

# Power and Politics in Today's World

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This paper is going to deal with power and politics in today's world and by today's world, I'm gonna mean the 30 years since 1989 and the 30 years since 1989 are and have been an incredibly tumultuous period of very great change. And that's for xxx unusual. For instance, if you compare it to the previous 40 years in most of the advanced capitalist democracies, they were a period of relative stability after World War II. In most countries, it was an era of great prosperity even countries recovering from World War II like the countries of Europe were being rebuilt with Marshal Plan aid and it was a period, partly for demographic reasons, of very great political stability for people who grew up in that period. Internationally, as well, it was a period of very great stability because partly, because of the Cold War. It's true we had episodes like the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War but as the Vietnam War indicates, most of the conflicts within the Cold War were played out as you like, as proxy wars in other parts of the world. From the point of view of the citizens of the Western democracies, except for those who are actually fighting in Vietnam, it was a far-off war that didn't have a great impact on the stability of people's lives and that is very different from what has been experienced since 1989; time, if you like, has speeded up a great deal. We've seen incredible change in three decades. And those are the three decades that I am going to be exploring. One pedagogical challenge that presents is that for some of us in this room, the last three decades are etched into our minds as like it was yesterday. We experienced them in real time but there are many people in this room who were never born until long after that.

For them, whether it's the last 40 years or the last 60 years, 40 years or the 60 years after World War II, it's all history. One of the first things I need to do and I'm gonna try and make this a regular practice during the course is I need to take everybody back and to make people understand who weren't there what it was like and then to remind people who've lived through it of things that they might have forgotten. So let's just go back to 1989 in Berlin. - The Berlin Wall, once it divided East from West, now on its way to becoming an artifact of history. This the CBS Evening News. Dan Rather, reporting tonight from in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany. Good evening. These are the sights and sounds of

the continuing celebration of Germans about the symbolic, not the literal, at least, not yet but the symbolic tearing down of the Berlin Wall. It's impossible to completely describe how deeply Germans feel about what's happened here. East German border guards tonight were literally tearing down portions of the wall itself, not the whole wall but portions of the wall to make it easier for East Germans to come into West Berlin and as the joyous hordes of Berliners were still streaming through the wall, the East German communist government said they can come and go permanently, they can come into West Berlin, have a look and then come back home again with no special documents required. Today, what goes through your mind and heart? - Well, of course, I look back to all those years of hardship for the families even more than for the country as a whole and it's moving to see families getting together again. My feeling is that we are very close to an end of the artificial division of Berlin and I also believe we are close to the point where the parts of Germany will become much closer together. This, of course, only within the reasonable European framework. Anyone know who that was? Xxx Billy Braun, the former Chancellor of Germany who actually would die a couple of years, three years after that, so he was one of the celebratory crowd at that time.

So that might give you a little sense of the shock and the enthusiasm that people experienced in the latter days of 1989. This had been a period in which the Soviet Union was clearly losing its grip on Eastern Europe. It wasn't just Germany. Right across Eastern Europe, all through 1989, there had been these massive resistance movements developing and the Soviet Union was losing, it was clearly not in a position to intervene in these countries. And they were shedding totalitarian control for the first time in decades. Of course, the great exception which we will be talking about next week was in China where demonstrations in Tiananmen Square that June had come out, meant a very different result but in most of the world, after 1989, it seemed like democracy was on the March. We saw the democratization of all of the former Soviet Union bloc countries in Eastern Europe even places like South Africa which had been mired in a bitter conflict for decades transitioned in the early 1990s to a multi-racial democracy. The problems in Northern Ireland finally settled with the Good Friday Accords in 1997. Even Israel-Palestine which had been one of the most intractable conflicts for decades and decades seemed to be moving towards a resolution in the early 1990s. There were the Oslo Accords, the PLO and the Israeli government were negotiating a settlement. Anyone who was in Israel or the West Bank at that time anticipated that there was going to be a settlement until the assassination of one of the key protagonists, Yitzhak Rabin in November of 1995. And that would lead to an unraveling of that potential settlement but in the early 1990s, it's really I think difficult to overstate the enthusiasm for change. This is the period when Francis Fukuyama was talking about the end of history by which he meant that liberal democracy was sweeping the world.

In fact, at the turn of the 21st century, we finally went from a world in which most countries in the world were not democracies by most standard measures to a world in which most countries were democracies by most standard measures. So it's not surprising that one would have had the kind of enthusiasm that Fukuyama had at that time and that was almost, what's the word? Just snowballing across so much of the developed world. Enormous confidence in democratic capitalism and enormous confidence in the idea that

many people were gonna be lifted out of poverty and that the world was heading for a kind of benign equilibrium, as an economist would say, Fukuyama's end of history idea. now let's fast-forward three decades and let's stay in Germany and here's a very different thing to look at. So he's a leader of the Alternative for Deutschland, far-right anti-immigrant, anti-system political party and what he is celebrating is that they have crossed the 5% threshold. This is the AfD here on this graph. Germany has a 5% threshold to get seated in the parliament so if you don't get 5%, you get no seats, they hadn't gotten 5% before and now they had won 5% and so they saw themselves as getting a foothold in German electoral politics for the first time. Germany, in 2017 was coming out of a situation in which there had been a grand coalition between the SPD which is the left of said Social Democratic Party and the right of center CDU, Christian Democratic Party led by Angela Merkel. And the SPD were very unhappy, they had been in this grand coalition for a long time and they found that they were paying a huge price with their supporters. They were getting less and less of the vote for reasons we'll talk about later in the course and they announced that they were not gonna participate in a grand coalition again and they were gonna go into opposition and rebuild themselves. Angela Merkel then spent the next six months, Alternative for Deutschland were and still are seen as beyond the pale, nobody will form a government with them.

So she spent the next six months trying to put together a coalition with the Green Environmentalist Party and the so-called Free Democrats. The Free Democrats would be what we would think of as, in this country, as Rand Paul libertarians. They are for small government, low regulation across the board. It's not surprising that she couldn't do it because the greens want green regulation. They want environmental regulation. That's their raison d'etre and the Free Democrats want no regulation or certainly, less regulation. So they stumbled along in and out of negotiations but they weren't able to form a coalition. However, over the course of that six months, all the opinion polls showed that the AfD, the Alternative for Deutschland was actually rising in popularity. And so the German president was very against having another election in the face of the stalemate with the Social Democrats refusing to join in a grand coalition on the one hand and Merkel's inability to construct a different coalition on the other. They all knew that if they went for another election, the AfD would do even better. So finally, after much hand-wringing, the SPD was persuaded after extracting a very big set of concessions, including six ministries and the Finance Ministry. They were persuaded to go back into a grand coalition even though a lot of their membership didn't want it. So terrified were they of the prospect of another election in which the far right would do even better. So we thought German politics was kind of settling down at this point but the following year, this is what you see happening. - German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, who's led Germany for 13 years has offered to step down as her party's leader and said she won't run for office again after her term ends in 2021. Her announcement came a day after her party, the Christian Democratic Union, saw a disappointing performance in a key regional election in the state of Hesse.

The far-right, Alternative for Germany party claimed more than a dozen seats in Hesse's Parliament for the first time. The entire migrant party now controls seats in all 16 of Germany's state Parliaments plus the National Bundestag and European Parliament. - So

there it is. They had also done very poorly in the Bavarian regional elections. They had hemorrhaged about 10% of their vote to the AfD in these regional elections and by the way, the SPD wasn't very happy either because they were hemorrhaging support to the greens. And this is something we'll see playing out in many European countries. The establishment parties are shrinking and becoming weaker and the parties on the fringes are growing and becoming stronger. And it was impossible not to start thinking about the past and thinking particularly about the 1920s and 30s. - As a result of the elections of July, 1932, the Nazis became the biggest party in Germany with 37% of the vote. - So if you wanna go back to the 1930s, you can see that that video was about the July 1932 election and you can see what happened in the subsequent elections that it was a very unstable system. They were having multiple elections and of course, 18 months later, Hitler came to power. And if you go to Germany, you hear very anxious people talking about is this back to the future? Is 2017 and 2018 some kind of replay of the empowerment of extremist parties and of course, it wasn't just Germany. In 2016 we had massive shocks delivered to establishment parties with the Brexit result in the UK and Donald Trump's populist stampede to the presidency in the US, both widely unanticipated outcomes by most of the establishment parties, pundits and politicians. And you could go around the world. In the Austrian elections of 2016, people are very relieved that in the runoff, the Green candidate actually defeated the far-right quite handsomely by 54 to 46% but if you look at the legislature, again, you see the far-right gaining ground, the establishment parties coming in fourth and fifth in the 2017 legislative elections.

These are the parties that would normally have come in first and second while the far-right party increased its vote, putting them a close third with 51 seats, while the Greens fell below the threshold and won nothing or if you look at Belgium, you see a center-right party retains its majority but if you drill down a little bit, you can see that there was an increase of support for the far-right Flemish Vlaams Belang which received almost 12% of the vote gaining seats. If you look at Italy, you can see the center-left party ceding power to the center-right but many of the votes for the center-right party are coming from the league, so-called, again, a far right-wing populist party which ends up with 125 seats and 17% of the popular vote, of 109 seats and I could put up another seven or eight or nine slides of different countries that basically tell the same stories in country after country across Europe both Eastern Europe and Western Europe, including countries that we thought of as bastions of civil social democratic stability like Sweden. You see these far-right parties doing well, Turkey, Latin America, elsewhere, where anti-establishment parties that sometimes also verge on being anti-system parties are gaining ground in many legislatures. So if you think about the contrast between the videos of 1989 and where the world has been since 2016, it couldn't be more dramatic and in some ways, it's a big downer but my first thing I wanna say is don't get too depressed. It's not all of course, for depression. The central questions of this course are three. How did we get from there to here? What are the challenges and prospects going forward? And most importantly, in the last part of the course, how could we get to a better place in many of the countries that we're talking about? We'll spend a lot of time on the US but not exclusively in the US.

I should say a little bit about the distinctive approach that I'm gonna be taking in these lectures, not to say it's the best approach; there are many ways to look at this kind of material but it is the approach that I'm going to be using. And the first thing I would say about this approach is that I'm going to be studying history with the tools of political science and political theory on the one hand but also using history to keep political science and political theory honest. So what do I mean by that? Well, one thing that is remarkable about the events of 1989 is that they supply us with a terrific natural experiment from the point of view of social scientists. If you look at the literature, for example, of people who studied European democracies, before 1989, they were essentially cycling endless numbers of theories through the same old data set that everybody had had for four decades. And they didn't have any a big exogenous change. 1989 is a big shock to the system and suddenly, we have, for instance, in Western Europe, in Eastern Europe, the addition of a whole lot of new parliamentary democracies. That creates possibilities of thinking about long-established conventional wisdom, testing theories against new data which is the gold standard for social science rather than testing theories on data out of which the theories have been developed, which tend to result in what statisticians call just-so stories, fitting the curve to the data. Suddenly we have all this new data, coming along in real time. If you think about and we're gonna talk some about some of the standard theories in political science like modernization theory, which is a theory about how as economies modify, certain kinds of political changes become more likely. It was long held that modernization produces democracy. There were many variants of modernization theory. And we will talk about some of the differences among them but now we have new data and whether modernizing economies will produce democracy.

It is long been conventional wisdom that democratic systems are incompatible with state-run economies. If we look at what's happened since 1989, we've gone to market economies in some of the post-communist systems but others like China and Vietnam have become state capitalist systems of a certain kind while retaining non democratic politics. So we'll have cause to think about theories of that general sort. There's been a lot of conventional wisdom about the conditions for stable democracy that suddenly can be put to the test on a whole slew of new democracies. Is it all the economy stupid or do beliefs of citizens matter? And what kinds of beliefs matter and what about the beliefs of elites? All of these things, we can look at again, in new contexts. So we have lots of new data to think about them, provided by this dramatic break of 1989. There's a lot of conventional wisdom about the relations between business, government and labor that has built up among political economists and political scientists over the last several decades before 1989. We now have big power shifts partly because communism as an economic system has been taken off the table. Well if communism, as an economic system, is taken off the table, how does that restructure relations between business government and labor? It turns out it really has a big impact on those relationships. So that's another of the topics we will be looking at. How do electoral systems affect things like inequality, provision of environmental legislation and public goods? A lot of conventional wisdom there about which types of democracies are more likely to do that and which are less likely to do that start to look before and after 1989 and we're gonna discover that some of the conventional wisdom needs rethinking. So on

the one hand we're bringing the tools of political science and the theories of political science to bear on the data that's thrown up by this last 30 years of history. On the other hand, we're using that data to keep the political scientists honest, precisely because we have this whole smorgasbord of new results as a social scientist would put it but then I also said I'm gonna use the tools of political theory.

So political theory, I should confess, truth in advertising by my first profession, if extended is a profession is I'm a political theorist. I cut my teeth in the world of political philosophy. I'm in normative things about what should happen, how the world should be organized, rather than empirical work on how it is organized. We are definitely gonna be thinking about normative questions here as well as we go along, what should happen, what might have happened but the confession I need to make about my home discipline is that it reminds me of the story about the fella who goes up to a farmer in Donegal and says how do I get to Dublin and the answer that comes back is well, I wouldn't start from here, sonny. That is to say much of political philosophy develops theories that take no account of where we actually are and how the theories that people argue about in the journals and in the literature actually could be implemented in the world, if at all. And this spills over into normative arguments made by other scholars. Thomas Piketty in his book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, argues for a 4% global wealth tax. Well, good luck with that. Who's gonna implement a 4% global wealth tax. So when I think about normative questions, it's gonna be from the perspective of how might the goals that we think are desirable actually be achieved. I am going to spend, as we go along, through the different topics that we're gonna be discussing. I am gonna be focusing on paths not taken, things that might have been done differently and here the sorts of things I'm gonna be talking about are things like NATO expansion, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the NATO alliance, we'll talk about this next week which was expanded over the next several decades to include most, eventually, all of the former Soviet bloc countries and there were overtures, also to including former Soviet states like Georgia and several others.

I'll, talk about this Ukraine, Georgia and Ukraine were both talking about, joining NATO that part of the reason the Soviet Union invaded Ukraine. So we will talk about whether there was a path not taken at that time French president Francois Mitterrand thought that NATO should be shut down at the end of the Cold War it was a defensive alliance that had lost its purpose. How realistic was that? how might the world have been different had that happened we're going to be talking about the Global War on Terror I should in after 9/11 when, we invaded first Afghanistan and then Iraq. Was there another path that would have been politically viable that would have led the world in a different direction. We will talk about the response to the financial crisis of 2008 in 2009, again what were their possibilities that, were, ignored or overlooked that might have been both politically feasible and more polished effective in the sense of policy and so that brings me to underscore the third feature of the approach that I am going to take in this course which is when you look at, people who talk about public policy, it tends either to be policy wonks who just go on about what would be, the best policy or political scientists who talk about why some policies get adopted in some systems and not in other systems but there's very little discussion of what is the effective political way of achieving a good policy or the effective political way of

blocking a bad policy and so when I talk about innovations in the last part of the course, it's very much going to be in a way that marries considerations of politics to considerations of good public policy so, that that is the flavor of what we're going to be doing here and as I said it's not the only way one might study these materials, but it's the way that we're going to be doing it in this course.

Let me talk a little bit about the shape of the course. It falls into five, sections. The the first one is going to starting on Monday deal with the collapse of communism and its aftermath. There we going to look at collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in Russia, in China and in Vietnam. Although I will talk about some other countries along the way. We're going to talk about the rise of a unipolar world, until 1989, we had a bipolar world in which, as I said a lot of actual stability, that came about as a byproduct of the Cold War at least among the the major powers even if they maintained this stability, partly by, acting out their conflicts in proxy wars in, Asia, Africa and at America but it by and large the great powers were the nucleus standoff worked and we didn't have a major conflict between them. Now we have gone to a unipolar world dominated, by a single power, after 1989. How does that restructure politics and the possibilities for politics that will be also part of our concern. And then I'm going to talk about the, politics of the economics. What I'm going to call the rise of neoliberalism at home and the Washington Consensus abroad and this is put on this is basically it comes to, exist because of the collapse of an alternative to capitalism, the disappearance of communism as a viable, political system as a viable economic system and so you have this idea that's often called neoliberalism that basically has three elements. Its trade deregulation, trade deals getting rid of restraints on trade, getting rid of internal regulation within countries, and massive privatization of formerly state assets that was called, the neoliberal approach to political public political economy. And when it's translated into a set of recommendations or requirements for countries in the developing world, it was called the Washington Consensus, was essentially adopted by the World Bank by the IMF as a condition for giving loans to developing countries and it, was essentially taking neoliberalism global.

And so the, post communist era is marked by, this massive confidence in, the the capacity of unregulated or mildly regulated free-market capitalism, to deliver the best results, for every country in the world then we're going to talk about the new global order, that is ushered in by this. We're going to look at whether democracy really was on the march the people thought about a potential we had talked again the conventional wisdom in political science was that the democratization had preceded in three waves. The first wave being the gradual expansion of the franchise in what we think of today as the older democracies, the second wave being decolonization in Africa and Asia and Latin America after World War II. The third wave coming in 1989 to 1991 and people started to wonder whether there's a fourth wave now with democratization of South Africa with settlements in places like Northern Ireland, initially with the Arab Spring people wondered whether we were going to start to see more democracy as part of this new global order. Then we're going to look at the international institutions that developed in this global order, we'll talk about things like, the International Criminal Court which for the first time would hold dictators to account for their activities of repression. There was the creation and of something called a doctrine at the United Nations

called the responsibility to protect. Responsibility to protect, says that this was in the wake of, things like the Rwanda genocide of 1994 and what happened in Kosovo, in 1999 eventually we got responsibility to protect where the UN was said all governments are going to be held accountable for severe human rights violations within their own territories and if they don't respect them, the UN is going to intervene, militarily this is you know a big change we're saying we're not going to respect the sovereignty of Nations so the new international order seems to be, affecting not only relations among countries but relations within them.

The third part of the course I'm calling the end of the end of history and this is really, has its ultimate roots with 9/11 and the emergence of the global war on terror. The invasion of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and eventually the collapsing Syria we're going to see that the idea that history was heading in some benign direction, was getting harder and harder for people to hold on to. we're going to look at the resurgence of state capitalism. we're going to look at what China was, has been and is doing in Africa. We are going to be looking at Russia's resurgence as a global power, they had been back on their heels, for much of the 1990s and early 2000 but now they became actively involved, in, the Middle East and elsewhere, we're going to, look at, the new role of business in many political conflicts around the world sometimes with benign purposes in mind, but often not and so we're going to start to see a much messier politics. The fourth part of the course, is about the new politics of insecurity. This is really ushered in not so much by the financial crisis itself, but by the way in which governments responded to the financial crisis and this will be one of the areas where we will be looking at paths not taken but, we will see that there was, growing insecurity in the workforces of many of the advanced democracies that had been building up for decades, and the financial crisis, threw into sharp relief the fact that most governments were not doing much about it if anything at all and in fact that they ended up bailing out the elites, while doing nothing much, for the people who have been most harmed in the crisis and so we will look at the response to, the financial crisis in a number of countries particularly in the US and then we will all in the last part of the course, what is to be done that great Leninists slogan, we will be looking at, two things really. First how the, voter sentiment in these countries was, so poorly misdiagnosed by so many, political elites and people in control of political parties, misdiagnosed to the point where not only did they fail to respond, to the growing economic insecurity, that was experienced by many, many millions of workers within their own countries.

They were actually implementing political reforms that were likely to make things worse. And so the last part of the course will be looking at those two interacting issues. What sorts of economic policies were pursued or failed to be pursued. What kinds of policies might have been pursued and how did the reform of political systems over the last 15 or 20 years, make the problem worse and that will lead me, to make some arguments, about how we should, think about, politics going forward.

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