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## UNIT 1 Why Comparative Politics?

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- 1. North Korea on the Edge: If the Regime Collapses, Will the Rest of the World Be Ready?**, B. R. Myers, *Wall Street Journal*, March 27, 2010  
It is sometimes easy to dismiss foreign affairs on the grounds that the politics and resultant policies of foreign countries could not possibly impact us. This article highlights the **problems** that **erratic governance** as far away as North Korea poses to the rest of the world. But, will its **collapse** mean a better world? Or will the problems pose greater dangers? As the author notes, we all have an interest in knowing the answers to these questions. 4
- 2. Somali Piracy: A Nasty Problem, a Web of Responses**, James Kraska and Brian Wilson, *Current History*, May 2009  
The threat of Somali pirates to maritime activities showcases another problem of unstable governments that are unable to enforce the rule of law. The successful U.S. rescue of the American cargo ship was a remarkable affirmation of the U.S. capabilities; however, as the article points out, the geographic vastness **inhibits any one country** from effectively patrolling the seas. While **countries may unite** to control piracy, the long-run reduction depends on **institutional-building** by strengthening the government in Somalia. 6
- 3. Corruption Suspected in Airlift of Billions in Cash from Kabul**, Matthew Rosenberg, *Wall Street Journal*, June 28, 2010  
Another reason for paying attention to foreign governance and policies: It pays (literally) to know what accountability and oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure that **aid** is **used appropriately**. If, as the article notes, as much as \$3 billion has been shipped out of Afghanistan in the last 3 years, how should we treat more requests for money? What are the consequences of halting aid to Afghanistan? 10
- 4. Corruption You Can Count On**, Raymond Fisman, *The Wall Street Journal*, April 3, 2010  
Clearly, the world will be a better place without corruption. Yet, it is not clear that eradicating **corruption** will be a successful endeavor. That being the case, an important question is: What types of corruption are less detrimental than others? If not all corruption is equal, do we need to **distinguish** between corruption that destroys and that which is merely disagreeable? 12
- 5. The Politics of Death in Darfur**, Gérard Prunier, *Current History*, Vol. 105, Issue 691, May 2006  
Combating **violence** is one of the foremost reasons why we care about politics in foreign countries. Notwithstanding our efforts and participation, violence of astounding magnitudes occurs. In examining and describing the crisis in Darfur, the author raises the fundamental questions: **How did it get so bad? Were our efforts too little too late?** 15
- 6. When to Step in to Stop War Crimes Causes Fissures**, Neil MacFarquhar, *The New York Times*, July 22, 2009  
Even when we agree that we need to stop war crimes, can we forge the policy to do so? The debate in the UN on the issue reveals that the means to this end remains fraught with problems and **consensus is elusive**. On the one hand, it seems that military intervention as a final response from the international community is necessary to enforce the UN's R2P doctrine. On the other hand, the variety of crises that have led some to invoke the doctrine elicits suspicion and concern. **When is the time to step in and how?** 22

The concepts in bold italics are developed in the article. For further expansion, please refer to the Topic Guide.

7. **Mexican Drug Trafficking**, The New York Times, June 9, 2010

Closer to home, we need to look no further than Mexico's drug war to see that we are vested in its success. It is clear that U.S. participation and coordination with the Mexican government helps significantly in this effort to stamp out drug trafficking. It is also useful to see that the long-term prospects for success depends on improving the government and civilian infrastructure, such as law enforcement and rebuilding communities. The shift in strategies—from military assistance to *institution-strengthening*—attests to the fact that success is built on learning and knowing a country, its politics, and its people.

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## UNIT 2

### Studying Comparative Politics: Developing Theories, Culling Evidence, and Interpretation over Time

#### Unit Overview

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8. **What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not**, Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, *Journal of Democracy*, Summer 1991

The term “democracy” is often used normatively to defend political decisions or outcomes. In this article, the authors outline what the term means conceptually, procedurally, and in principle. They also emphasize citizen participation as an integral concept to democracy. This is made clearer in the discussion on procedures, where the authors note that *citizen participation* underlies the procedures that realize *democracy*. Finally, the authors explain that *no single set of actual institutions, practices, or values embodies democracy*.

28

9. **Twenty-Five Years, Fifteen Findings**, Philippe C. Schmitter, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 2010

Too often, we fail to consider that *theory and evidence*—much of what we take as given—*are challenged repeatedly and have evolved over time*. In this article, we find out the reactions of the previous author, Philippe Schmitter, to the theoretical and empirical challenges of the theory of democracy espoused, as well as a “refresher” of 15 points he considers relevant to the understanding of democratic development after 25 years.

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10. **Schmitter's Retrospective: A Few Dissenting Notes**, Guillermo O'Donnell, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 2010

This article by one of Schmitter's co-authors emphasizes the slow, deliberative process that buttresses *theoretical development and interpretation of evidence*. Two points need to be made: First, there are many sources of disagreement in terms of theoretical development or interpretation of evidence. Second, what often follows from the disagreement is a re-examination of the theory and evidence, with resultant nuances added to the theory. In this way, the very process ensures that theoretical developments are rigorous and robust. And, it provides the room for *continued evolution of theory and practice to match*.

42

11. **People Power**, Sarah Childress, *The Wall Street Journal*, June 18, 2008

This article captures one of the points of disagreement between Schmitter and O'Donnell: Does citizen power matter? If so, how much? This article highlights that democratic footholds are established in Ghana, Tanzania, Mauritius, Senegal, Mozambique, South Africa, and Botswana, and that the substantial gains pursued by *citizens and groups in securing democratic government* in their respective countries. In describing the challenges to Mugabe in Zimbabwe, the article highlights, once again, the significant role of citizens and groups in pursuing fairness and *accountability and effecting change* in the process. Does the evidence vindicate O'Donnell's point or support Schmitter's perspective?

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12. **Advanced Democracies and the New Politics**, Russell J. Dalton, Susan E. Scarrow, and Bruce E. Cain, *Journal of Democracy*, January 2004

It is important to note that theoretical discussions often focus on archetypes. Reality often departs from these archetypes. This is why continued study remains important. In this article, the authors point out that even in established democracies, democratic development continues. In these countries, citizens are demanding more access, greater transparency in policymaking, and more accountability in government. The authors also show how procedures other than elections meet these demands. In particular, the authors note three trends in the evolution of democracy. First, changes such as campaign financing and term limits affect *representation*. Second, initiatives and referenda, where citizens *participate directly in policymaking*, are increasing. Third, citizens and interest groups are using the courts to pursue *policy formation*. Do the authors vindicate O'Donnell's point or do they support Schmitter's perspective?

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The concepts in bold italics are developed in the article. For further expansion, please refer to the Topic Guide.

13. **Facing the Challenge of Semi-Authoritarian States**, Marina Ottaway, *Facing the Challenge of Semi-Authoritarian States*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003

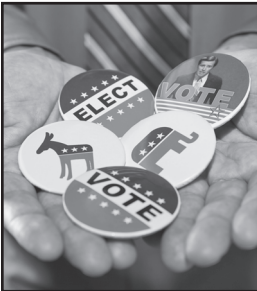
When we focus on democracies as **archetypes**, we often also set up dictatorships as the opposite end of the archetypal spectrum. Yet, as the author notes, many countries fall in the middle. These political **hybrids, or semi-authoritarian regimes**, contain many widely used processes in democracies, such as regular elections, rights of citizens, and an independent press. However, these states are not really aiming to become **pluralist democracies**. Instead, the ruling groups seem to take advantage of the democratic label without incurring the political risks that a free society entails. The author asks, “How should such regimes be dealt with?” She notes that promoting democracy in such regimes does not begin or end with removing the leaders. Compare this to Article 1 in Unit 1. Is there a trend here?

55

14. **Capitalism and Democracy**, Gabriel A. Almond, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, September 1991

This article reminds us of the many nuances in the development of theory. In the focus on democracy or democratization, Gabriel Almond asks: Does capitalism lead to institutional change? Does capitalism foster democracy or democratization? The institutional changes in the former Soviet Union and the former Eastern European communist countries suggest that political and economic institutions are interrelated. So does the previous article. But, Gabriel Almond shows that the **relationship between capitalism and democracy** is not clear. Drawing on the work of other theorists, the scholar explores ways in which capitalism both supports and subverts democracy, as well as ways in which democracy may both subvert and foster capitalism.

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## UNIT 3

### Political Participation: From Preferences to Policies

#### Unit Overview

66

15. **What Political Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?**, Robert A. Dahl, *On Democracy*, Yale University Press, 2000

The veteran scholar reiterates lessons from Article 1 in Unit 1: “Every actual democracy has always fallen short of democratic criteria.” Notwithstanding, he provides **six criteria** that form the minimum requirements for a democratic country: **electoral officials; free, fair, and frequent elections; freedom of expression; access to alternative sources of information; associational autonomy; and inclusive citizenship**. It is notable that citizen participation underpins all six criteria. While organizations such as interest groups and political parties are sometimes viewed with skepticism and even suspicion, organizing people into interest groups and political parties facilitates citizen influence and is, thus, indispensable toward building a democratic country.

68

16. **Civil Society, Youth and Societal Mobilization in Democratic Revolutions**, Taras Kuzio, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 39 (2006)

In this article, the author describes youth movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine to show how their involvement galvanized the opposition in these countries to overturn the previous less-democratic regime. Importantly, the author points out that the zeal of the youths had to be coached in order to viably challenge the former regime. Through **organization** to confront electoral fraud, **training** to mobilize and unify, and **contemporizing politics**—incorporating modern communications like cellphones and texting, and using music and ridicule—**to connect and raise awareness**, the youth movements presented challenges that the authorities could not overcome with their traditional methods of portraying the groups as extremist, terrorist, or pro-Western anti-nationalists.

74

17. **Online Activism**, Guobin Yang, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 3, July 2009

This article echoes the insights from the previous: First, modern technology has facilitated the expansion of **political activism** and emboldened political opposition, even in a country such as China where political control is high. Second, he points out the success of such political activism in effecting change. The author maintains that an important underlying principle is citizens’ political attitudes and gives three reasons to explain how online activity catalyzes activism.

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**18. Community Engagement for Counterterrorism: Lessons from the United Kingdom**, Rachel Briggs, *International Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 4, (2010)

Often, political participation is considered only in the context of challenging the government. In this article, the author points out how political participation also buttresses the government and its policies to safeguard the community. In particular, she highlights four ways that community involvement are effective in the short- and long-run in **battling terrorism**: (a) as early warning systems; (b) as a stop-guard in preventing youths from radicalization; (c) to provide local responses to grievances; (d) and to provide the consent necessary for legitimizing law enforcement. Importantly, the author emphasizes that terrorism is not a response against religion but crime; this is reiterated in the next article.

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**19. Bin Laden, the Arab “Street,” and the Middle East’s Democracy Deficit**, Dale F. Eickelman, *Current History*, January 2002

It is easy to dismiss Osama bin Laden because of his extremism and obvious manipulation of Islamic values and alienated youths. The author points out that it is more important to understand **why, how, and when** Bin Laden is **successful** than to dismiss or caricaturize him. In particular, he emphasizes that providing platforms in the Middle East to express opinions on matters of **public concern** mitigates the threat of terrorism. Fundamentally, this means greater, not less, **responsiveness** of Middle Eastern governments to the people. Importantly, the authors point out that a key need for the West is to communicate that the war against terrorism is not that of one civilization against another.

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## UNIT 4

### The Executive: Instituting Accountability and Responsiveness

#### Unit Overview

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**20. The Return of *Continuismo*?**, Shelley A. McConnell, *Current History*, Vol. 109, No. 724, February 2010

The author points out the ways that executives circumvent **term limits**: through referendum, constitutional amendment, judicial challenges, or legislative acquiescence. On the one hand, opponents point out that such circumvention succeeds largely because of the lack of **checks and balances** in the countries. On the other hand, proponents argue that the popular vote acts as the ultimate constrain against arbitrary executives.

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**21. How Reform Has Powered Brazil’s Rise**, Riordan Roett, *Current History*, Vol. 109, No. 723, February 2010

The rise of Brazil as an **economic powerhouse** largely rests on strong executives who were willing to take tough action in disciplining the economy. As a result, the country has drawn foreign investment and weathered the 2008–2009 global economic crisis with respectable performance. The author credits the executives in Brazil for this success. Importantly, is this reason enough to adopt constitutional changes to allow the executives another term?

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**22. Lula’s Last Year**, Kenneth Maxwell, *Current History*, Vol. 109, No. 723, February 2010

The article documents the rise of Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva as executive and points out the strategies that the president adopted to ignite the economy. Although problems remain in Brazil, the author also credits the president with much of Brazil’s **economic success**. Again, is this reason enough to adopt constitutional changes to allow the executives another term?

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**23. It Is Still Putin’s Russia**, Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, *Current History*, Vol. 107, No. 711, October 2008

Since assuming the premiership, Putin has continued to head the government, and his policies have stopped, if not turned back, Russia in its democratic evolution. Largely, Putin has been successful in controlling popular freedoms and enhancing executive powers through economic success. Thus, an economic downturn would mean **setbacks** from the system that he has established. Also, the international community may be a source to egg Russia further along in its democratic development.

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24. **The Resilient Authoritarians**, Martin Dimitrov, *Current History*, Vol. 107, No. 705, January 2008

Although it is tempting to conclude that authoritarian governments survive in office through terrorizing their citizenry, the article points out that much of the resilience is tied to the governments' willingness to loosen some restrictions while playing up on nationalistic sentiments. The author notes how **accountability** and **responsiveness** may be used to stall democratic development.

122

25. **Iran in Ferment: Civil Society's Choice**, Ladan Boroumand, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 4, October 2009

It is clear that even political autocrats need to build **broad support** based on **accountability** and **responsiveness** to achieve **governability**. In the case of Iran, even though many of the political activists did not support an opposition candidate against Ahmehdinejad, they set out to raise awareness for their causes. Ahmehdinejad won the election, but is this the last word in Iran?

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## UNIT 5

### The Legislature: Representation and the Effects of Electoral Systems

#### Unit Overview

130

26. **Discipline, Accountability, and Legislative Voting in Latin America**, John M. Carey, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 2, January 2003

The article shows how political reforms have edged legislators toward greater accountability to their constituencies. This is no mean feat: Legislators are conflicted between the divided loyalties of accountability to the party versus to their constituencies. However, the influence of parties has been eroded over time, in part by new technological advancements such as electronic vote-keeping in the legislature and in part by new demands, such as the executive's ability to provide **patronage** to legislators for their support. The trajectory is towards **greater accountability to constituency**, or "principles."

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27. **The Case for a Multi-Party U.S. Parliament?**, Christopher S. Allen, *Original Work*, 2007

The author considers how U.S. political institutions have suffered under **divided government**. He suggests that the United States may benefit from the study of comparative politics and presents a brief mental experiment in institutional transplantation, where the **presidential** system is replaced by **parliamentary** institutions. It underscores the basic insight that **institutions** matter a great deal. They are not neutral, but have consequences for the **political process** itself.

141

28. **Equity in Representation for Women and Minorities**, Wilma Rule and Joseph Zimmerman, from *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women and Minorities*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994

This article points out that **minority representation across all countries is well short of their proportional numbers in the population**. There are several reasons for minority underrepresentation. Chief among them are the majority's attitudes toward minorities, which affects how minorities are classified and the ease or difficulty of obtaining citizenship that vests them with rights for political participation and involvement. Having "**reserved**" seats for their representation helps, as does using **proportional system or single transferable vote** rather than **plurality elections**. Does this matter? The author points out that promoting minority representation in legislatures is likely to reduce political alienation among minorities and, consequently, reduce tensions and conflicts that can splinter a country.

150

29. **The Female Factor: Women Spreading Political Wings with Help of India's Quota System**, Mian Ridge, *The New York Times*, April 28, 2010

India's **quota system** that sets aside one-third of the seats for women in the local governments has seen an increase in the number of **women chiefs** in the villages. The effect has been impressive: There are more public services, including better roads and safer drinking water in villages where women head the villages. And, there is also less corruption in these villages. Should the quota be extended to the national level?

155

30. **Malaysia in 2008: The Elections That Broke the Tiger's Back**, Bilveer Singh, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 49, Issue 1, January/February 2009

The 2008 general elections in Malaysia saw the loss of the **super-majority** status of the coalition-party of the Barisan Nasional, comprising the United Malay National Organization, the Malaysian Chinese Association, the Malaysian Indian Congress, and smaller parties in East Malaysia. The loss of the supermajority after almost 40 years is a significant setback for the BN and, importantly, presages increased **representation and democratic development** in the country, now that the BN no longer controls the supermajority that may forestall changes.

157

31. **Australia's Dead-Heat Election: Hung, Drawn, Now Courting**, The Economist, August 26, 2010

This article reveals another significance of legislature: majorities in parliamentary systems. The recent election in Australia appears to have failed to produce a majority in the legislature. This directly affects the ability to form a government, since the **government governs with the approval of the legislature** in parliamentary systems. The article, then, highlights another aspect of **representation and democratic development**, this time in **mature** democracies.

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## UNIT 6

### The Judiciary, Intelligence Agencies, and the Military: Unelected Thugs or Expert Protectors?

#### Unit Overview

164

32. **Reclaiming Democracy: The Strategic Uses of Foreign and International Law by National Courts**, Eyal Benvenisti, *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 102, No. 2, April 2008

The author notes that courts in several democracies have begun to apply international law and the jurisprudence of other national courts to their domestic laws. The article cites three areas where this judicial convergence is most notable: judicial review of global counterterrorism measures, the protection of the environment in developing countries, and the status of asylum seekers in destination countries. The author points out that in each of these areas, the judiciary does not actually aim to **displace executive priorities or legislative policymaking** with their judicial decisions. Rather, the aim is to push these branches of government to clarify policymaking. In doing so, the author points out that judiciaries are providing "**expanded policy space**" for domestic **deliberation**, which facilitates democratic development.

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33. **Rule of Law, Russian-Style**, Kathryn Hendley, *Current History*, Vol. 108, No. 720, October 2009

Much of the focus on Russia's failure to institutionalize democracy has rested on the role of the executive, particularly Putin. This article points out that **institution-building** in terms of defining and implementing rule of law is also short-changed, so that the popular adage in Russia is, "It is forbidden but if you really want to, then go ahead." But all is not lost; as the author points out, there are recent efforts to ensure **transparency**.

174

34. **The Making of a Neo-KGB State**, *The Economist*, August 25, 2007

Agencies such as the **KGB** typify the **bad** of all-powerful, unchecked, agencies that are opaque. The article describes the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor to the KGB, in Russia and its role in forcing owners, specifically of oil businesses, to give up their businesses and return them to state ownership. Critics, such as Anna Politkovskaya, a renowned journalist, and Litvinenko, a former KGB officer, have died under suspicious circumstances. Yet, few expect that the businesses seized will be run successfully, and feel that the power of such an agency will likely turn out to be its undoing.

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35. **Civil-Military Power Struggles: The Case of Mauritania**, Dafna Hochman, *Current History*, Vol. 108, Issue 718, May 2009

The article highlights the problem of civilian governments in emergent democracies: the struggle in **institution-building** in order to establish **legitimacy** and win **popular confidence**, with a military waiting in the wings and ready to displace the government at the sign of trouble. The article points out many problems that led to the coup; however, the author also reminds us that the coup is based on a “structural dilemma” experienced in emergent democracies: difficult political system—a semi-presidential system—over multi-ethnic and divided society, in an international arena that is intently focused on fighting terrorism. Under these conditions, the government is likely to show lapses, and the military is also likely to usurp power on the grounds that things are out of control.

180

36. **In Turkey, Military’s Power over Secular Democracy Slips**, Janine Zacharia, *Washington Post*, April 11, 2010

Turkey’s revered national founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk established a military-political order where the military holds a role in protecting secularism in the country. As such, the military seems above the government or, at the least, is not controlled by the government. Yet, there is evidence that civilian support for such **military interference** is dissipating; further, there is a push to reform the constitution in order to reduce the role of the military as guardian of the state.

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## UNIT 7

### Trends and Challenges: How to Change Institutions

#### Unit Overview

188

37. **China: The Quiet Revolution**, Doug Guthrie, *Harvard International Review*, Summer 2003

The fall of the political systems in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European communist countries suggests that a cause for the institutional changes lies in the economic distress from socialism. China appears to followed market principles without the concomitant institutional change, such as privatization, by providing **incentives** to produce and encourage **efficiency**. Yet, the author points out that much of China’s success rests on **gradual transformation of legal and institutional changes**. That is, although China did not engage in a dramatic revolution, there is no question that China is undergoing institutional change.

190

38. **The True Clash of Civilizations**, Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2003

Is there an institutional incompatibility between those of the West and those that follow Islam? The authors suggest that Samuel Huntington is correct in claiming that culture is important, but he is incorrect in assuming that political values are the main factor in the clash between the West and Islam. In their opinion, gender equality and sexual liberation may be more important. Even though Muslims want **democracy**, it is not sustainable without **tolerance** toward “sexual orientation and gender equality.” The authors also point out that the processes and institutions of democracy will remain “trappings” that do not further democratization unless resources are spent to foster human development and change the culture.

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39. **Authoritarianism’s Last Line of Defense**, Andreas Schedler, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 2010

The author reminds us that even as previously authoritarian countries embrace a host of democratic institutions ranging from **constitutional reforms** to improvements in the **freedom of civic associations**, these changes are accompanied by a wide range of controls. These include disempowerment, agent control, and fragmentation. However, the author is optimistic that these institutions, although manipulated, will facilitate **democratic opening** because they provide venues for debate, discussion, and opportunities for challenges.

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<p><b>40. Why Democracy Needs a Level Playing Field</b>, Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 2010  This article provides the empirical evidence of <b><i>manipulation of rules and institutions in new democracies</i></b>: access to resources, access to the media, access to the law. The authors point out that, as a result of the “uneven playing field,” some ruling parties are reelected by wide margins. This poses a problem to democratic development since there is no real competition for office, both during and between elections.</p>	<p><b>207</b></p>
<p><b>41. The EU and Its “Constitution,”</b> Alberta Sbragia, <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>, April 2006  The EU represents the effort to form an integrated regional government despite the failure of the EU “Constitution” to receive majority support in the Dutch and French <b><i>referenda</i></b> of 2005. The author suggests presenting the EU as a geoeconomic or geopolitical project in order to elicit more public support. Fundamental to her suggestion is the author’s recognition that it is better to start off strong for institutional building because tepid support will ultimately jeopardize the performance of institutions. But it is her other suggestion that is more provoking: Integration may proceed on a smaller scale. After all, the EU has been more active and successful than the GATT/WTO.</p>	<p><b>213</b></p>
<p><b><i>Test-Your-Knowledge Form</i></b></p>	<p><b>218</b></p>
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