The subject of comparative politics is little more than the study of foreign politics. We can thus approach it with the same sense of adventure and anticipation as when we travel abroad. The purpose of this volume is to provide you with the background and analytical charts that, when added to in-depth study of particular countries, will make you not the stereotypical tourist, but rather an informed traveler in your intellectual journey. The informed traveler returns from a journey both more educated in the ways of others and more critical and yet more appreciative of his or her own culture. This is the experience that we would like you to have in reading this book.

There are three additional reasons that we believe one should study comparative politics from the analytical and theoretical points of view contained in this volume. The first is simply so that you can see how the study of social science you have undertaken in your other courses or in your own reading is related to the study of comparative politics. Comparative politics is interdisciplinary, and therefore our selected readings are likely to link and expand upon things you already know.

The second reason is the importance of the study of comparative politics to the understanding of foreign policy. We feel that policymakers too often are insufficiently rigorous in the analysis that goes into the formulation of policy. Often, analogy becomes a substitute for clearness of thought. Thus, in Vietnam, we had to avoid the mistakes of Korea; in Iran, we had to avoid those of Vietnam; in Egypt, those of Iran; and so on. In the same way, in Libya we must repeat the "success" of what was done in the Philippines, and in Nicaragua we must avoid creating another Cuba. Elected officials and others, who ought to know better because of factual expertise, all succumb to this flabby analogical mode of "thought." Our readings are intended to provide you with the analytical tools to avoid such a mode and to see the political process in a more intellectual and detached fashion.

Our third reason is related to the importance of comparative politics not only to foreign policy formulation, but also to the international context of secure business investment and the political determinants of what is usually called economic development policy. In short, comparative politics is an academic subject with very important practical applications.

We approached the task of preparing this reader both enthusiastically and critically. Our enthusiasm arose from the intellectual challenge of selecting readings from the whole of the comparative politics field that are truly representative of present academic consensus. Our critical frame of mind came about because of the manner in which emerging intellectual concerns are challenging the assumptions of political science as the discipline is presently
constituted. The post-behavioral era, and its criticisms of what preceded it, have been with us for more than fifteen years. The deficiencies of a behavioral-dominated "scientific" political science are by now well known. Yet, the discipline shows little evidence of addressing these criticisms. We have attempted to do this here by confronting one major criticism of behavioralism, namely its politically liberal and pluralist ideological bias. In doing so, we have tried also to avoid the pitfall of disregarding that which went before and thereby contributing to a noncumulative political science. For that reason, and because of their intellectual durability and excellence, a number of selections are contained in this book that are familiar, well known, and not necessarily improved upon in recent years.

Finally, there is an important point about the pedagogy of comparative politics that is implicit in the foregoing. This book, which is intended for use primarily by undergraduates, presents some difficult and abstract ideas, both as organizing themes and in the separate readings. It has been said that such issues are more properly the stuff of graduate study. This implies that the recommended content of the basic course in comparative politics should consist primarily of an empirical and overview introduction to the politics of selected states; one should not attempt to interest students in more abstract issues, because these are seen as the strictly professional concerns of the political science discipline and at best as too specialized for undergraduates. On both counts we disagree. First, we believe that it is absolutely necessary to address questions of historical development and changes in intellectual emphasis over time in order to ground comparative studies in a coherent intellectual framework. Second, the focus of this book—the decline of the prominence of liberal behavioralism and its present coexistence with radical and conservative alternatives—presents the student with major intellectual issues appropriate to any undergraduate liberal arts education. Furthermore, five years after graduation, for generalist and political specialist alike, what is more important: soon forgotten factual knowledge of some aspect of French politics, or the ability to employ theories and concepts in application to French politics and politics more generally?

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