protests for democratization in Indonesia were equally dramatic. Samuel P. Huntington speaks of this latest move toward democracy as a "Third Wave" of worldwide democratization.²³



As a result of these three democratization waves, democracy has become a common goal of the global community (see Figure 1.3). As late as 1978, only a third of the world's independent countries had competitive party and electoral systems. Communist and other single-party governments and other authoritarian regimes dominated the landscape. By 2004, almost two-thirds of states had a system of electoral democracy, and human rights and liberties were similarly spreading to more of the world's population.²⁴ This democratization trend is continuing in the new millennium, with prospects for further progress in many nations.

This democratization process results from a combination of factors. Economic development transforms societies in ways that typically encourage democratization by creating autonomous political groups that demand political influence, by expanding the political skills of the citizenry, and by creating economic complexity that encourages systems of self-governance. Social modernization transforms the political values and political culture of the public, which increases demands for a more participatory system (see Chapter 3). New democracies are also much more likely to endure when founded in economically developed societies.²⁵

Democracy is not an all-or-nothing proposition, however. No democracy is perfect, and we can speak of shades or gradations of democracy. Democracy typically does not come about overnight. It often takes time to establish democratic institutions and to have citizens recognize them and comply with the rules of the democratic process.

It can be especially difficult to consolidate democracy in less economically developed societies. Not all of the newly democratizing countries are succeeding beyond the first few years. In some, democratic processes fail to produce stable institutions and effective public policies and give way to some form of authoritarianism. In Nigeria, a democratic-leaning regime installed in 1979 was overthrown by a military coup in 1983, and a partial movement toward redemocratization was again aborted by the military in 1993 before being reestablished in 1999. Nigeria is by no

Source: Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2006* (www.freedomhouse.org).

Women and Political Development

BOX 1.4

If a poor nation could do one thing to stimulate its development, what should it do? Opening the fiftieth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2006, UN Deputy-Secretary General Louise Fréchet said the international community finally comprehends that empowering women and girls around the globe is the most effective tool for a country's development. She stated that studies have repeatedly shown that by giving women equal education and work opportunities and

access to a society's decision-making processes, a country can boost its economic productivity, reduce infant and maternal mortality rates and improve the general population's nutrition and health. These results are achieved because women's education and participation in the labor force increase family output, increase the likelihood that children will be better educated and benefit from health care, improve nutrition in the family, and better the quality of life for women and their families.

Source: UN News Center, February 27, 2006.

means unique. Transition can move in either direction, toward or away from democracy. The recent wave of democratization is supported by the more favorable environments of more modernized societies and because there are now more democracies in the world to support new democracies. However, democracy is difficult to sustain when severe economic or political problems face a nation, or where the public remains uncertain about democracy.

Even when states democratize, there is no guarantee that they will grant human rights and civil liberties to all their people. In some countries, majority rule turns into a "tyranny of the majority" against ethnic or religious minorities. Therefore, democracies have to balance between respecting the will of the majority and protecting the rights of the minority. Even when political rulers sincerely try to promote human rights and civil liberties (which is by no means always the case), they do not always agree on the nature of those rights.

A good example of the spread of rights and liberties—and cultural differences in the definition of rights—involves gender issues. Governments in Western industrial societies favor gender policies that guarantee equality for women in society, the workplace, and politics. The United Nations and other international organizations have become advocates of women's rights. But gender norms often vary across cultural zones. The UN's statistics indicate that many developing nations hesitate to grant equal rights to women, restricting their education and involvement in the economy and politics.²⁶ Restrictions on women's rights are even starker in many Arab states. Ironically, other research indicates that improving the status of

women is one of the most productive ways to develop a nation politically and economically (see Box 1.4). In short, expanding human rights is an ongoing process in the world today, and there is much room for further progress.

LOOKING FORWARD

The last several decades have been a period of tremendous social, economic, and political change in the world. Economic development, improved living standards, the spread of human rights, and democratization improved the life chances and life conditions of billions of individuals. In most of the world, the average child born today can look forward to a longer, better, and freer life than his or her parents—especially if she is a girl.

At the same time, continuing social, economic, and political problems remain. Progress in one area can create new opportunities, but also new problems in another. Economic development, for example, can sometimes stimulate ethnic strife and destabilize political institutions. Economic development can also disrupt social life. And the process of development has been uneven across and within nations. Many basic human needs still remain in too short supply.²⁷

Even in the affluent democracies, as one set of policy issues is addressed, new issues come to the fore. Western democracies struggle to address issues of environmental quality, changing lifestyles, and the challenges of globalization and multiculturalism. A more affluent and information-driven citizenry can also limit the effectiveness of political parties, interest groups,