

## *Chapter 1*

# Comparing Apples and Mangoes

An attempt to define a common property for developing countries in political terms faces two hurdles. One needs to first overcome universalism's sense of "history of life as somehow inherently directed toward us" and particularism's "walled segregation" to use Stephen Gould's and Aimé Césaire's words. Then one has to locate such a property between the two approaches without reducing it to a simple juxtaposition of the two. In this chapter, I discuss how a fruit analogy can help do both by helping locate and define overpoliticization as the common property in developing countries.

### THE MISCHARACTERIZATION OF THIRD WORLD EXPERIENCES

Consider politics since 1948. Unlike Western countries, African, Asian, and South American countries have been characterized since 1948 by six major traits that reveal patterns of similar political behaviors among them. First, their postindependence regimes have faced the crisis syndrome characterized by irredentism, rebellions, guerrilla warfare, civil war, violent overthrows, and military coups. Second, almost all of the countries have experienced authoritarian rule with its attendant effects. In addition, they have shared an inability to sustain democratic rule for a prolonged period as exemplified by postindependence democratic regimes in Africa and Asia, which turned authoritarian just a few years after independence, and by South American countries, which embraced authoritarianism after the 1948–64 "high noon" for democracy. Argentina before October 1983, Brazil before January 1985, Uruguay before February 1985, Nigeria before 1984, and Ghana before 1981 attempted first, second, and third rounds of democratization only to fall back into authoritarianism.

Third, in many cases, before the recent worldwide calls for reform, the proclaimed democratic rule was replaced by *de facto* authoritarianism by a dominant party. Mexico's Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Sénégal's Union Progressiste Sénégalaise (now the Socialist Party), and, to an extent,

India's Congress Party (during the emergency powers of the 1970s) are examples. Fourth, democratic political competitions are often won by the same political parties, which maintain an electoral monopoly; the monopoly is sometimes maintained through power swapping. The cases of Sénégal (before 2000), Botswana, Malaysia, Singapore (to the extent that it is considered a democracy), Venezuela, Colombia, and other South American countries come to mind. Fifth, in nearly all cases, election results are contested by the opposition because of fraud or irregularities when they are not boycotted or marred by violence. The fall 1999 general elections in India, the "largest democracy," as reported by U.S. National Public Radio, illustrate the point:

The campaign leading up to the [Indian] general elections is a riotous, no-holds-barred affair. Party workers beat each other up with bamboo sticks and candidates shoot it out at the polls. That is, if they haven't been kidnapped and murdered by their political rivals first. Votes are routinely bought and sold, whiskey and cash panned up like campaign literature. Parties use every means to get out the vote. And what they don't have, they sometimes steal. Cars for campaigning, for example, which I unfortunately found out when they took mine.<sup>1</sup>

Sixth, in most cases in which democratic rule has been proclaimed, especially in the post-1985 period, authoritarian practices linger as former authoritarian leaders maintain power and the military remains the arbitrator of the situation.<sup>2</sup> In some other cases authoritarian rulers have violently or via an electoral facade resisted calls for democratic change. Where elections have become routine, the "consolidated democracy" has not avoided the characteristic features of the old democracies, such as India, Colombia, and Venezuela. One recalls Argentina's Carlos Menem's oft-decried behaviors during his tenure, Benin's electoral fraud and its president Kerekou accusing the opposition of coup plots, South Korea's lingering dictatorial powers and political imprisonment, and the Ecuadorian syndrome in which, as Ecuador's overthrown President Jamil Mahuad bitterly put it, whenever the president makes a decision that is not liked, he and the city (of Quito) are taken hostage.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the Ecuadorian syndrome, that is, susceptibility to mass overthrows, has characterized many of the democratic rules since 2000: Ecuador in 1996, 2000, and 2005, Peru in 2000, Argentina in 2001, the Philippines in 2001 (attempted in 2005), Venezuela in 2002, Côte d'Ivoire in 2002, Bolivia in 2003 and 2005, and Haiti in 2004. To this situation one adds the fact that most of these democratic rules face a higher level of unpunished corruption than do Western liberal democratic states. The post-2004 anecdotal evidence mentioned in the Introduction confirms these trends.

To be sure, when taken separately, these six types of political behaviors testify to variations in the experiences of different non-Western countries. Because not even identical twins display similarities in all of their inward and outward traits, differences and variations are a given. Perfect identity does not exist in history or in social life. Argentina is different from Venezuela, Haiti from Jamaica, Senegal from Botswana, and India from Singapore although the countries in each pair belong to the same continent or region. What is true of countries from the same geographical area is even more so for countries located on different continents. Nevertheless, theory building depends on patterns of social behaviors. These variations scarcely hide the fact that the above behaviors constitute deeply similar patterns shared by African, Asian, and South American countries. These similarities are starkly magnified by the contrast provided by Western liberal democracies when compared with non-Western countries temporally, spatially, and across regimes. Like Western countries, which display variations in their political behaviors but share a pattern of behaviors that make them “Western democracies,” features in non-Western countries suggest that they share a pattern of political behaviors that make them a conceptual unity despite their variations. Like a thread, this pattern links them to each other in two important ways. First, the six types of behavior can be arranged in three categories of behavior as they relate to (1) authoritarian rule, (2) democratic (electoralist) rule, and (3) both types of rule. Second, the three categories connote and converge, in turn, toward a lack of compromise or tenuous compromise in political competition.

This being the case, one should expect this empirical/conceptual unity to be at the center of the preoccupations of the cross-national comparative politics of developing countries. Yet, because of the contradictory claims made by universalism and particularism, this is not the case. Both modes of inquiry fail to grasp the pattern of behaviors that emerges from the above six types of empirical experiences, the pattern that, like a thread, runs through these experiences and links them together. By representing the six types of political behavior, indeed the same empirical experiences, according to their respective concerns, the two approaches define these behaviors contradictorily and dispersedly, leading, as indicated earlier, to a profusion of theories and typologies of the state. I will fully elaborate on how the two modes of inquiry mischaracterize the empirical experiences in developing countries (see chaps. 2). Before doing so, however, it is worth saying a few words here about the two in order to put in its proper context my argument about how and why the two ways of characterizing political experiences in developing countries need to be altered and integrated into the notion of overpoliticization.

*Universalism Versus Particularism*

There are two major modes of inquiry in comparative politics: macro- and microanalytical orientations. The two generally resort to deductive and inductive approaches. Macrodeductive (sometimes referred to as global/grand)<sup>4</sup> theories adopt a universal and totalizing view and apply deductively a priori theories to each and all cases. They include, among others, modernization theory, structural functionalism, systems and structuralist analyses, pluralism/democratization, globalization, imperialism-centered theories such as imperialism, dependency and world-system analyses, and Marxist analyses. Microdeductive theories are exemplified by rational choice, which deductively applies insights about self-seeking rational individuals. Generally, macrodeductive and microdeductive theories resort to the variable-oriented strategy that concerns itself with the widest possible range of cases (often in the form of quantitative method). It is less concerned with understanding specific outcomes and more interested in broad theoretically based aspects of macrosocial phenomena. Explanations in this strategy are generally probabilistic. Macroinductive theories include those “middle-range” theories that analyze political institutions and other politically relevant variables using a small number of comparative case studies, whereas microinductive (or narrow-gauge) theories rely on local cultures and anthropologically inspired local data.<sup>5</sup>

Some overlapping occurs among macrotheories, deductive or inductive, and among deductive theories, macro or micro. Often macroinductive (middle-range) and microinductive (narrow-gauge) theories are rooted in and inspired by macrodeductive theories. This overlapping is not uncommon in the case-oriented strategy of research, which relies on a few cases and pays close attention to their data and configurations of conditions. It determines the different combinations of conditions associated with specific outcomes or processes. Although the case-study strategy is often used by proponents of middle-range theories, advocates of macrodeductive theories also resort to it sometimes when applying deductive theories to chosen case studies. In developing countries per se, middle-range theories fall in one of the two camps. They either apply a deductive theory to a selected number of cases in developing countries or develop models that cannot be applied to other developing regions because of their local fact/culture-sensitive nature.

These distinctions and cautionary note made, it is fair to say that the comparative politics of non-Western countries offers generally a double picture of transnational and universal uniformity, on the one hand, and reliance on local and regional culture and features, on the other. To stress this double picture, I use the term “universalism” to refer to the modes of theorizing in comparative politics that are macro/microdeductive (some case-studies included) and “particularism” to refer to those that are macro/microinductive.

In addition to conveying the critical messages in my Gould and Césaire-inspired epigraphs, universalism and particularism will serve as shorthand forms that help avoid ponderous repetitions of macrodeductive and microinductive theories for which they substitute.<sup>6</sup>

Universalism in comparative politics has its roots in the behavioral revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. The latter provided the impetus for comparative politics by rescuing it from its configurative and descriptive status and turning it into a theoretical and scientific enterprise that relies on explanation and prediction of phenomena. This scientific and systematic approach was inherited by modernization theory, which, through the concept of institutionalization, shifted the focus from the particularities and idiosyncrasies of particular countries to broad theoretical considerations. Confirming what the proponents of postmodernism decry, modernization theory traced a linear developmental process whose binary opposites were backwardness and modernity, or the modernized stage. Along with the missing crucial modernizing variables such as democratic institutions, it advocated order and rational material allocations, an aspect of which was the literature on authoritarianism.<sup>7</sup> As Susanne Hoeber Rudolph states, “Because the macrosocial projects of the 1960s were holistic, they were under a logical and intellectual compulsion to suppress alternative truths, to imagine that Western history was world history and suppress the possibility of multiple histories.”<sup>8</sup> The reaction to modernization theory also relied on universalism as Marxism, dependency theory, and world-system analyses dominated the 1970s and 1980s. In the globalization era,<sup>9</sup> universalism projects a picture of transnational and vertical uniformity. It defines political features (e.g., the above six types of political features) in developing countries as temporary deviations from the universal norm. It eschews the horizontal empirical and conceptual unity among developing countries. This tendency is even stronger with respect to those countries whose robust economic growth has obscured their similarities in political features with other developing countries.

Particularism does the same but for different reasons. It denies the empirical and conceptual unity shared by Third World countries and seeks, instead, to affirm the identity of local or regional political features. As early as 1970, Peter Winch took to task cross-national comparative studies because their conceptual claims were inappropriate and of little use in different cultural contexts.<sup>10</sup> The post-Soviet era accentuated these debates. The antidote to universalism was to redirect attention to locally and regionally based analyses of non-Western countries. Particularism shares its concerns with postmodernism,<sup>11</sup> especially its critique of metanarratives, that is, “stories that make all other stories subordinate.”<sup>12</sup> It seeks heterogeneity, diversity, fluidity, and difference over and above unity. In the post-Soviet era, characterized by the freeing of bottled up frustrations imposed by cold war political blocks,

particularism rejects the term “Third World,”<sup>13</sup> the conceptual unity of developing countries that made their comparison with Western (and the former Soviet Bloc) countries possible. The call for the abolition of the term “Third World” has reinforced particularism and regionalism in Third World politics.

Particularism advocates a serious reading of local non-Western cultures.<sup>14</sup> It relies on region- or country-tailored studies that seek to reflect the culture or specific situations of the country or region under study (e.g., the African soft state, African specific colonial legacy, South American bureaucratic-authoritarian state, the Asian authoritarian/paternalistic state, the postnational argument, and the focus on regional differences in democratization).<sup>15</sup> Through these debates, particularism discounts the horizontally deep empirical/conceptual unity shared by non-Western countries with respect to the above six types of political features. Partly because it relies on differential economic and “cultural” indices in Africa, Asia, and South America, it obscures and overlooks the deep similarities they share in political features.<sup>16</sup> The focus on cultural/geographical differences leads to overemphasis on the ramifications and specialized manifestations of these shared features in different countries at the expense of grasping the main features themselves. An example is aspects of 1964–85 authoritarianism that were associated with Iberian culture in South America despite the fact that South American authoritarianism did not differ, as a political behavior, from that which exists but displays specific ramifications in Africa and Asia. Another example is societal withdrawal from the state, which was made a specifically African phenomenon in the “soft state” literature despite the fact that withdrawal from the state in Africa, irredentism in Asia, and guerrilla warfare in South America are specialized and localized manifestations of the same political behavior.

Because both universalism and particularism neglect the horizontal empirical and conceptual unity of developing countries in political features, the intersection of both types of theoretical inquiry is filled with unresolved tensions. These tensions reflect the type of debate and disagreements that have dominated cross-national comparative politics in general and Third World comparative politics in particular<sup>17</sup> since the late 1970s. They explain for the most part, as indicated earlier, why the state of comparative politics was seen as “appalling” and the discipline itself as “divided”<sup>18</sup> by some of its own leading practitioners. Ultimately, they lead to the unresolved debate and controversy between advocates of universalism under the label “general theory”<sup>19</sup> and proponents of area studies.

The debate between advocates of general theory and area studies is an old one; in the past it was framed in terms of nomothetic and idiographic approaches, which advocated, respectively, general theory and immersion in local realities. Ethnic and regional centrifugal tendencies in many countries in the post-cold war period intensified the debate. Students of the democra-

tization movement are divided into supporters of general theory and proponents of area studies and regionalism even though all of them are universalists. Advocates of the rational choice theory more explicitly proclaim their opposition to area studies.<sup>20</sup> Scholars working within the rational choice tradition argue that area-based research tends to be parochial, idiographic, narrative-prone, and closer to humanities than to (social) sciences. Robert Bates goes so far as to “accuse” area specialists of defecting from the social sciences into the humanities camp because of their commitment to the study of history, languages, culture, and their reliance on interpretive approaches. He regards “area studies as a problem for political science” because, among other things, they lack the capacity to develop general theories or test theories against empirical reality. Like him, other advocates of rational choice and universalism suggest that one can theorize about other nations with little need for scholars to develop specific knowledge of regions and countries. Their advice is for one to take counsel from theory, extract testable implications, collect measures, collect data, and seek possibility for falsification.<sup>21</sup> This tendency has been reinforced by studies in globalization, which cite global production networks, the disappearance of ideologies, the erosion of state boundaries, geographical interconnectedness, cultural homogenization, transnational organizations, and social movements, to argue that area studies have become obsolete.<sup>22</sup>

Proponents of area studies retort to advocates of universalizing rational choice by attacking their faddish imitation of economists, their nonrespect for the new realms of complexity opened up by the postmodern perspectives on race, gender, and culture, their pretentious reduction of human behavior to a few individual motivational uniformities, their cultural ethnocentrism and ideological projection of American culture and interests in the post-cold war period to the world, and their misappropriation of the term “theory.”<sup>23</sup> With respect to the literature on democratization and democratic consolidation, the debate has revolved around the applicability of the models developed in South America to the former Soviet-bloc countries. The debate opposes proponents of universalism, who argue that macroprocesses in Eastern Europe are similar to those in South America (Asia and Africa) and can, therefore, benefit from the theoretical insights developed about the latter, to advocates of “area studies,” who maintain that comparing the two processes is to “compare apples and kangaroos.”<sup>24</sup>

There have been de facto quasireconciliations between general theory and area studies at the “eclectic messy center,”<sup>25</sup> in addition to the purposeful attempts to integrate both. In most cases, however, these attempts have not been successful. Many studies done in political science as area studies should, in principle, reconcile universalism and areas studies to the extent that most case studies apply general theory to a country or a region. In reality, however,

they do not reconcile the two because it is universalism that prevails; the case study may be geographically non-Western, but universalism prevails conceptually and theoretically. In the era of globalization, the contact between global forces and developing societies shows an uneasy *de facto* coexistence between resistant non-Western societies and globalization. This suggests, in principle, that general theory should rely on and reconcile with area knowledge for understanding the universalizing effects of globalization and, perhaps, to correct them. Yet this is not the case because advocates of universalism and globalization proclaim the obsolescence of area studies. Reconciliation or integration is just as illusive between advocates of rational choice and area studies despite their call for such integration. Robert Bates and Samuel Popkin, for instance, have called for a modification of the rational choice approach to accommodate peasant societies and cultures of Asia and Africa.<sup>26</sup> Widely viewed as the instigator of the 1990s controversy between advocates of rational choice and area studies, Bates has actually, despite his predilection for rational choice, proposed a “fusion” and a “synthesis” between the two. Those critical of rational choice and supportive of area studies have also recognized the need for the “vocabulary” of general theory to translate area knowledge into a widely understood language and for both sides to understand each other.<sup>27</sup> Yet, the fusion has not taken place. Advocates of rational choice proclaim the conceptual and theoretical superiority of the rational choice model and seek to assimilate area studies; proponents of area studies maintain that good theorizing is necessarily inductive and depends on area studies. Attempts made for integration are mostly reduced to recounting the contributions of regional research (Latin America, Africa, Asia) to political science.<sup>28</sup> The debate has not been resolved among students of democratization either since advocates of regional trends still maintain that democratic experiments reflect local/regional conditions.<sup>29</sup> As discussed in chapter 6, attempts by proponents of culture as explanation and by practitioners of the world-system theory to integrate culture into the general explanatory framework have not been any more successful.

These tensions have negative implications for the way one proposes prescriptions, as Lucian Pye and others have argued in the case of the literature on democratization.<sup>30</sup> Above all, they leave unanswered the question of why the six political features that have characterized developing countries since 1948 seem to form a pattern that contrasts with both their individual or regional idiosyncrasies and Western countries. In the absence of a definition and conceptualization of this empirical unity of developing countries, this question cannot be answered adequately. The definition is the starting point for proposing new types of explanations, and needs to alter both universalism and particularism and fuse them into a new whole. How, then, does one accomplish this task? How does this conceptualization help distinguish the political features of Third World countries from both their idiosyncratic/regional traits and the features of West-



ern countries? I answer these questions by developing the concept of the overpoliticization. Given that the latter concept can be grasped only within a comparative framework that features Western countries as the other term of the comparison, I resort to a fruit analogy.

#### SETTING THE FRAMEWORK: COMPARING APPLES AND MANGOES

Although nuances exist among proponents of particularism, in general particularism criticizes universalism's tendency to apply deductively the concepts, methods, and theories derived from the Western experience to non-Western countries. It retreats behind regional and country particularities to fend off attempts to see similar patterns among either Western countries or developing countries. Its advocates argue that vast differences among non-Western countries defy reasonable comparisons among them. In so doing, particularism easily raises the perennial objection of comparing apples and oranges. The objection has already been answered from a universalistic point of view by Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, who argued that apples and oranges can be compared because they possess a general property: they are "fruits."<sup>31</sup> In other words, from a universalistic perspective Western and non-Western countries can be compared through their common conceptual property. This is true but incomplete.

Let us, for the sake of this study, expand the range of the fruits involved. Consider, on the one hand, apples and pears, which are temperate fruits and, on the other, mangoes, papayas, and pineapples, which are tropical fruits. Let us, further, call their general property of being fruits "fruitiness." And without substituting an analogy for reality, let temperate fruits (apples and pears) represent North American and West European countries and tropical fruits (mangoes, papayas, and pineapples) African, Asian, and South American countries.<sup>32</sup> The analogy and the notion of fruitiness evoke one of the most important and salvageable contributions of the behavioral revolution in political science (hence, universalism), namely, that the "fruitiness" refers to specifically political phenomena or behaviors, the common property shared by Western and non-Western countries. Indeed, at the core of David Easton's contributions to political science lies his definition of the *political* as a specific and separate set of behaviors that shares borders with other behaviors (economic, social, psychological) but cannot be confused with them. As he put it,

In terms of the mode of analysis under discussion in this volume, political life will be interpreted as a system conceptually distinct from other systems in a society. Those interactions that fall outside of a

political system may be designated as the environment in which a political system exists.<sup>33</sup>

This means that the property to be compared (the fruitiness or the universal common phenomenon) consists, not of economic life or other systems of behavior, but of a pattern of specifically *political* behaviors. In other words, the dependent variable in comparative politics should consist of generic patterns of specifically political behaviors that are found across regions, regimes, and time.<sup>34</sup>

To be sure, the notion of “specifically political phenomena” is questioned by those who see “politics” everywhere, that is, as inseparable from other aspects of social life. Everything is political, they argue.<sup>35</sup> Their view is strengthened by the fact that it is almost impossible to do political science without an understanding of economics and other social sciences, and vice versa. The much celebrated political economy approach, which, especially since the 1970s, has sought to revive the inseparable link established by classical economists between politics and economics is a good testimony to this view. In some cases, it is difficult to determine whether a scholar does political science, economics, history or sociology. What this means is that it is not uncommon to define political phenomena in close relationship with economic or other variables or, when proposing explanations to a given phenomenon, to establish correlations or causal relations between economic and political variables. Contrary to the “everything is political” view, however, it does *not* mean that politics is economics or literature.

Przeworski and Teune are, thus, correct with respect to the comparability of Western and non-Western countries on the basis of the specifically political behaviors. Indeed, suppose that one eats both sets of fruits (temperate and tropical) and becomes interested in comparing them. One is likely to discover that they are similar. What they have in common is their general characteristic of being fruits (fruitiness), which involves related properties such as containing fruit acid. On this ground Western countries and non-Western countries can be compared on the basis of their similar property (the political or the political system, the equivalent of fruitiness in the fruit analogy). One of the strengths of modernization theory is to have proposed this type of comparison. And one of the beneficial effects of the behavioral revolution on comparative politics was to underscore, on the basis of this common property, that theoretic comparative politics should militate against contextual explanations in favor of general explanations.<sup>36</sup> It was said that “the same theories must be evaluated in different systemic settings and . . . social science theories can gain confirmation only if theories formulated in terms of the common factors constitute the point of departure for comparative research.”<sup>37</sup> These proclamations constitute universalism’s strength. They help

one avoid the now pervasive confusion in comparative politics of comparing and evaluating Third World countries on the basis of economic and other factors rather than political variables. They also help avoid geographically tailored explanations. By using the political as the standard of comparison, similarities and differences can be detected not only among non-Western countries but between them and Western countries at a certain level.

But fruitiness (or the political) does not settle the issue, and here is where universalism's analytical strength ends. Let us posit that the fruits differ in that apples and pears can grow only in a temperate climate, whereas mangoes, papayas, and pineapples can only grow in a tropical climate. Let us further posit that because of their tropical origin, tropical fruits have a higher respiration rate and, hence, a shorter life expectancy than apples and pears. Intuitively, because the similarity (fruitiness) between temperate and tropical fruits is taken for granted, the puzzling and more interesting question for the eater is "why the two sets of fruits have different life spans and cannot grow in each other's climatic and geographical environments." Now suppose that in seeking answers to the question the eater closely investigates tropical fruits, which are different in shape and taste from each other. The eater is better served by focusing not on the differences (shapes and tastes) among tropical fruits—an approach that is interesting but unhelpful—but on what mangoes, papayas, and pineapples *share* that makes it possible for them to have a shorter life span and to grow, *unlike* apples and pears, in the tropics. Likewise, to answer the question, the differences in shape and taste between apples and pears are less important than what they share, which distinguishes them from tropical fruits. In other words, the answer to the above puzzling question requires that the difference between the two mutually exclusive unities (temperate vs. tropical fruits) and the similarity among the members of each unity take center stage.

The issues of comparison about fruits apply to the two respective sets of countries (Western and non-Western) as well. Three considerations derive from the analogy, from the crucial bipolar difference between temperate fruits and tropical fruits, between Western and non-Western countries. First, fruitiness, the equivalent of the political system, implies cross-system universal political similarities. Here, Western and non-Western countries share political life and its generic traits ('the political' or 'political system'). Second, the shapes and tastes of particular temperate and tropical fruits, the equivalent of the specific local political institutions and manifestations, reflect the specificity of each Western and non-Western country or region. Third, temperate fruits versus tropical fruits, the equivalent of liberal democratic states versus states in developing countries, suggests a cross-system bipolar political difference opposing the commonalities of Western countries to those of non-Western countries. The two major strategies in comparative politics do not deal well

with these three dimensions. Universalism focuses on the first dimension, that is, fruitiness, and *assumes* universal political system similarities. It posits the political system<sup>38</sup> or other universal variables (e.g., institutions, class struggles) as the designated independent or causal variable (IV). Particularism—whether middle-range/regional or narrow-gauge theories—concerns itself with the second dimension, that is, the shapes and tastes of particular fruits or the specific local political institutions and manifestations. Because of overlapping, however, more often than not, cross-national studies, even universalistic deductive theories, tend to focus on the second dimension as well and use the historical, socioanthropological, and economic contexts of individual countries as IV.

Just as fruitiness and the shapes and tastes of particular temperate and tropical fruits are taken for granted, so, too, in the first two dimensions the dependent variable (DV) is a *given*; it consists generally of a political feature (e.g., the political system, the state, political regime, democracy, institutions, governance, revolution, violence) that is taken for granted and whose presence and absence must be explained by the posited IV. The only difference is that universalism, as in the case of fruitiness, assumes that these DV apply to all Western and non-Western countries and seeks to establish a causal relationship between the DV and posited IV in individual countries. This is done through either historical/interpretive analyses (the case-study approach) or quantitative (often correlation/regression) analyses (the variable-oriented approach).<sup>39</sup> Particularism, on the other hand, as in the case of the shapes and tastes of individual fruits, focuses on the specificity of these DV and IV in individual countries or regions.

The focus on the two analytical dimensions with their given DV leaves unaddressed the crucial third dimension highlighted in the fruit analogy—the two mutually exclusive unities (temperate vs. tropical fruits). This has severe implications for comparative analysis in two ways. First, just as the general property fruitiness (being fruits) cannot overshadow the crucial difference between temperate and tropical fruits, so, too, the general property political system (the political) cannot erase the crucial differences between political behaviors in Western and in non-Western countries. Just as the property of fruitiness cannot be reduced to and identified with temperate fruits and be imposed on tropical fruits, so, too, the political system cannot be reduced to the political characteristics of the Western liberal democratic states and applied to non-Western countries. By ignoring these requirements in order to delineate the widest possible sample population, universalism in comparative politics, especially variable-related research that confuses political behaviors in Western and non-Western countries, disables itself. Indeed, it is highly misleading to propose, for the sake of studying a large sample, a classification of more than one hundred countries from Western and non-Western regions

and to label them “polyarchies” or “democracies” just because they have had contestation or elections.<sup>40</sup> If one confuses electoralist rule in India and Colombia with liberal democratic rule in England in a theory of democracy, one is not likely to explain why the democratic process in India and Colombia is marred by deaths. To ignore the crucial difference between developing and Western countries and to focus only on the general property does not answer the question of why mangoes, papayas, and pineapples have a shorter life expectancy and do not grow in the apple and pear environment. It does not help us answer why many of these developing countries have over the years, and often taking turns, disappeared from the list of democracies only to reappear and disappear again.

Despite the general characteristics they share as political systems with Third World countries, and their differences from each other, the United States, Germany, Belgium, and Italy as “established democracies” share a conceptual unity among themselves that precludes not only African and Asian countries but also South American countries. It follows that the conceptual and empirical unity (based on politically relevant features) shared by African, Asian, and South American countries is best explained not by ignoring it and confusing their traits with those of Western countries as universalism does. One ought clearly to define and delineate this unity and to contrast it with that which is shared by Western countries.

The second problem is that the focus on the individual features of sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, East Asia, or specific countries in these regions, which is what particularism does, is not helpful. It does not explain why all of them display common political behaviors that distinguish them from Western democracies any more than focusing on the shape and taste of a mango helps explain why mangoes, like pineapples and papayas, have a shorter life expectancy than apples and pears and cannot grow in a temperate climate. To be sure, such a focus may provide a clue to the answer, but it remains incomplete. A mechanism is needed through which these local and individual traits can be linked to the common property, the conceptual unity/similarity shared by these regions that distinguishes them from Western liberal democracies in the same way the conceptual unity of tropical fruits distinguishes them from temperate fruits.

This study differs from other cross-national studies. Although the two dimensions of analysis (fruitiness or universal political similarities and the shapes and tastes of fruits or local/regional political variations) are important in their own way, they are not the focus here. Rather, I focus on the third dimension and only on the DV, namely the two mutually exclusive unities constituted by temperate fruits, on the one hand, and tropical fruits, on the other. The two mutually exclusive unities raise a puzzling question: Why do tropical fruits have a shorter life expectancy than temperate fruits, and why

do they not grow in each other's environment? To solve the puzzle one must, as a first step, catalog mangoes, papayas, and pineapples on the tropical side to isolate their possible common trait or property and do the same for apples and pears on the temperate side. A comparison of the two properties helps provide an answer to the puzzling question. Likewise, it is this third dimension that starkly exposes the puzzling question for developing countries: Why do they, as a group, consistently display political features, regardless of their local variations, that distinguish them from Western countries? Why do they, like tropical fruits in relation to temperate fruits, contrast with Western countries? To answer this question, one needs, as a first step, to catalog these political features to isolate their common property, the basis for comparisons with Western countries and explanatory theory.

This conceptual unity is confirmed even by studies that deny it on the basis of economic and other phenomena. Consider the following assessment by Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and S. M. Lipset:

Our twenty-six countries are quite representative of the heterogeneous world of those loosely called "Third World" or "developing" countries. These terms are largely misleading, and we want clearly to disassociate ourselves from assuming that such a category is scientifically useful in cross-national comparisons. Certainly it seems ridiculous to put Argentina or Uruguay or South Korea in the same classification of countries as Ghana, Papua New Guinea, or even India, in terms of economic development, social structure or cultural traditions, and prospects of socioeconomic development. Nevertheless, all twenty-six countries included in this study are less developed economically and less stable politically than the established, industrialized democracies of Europe, North America, Australasia and Japan.<sup>41</sup>

Another study, which calls "into question the analytic relevance . . . and political connotations embedded within the discourse of Third Worldism," admits that "currently there are more than twenty-five internal wars and civil conflicts under way in such countries as Peru, Guatemala, Liberia, Somalia, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa."<sup>42</sup> In both quotes, despite the repudiation of the term "Third World" on scientific and analytic grounds and the implicit reliance on regionalism and economic and cultural specificities, the presumably nonexistent analytical and conceptual unity of Africa, Asia, and South America persistently proclaims its existence with a vengeance on political grounds. In the first quote such unity (similarity) is confirmed by the fact that "all twenty-six countries . . . are . . . less stable politically than the established, industrialized democracies of Europe, North America, Australasia, and Japan." The authors add, "And all share the

same pressure . . . to build stable political institutions and . . . to become democracies.”<sup>43</sup> In the second quote the unity, as a pattern, is reaffirmed by the fact that, however “different” they may be from each other, African, Asian, and South American countries face civil wars and conflicts that are presumably not faced by North American and Western European countries.

A study, which attempts to disaggregate the Third World by classifying its component states into five categories based on their economic performance, provides even more support for this conceptual unity. Countries are classified in order of performance: (A) the newly industrialized countries, (B) the surplus oil exporters, (C) the countries enjoying economic over population growth, (D) the countries whose economic growth equals population growth, and (E) the countries that have negative economic growth. Yet in contrasting all of them with Western liberal democracies, the classification reveals their deep political similarities. Group A is described as “paternalistically state-led and not known for unambiguous democratic proclivities”; group B is said to be highly vulnerable and, therefore, invests heavily in armaments, not to mention that it also lacks democratic proclivities; group C is still subject to the vicissitudes of the international market, whose effects can be devastating given the ever present possibility of civil war; group D has weak governments and is vulnerable to external designs, coups, and insurgency; and group E also has weak governments, insurgencies, and various sources of instability.<sup>44</sup> Despite some variations in these political features as they apply to different groups, their deep conceptual unity remains. Indeed, all these political behaviors denote a common property.

In this sense, South Korea, Argentina, and Uruguay, despite their economies, can be put in the same classification as Ghana, Papua Guinea, or India the same way partially backward Italy and small-economy Belgium are put in the same classification as the United States and Germany and labeled Western democracies. Beyond their variations and differences, the notion of the liberal democratic state strongly suggests that France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, and the United States share crucial similarities. This reality is not erased by American “exceptionalism” and its leading economy, Italy’s partial backwardness and frequent government crises, or Belgium’s small economic size. Neither is it negated by the fact that the United States has a presidential system, most other Western countries a parliamentary one, while France has a mixed system. What is true for Western countries also holds true for non-Western countries. If one relies on statistical indices, Brazil, South Korea, and oil-producing countries such as Kuwait rank higher than others in economic output. But this does not say much. After all, these countries also score higher than some of their Western counterparts. What the aforementioned patterns emerging out of the six post-1948 types of political behaviors suggest is that economic indices and differences among them notwithstanding, countries of

South America, Asia, and Africa, like tropical fruits, share a conceptual unity or common property in political terms.

Relying, thus, on the third dimension of the fruit analogy, the study catalogues and conceptualizes this common property. The analogy helps us discover that *between the deep similarities shared by Western liberal democratic countries, despite their differences, and the deep similarities shared by Third World countries, despite their differences, lie the deep differences between Western countries and Third World countries, despite their similarities.* The deep similarities among developing countries, that is, their unity and common property represented by the six post-1948 types of political features, constitute *overpoliticization* (Figure 1.1).

### POLITICS AND OVERPOLITICIZATION

The “political” links developing countries and the six aforementioned types of political features and their three converging categories to each other and gives them their political character the same way the fruitiness links tropical fruits to each other and provides them with their “fruit” character. But if this were all there were to it, these features would resemble political features in Western countries, and tropical fruits would behave like temperate fruits. They do not because the notion of fruitiness is not enough, neither is that of the political or political system. What exactly in the political leaves its imprint on these features to make them different from the West? To answer, one must disaggregate the notion of the political/political system into its three constitutive components: politics, institutions, and the state itself. Of the three components it is *politics* that imposes its imprint on these features because politics determines the institutions and the state format, even though politics need not be necessarily associated with the modern European type of state. Hence to conceptualize overpoliticization and its attendant type of state requires that one focus on the preeminence of politics vis-à-vis institutions and the state itself.

At the core of Easton’s “inquiry into the state of political science”<sup>45</sup> is the question of what distinguishes political science from other fields of inquiry. Other political scientists, such as Karl Deutsch, raise the same question.<sup>46</sup> Easton answered the question by granting the political or the political system some preeminence because it, unlike the other systems, allocates values authoritatively. In this formulation it is not clear, however, why the political system acquires this authoritative status. Easton gives a hint through the notion of scarcity but does not draw its full implications. Why the political is preeminent is, ironically, fully answered by European scholarship that Easton criticized. Although Easton correctly criticized European and American prebehavioral political science for its reliance on legalism, which constricted



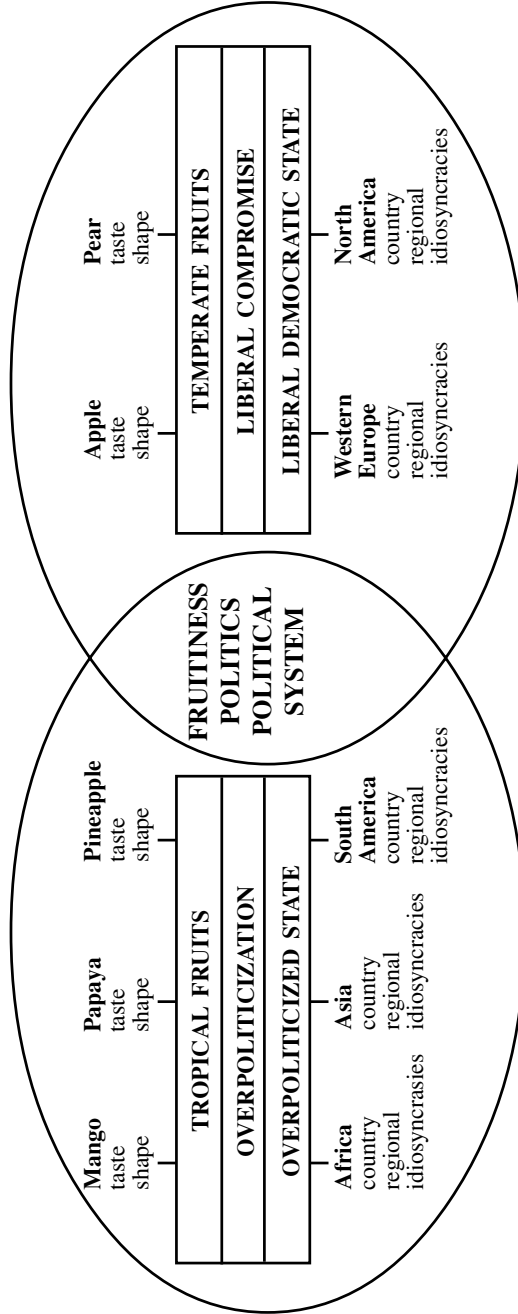


Figure 1.1. An Analogic Representation of Overpoliticization Versus Liberal Compromise

the realm of political phenomena, it must be said that not all European political scientists of the interwar and post–World War II periods held a legalistic view of politics. Among the notable exceptions, who espoused “positivist” and Machiavellian views were Germany’s Carl Schmitt and France’s Julien Freund. Their respective books, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (*The Concept of the Political*) and *l’Essence du politique* (*The Essence of the Political*),<sup>47</sup> convey this view. The titles are eminently suggestive. Indeed, the common variable in political inquiry is best rendered by the French term “*le politique*” (the political—although it may also refer to politicians), which differs from “*la politique*” (politics, policy). *Le politique* has three components: politics, institutions, and the state. To be sure, neither Schmitt nor Freund (nor much of the literature in political science) makes a clear and consistent distinction among the three components. The interchangeable use of politics and the political tends to blur the line of demarcation and adds to the confusion. Yet the distinction is crucial to make sense of “politically relevant phenomena” in comparative politics. Both Schmitt and Freund are a good starting point for defining politics apart from institutions and the state.

According to Giofranco Poggi, Schmitt “held that to define the nature of politics it was necessary to identify a distinctive realm of decisions to which the term ‘political’ could legitimately be applied.”<sup>48</sup> Schmitt conceived of social life in Hobbesian terms as disorderly and menacingly brutish. Most of these menaces emanated from outside societies. Hence “politics is accordingly concerned with setting and maintaining the boundaries between collectivities, and in particular with protecting each collectivity’s cultural identity from outside threats.”<sup>49</sup> By thus tracing the boundaries between “us” and “other,” politics consists of distinguishing between friends and foes, between those who work for “our integrity and autonomy” and those who are opposed to them. For this reason issues of the integrity of the collectivity are so overriding and emergency-filled that politics bears no relationship to legal rules. To deal with the decision between friends and foes properly, the political decision maker must avoid all secondary considerations that are legal, moral, economic, and so forth. Effectiveness, not legality, is what counts. Schmitt’s definition of the political is, thus, dominated by the notion of politics viewed as enmity between friends and foes involving two or more states. In this view, party or domestic politics is recognized as “political” only to the extent that it approximates or reflects the foe–friend situation that prevails in international politics. To be sure, the focus on international politics fails to take into account the constitution of the internal collectivity, which goes beyond the external competition and implies some kind of internal coercive regulation. It makes it difficult to understand the ways internal institutions and the state relate to the enmity with outside foes (e.g., how does coercive power help the collectivity face the external foe?).<sup>50</sup> Despite these pitfalls,

Schmitt's work is crucial because it reveals the centrality of politics and its difference from institutions and the state. Politics consists of a competition triggered by a group, class, state-nation over something (in Schmitt's case danger leads to competition over security and integrity). There is an unmistakably clear idea of competition (enmity) between two collectivities that requires the use of coercion or force (military might). In this sense, politics is the engine of the political and holds a preeminent position vis-à-vis political institutions and the state, even though in Schmitt's view the state is the "bearer of politics."<sup>51</sup>

Freund takes this idea of the preeminence of politics a step further by applying it to the internal dimension of politics without neglecting the international aspect. Like Easton, Freund argues that the political is a separate, *sui generis* activity that concerns itself above all with action. It is different from economics, morality, or science. It arises out of a social necessity and constitutes a response to the destiny (common good) of a collectivity. Its targeted good is hierarchically superior to other particularistic goods. For this reason, it relies on coercive power. By making the political a *sui generis* activity and by invoking the coercive power, Freund's discussion of the political pays a little more attention to internal institutions and the state than does Schmitt. He sees a unity among politics, institutions, and the state.

For my purpose, two major points guide the definition of politics. First, despite the conceptual unity among politics, institutions, and the state he recognizes, Freund, like Schmitt, posits politics as the engine of this unity. He does so by leaving the institutions and the state in the background and by subordinating their definition to that of politics through the notion of "common good." Indeed, after specifying the common good as the central piece of the goal of politics, Freund follows Hobbes's lead and suggests that the common good be reduced to its two basic dimensions: external security and domestic prosperity. Both involve competition. The competition (*lutttes* or struggles) results from divergent interests<sup>52</sup> and constitutes the engine of the political. Second, for Freund, prosperity rests above all on economic wealth and well-being. Therefore, politics is a competition over prosperity qua economic wealth and collective well-being. This fact, according to Freund, is recognized even by ancient political philosophers such as Aristotle, Hobbes, and Rousseau. He criticizes Weber (with whom he agrees on many points) for failing in one of his lectures<sup>53</sup> to recognize, contrary to the majority of philosophers, that economic prosperity remains the basis of internal politics.

Thus, in addition to viewing politics as the engine, Freund thinks of the competition it involves as inescapably based on economic concerns and well-being. Put differently, politics is not economics but is above all about economic property, goods, services, and values or, as I call it, the "social product."<sup>54</sup> Freund, by his own admission, shares this competitive view of politics with

political philosophers. I concur. A review of normative political theory from Plato to Marx, passing by Locke and non-Western political thought, confirms this view of politics.<sup>55</sup> One does not need to invoke Hobbes's proverbial conflict over land, wives, and cattle to make the point about politics as a competition over the social product. Adam Smith does the same in a telling passage: "But avarice and ambition in the rich, in the poor the hatred of labour . . . are the passions which prompt to invade property. . . . It is only under the shelter of the civil magistrate that the owner of that valuable property . . . can sleep a single night in security. . . . [And] till there be property, there can be no government, the very end of which is to secure wealth and to defend the rich from the poor."<sup>56</sup>

Whether one refers to Schmitt and Freund and their predecessors or to contemporary analyses on feminism, race, culture, and ethnic identity, politics is incomprehensible, and indeed unthinkable, in the absence of the type of society that produces property, goods, services, and values that are the objects of competition. The notion of society, like that of the state, is fluid and is defined in different ways. Today's emphasis on the "civil society" has rendered the concept even more fluid given the different meanings attached to this term by its many proponents. In the Lockian-Rousseauian use, civil society had an anti-state-of-nature connotation; Hegel used it to characterize what preceded the state; Marx talked of civil society to express its superiority over the state, whereas Gramsci viewed it as part of the superstructure. Despite these variations in meaning and emphasis, it is generally agreed that society is made of the economy, culture broadly defined, and the various groupings, stratifications, and relationships that take the form of social groups or classes. The overuse of the term "culture" means that in most instances culture is used interchangeably with "society." In many other cases, culture is restricted to artistic and communicative expressions such as language, music, visual art, and so forth. In reality, because it consists of the ways in which different groupings become involved in the economy, in social relations, and in intercommunications of different kinds, culture is not society; it is part of and a representation of society. In any case, by defining politics as a competition over the social product, which they often closely link to property, the aforementioned theorists recognize the unbreakable link between politics and the prevailing society. In this sense the link is not exclusively Marxist as often claimed. The situation also suggests that politics *starts at the society level* and involves individuals, groups, and classes that make up society. In purely chronological terms politics occurs first at this societal level, which is its genesis, before determining and shaping political institutions and the state as a whole.

Politics is, thus, a society-rooted competition among individuals, groups, or classes over the social product, that is property, goods, services, and values