

POS/PUB 350: Comparative Public Policy

Fall 2012

MWF 11:30-12:25pm

Lecture Center 0023 (LC 23)

Professor: Joel Olufowote

Office: 300G Milne Hall (Downtown Campus)

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1) Course Description: This course is concerned with the politics of public policymaking. We will explore why countries choose to enact the public policies they do, how policy priority and execution is determined, and why specific policies like welfare, education, healthcare, economic, among others, differ considerably from nation to nation. In addition, the role international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, have on public policy will be analyzed. These core questions will be tackled by examining public policy in a comparative context, focusing on a number of policy issues in both industrialized and developing countries. At the end of the course, you should have good knowledge on pertinent public policy issues in nations that differ from our own and also be able to speculate on why they contrast in the ways they do.

2) Course Objectives: This course provides us the opportunity to gain comprehensive understanding of policymaking through a global perspective. In doing so, we first pit focus on the conceptual parameters of the study of public policy, explore phases of the policymaking process, and gain insight on the theoretical underpinnings that influence its study. Being a course firmly fit in the intersection between global politics, comparative politics, and public policy, we will also spend some time on its “comparative” aspect in an effort to evaluate what benefits exist in comparing the process across nations as opposed to its study in a single setting. We will spend most of our time, however, learning about different public policies around the world paying particular attention on how, and why, they differ.

3) Course Requirements

- **Class Preparation & Attendance:** Your success in this class depends heavily upon your attendance and participation. You are expected to come to class having read the material assigned for the day.
- **Quizzes:** There will be seven (5 short answer) quizzes given throughout the semester. There are no make-up quizzes. Missed quizzes will be given a zero. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped.
- **Short Papers:** After each topic studied, you will provide me with a one - two page, double-spaced paper **explaining a newspaper article, policy brief or blog and illustrate how it relates to class material on the issue covered** in the class that week. In particular, I am looking for how what you have learned in class has helped you better understand what the journalist/blogger is describing. You must print out a copy of the source and staple it to your paper. Papers are due in class at the next meeting following the conclusion of our class discussion of the topic. No late papers will be accepted. The following sources are acceptable examples to use for your papers. You may use these or other similar newspapers or journals. They are:

Chicago Tribune
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/>

Global Policy Journal
<http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/>

New York Times
<http://nytimes.com/>

Brookings Policy Briefs
<http://www.brookings.edu/series/brookings-policy-brief>

BBC News
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

- **Exams:** There will be one exam, a midterm, held in class on Friday, October 19. The final for this class will be in the form of a 10-12 page policy brief which you will then present to your classmates as a poster presentation. Guidelines for the policy brief and poster presentation of your findings/recommendations are contained in the Appendix which follows the tentative course schedule.

- **Grading:**

Attendance	10%
Quiz #1	5%
Quiz #2	5%
Quiz #3	5%
Quiz #4	5%
Quiz #5	5%
Quiz#6	5%
Paper#1	4%
Paper#2	4%
Paper#3	4%
Paper#4	4%
Paper#5	4%
Midterm	15%
Policy Brief	3%
Policy Brief	3%
Policy Brief	3%
Final Policy Brief & Presentation	15%
Extra Credit	1%
Total	100%

4) Course Policies

- **Absences:** Success in this course is contingent on attendance and participation; therefore, multiple absences will result in a reduction of your overall letter grade, while excess absences may result in failure of the course. You are permitted three absences (one full week of classes) through the semester. Any absence in excess of this allowance must be supported with a written excuse from a verifiable source or communicated to me well in advance. Failure to do so will result in a 2% decrease in your overall grade per absence. Please plan accordingly. More than six unexcused absences will result in an automatic failing grade.

- **Missed Assignments:** Late assignments will not be accepted. Papers are due, typed, at the beginning of the class period. Missed assignments will be counted as a 0 which will inevitably reduce your overall grade for the course.
- **Cheating & Academic Dishonesty:** Any student found to be in violation of the University's policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty will receive an F in this course and be reported to the appropriate authorities. If in doubt, please consult the university handbook.

5) Textbooks & Class Materials

- There are two required textbooks for this course. All other relevant course material will be available through Blackboard, the Library Reserves, or handed out in electronic or print form. The textbooks for this course are:

Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press

Kelechi A. Kalu, 'Agenda Setting and Public Policy in Africa: Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies,' 2004. Ashgate Publishing Company

6) Important Dates and Deadlines

Monday September 10-	Quiz 1
Friday September 21-	Hand in first short paper
Monday September 24-	Quiz 2
Friday October 5-	Hand in paper 2
Monday October 8-	Quiz 3
Friday October 12-	Hand in Paper 3
Friday October 19-	Midterm
Friday October 24-	Policy Brief topic due
Wednesday October 31-	Hand in paper 4
Monday November 5-	Quiz 4
Friday November 16-	Policy issue and recommendation brief due
Monday November 19-	Quiz 5 and hand in paper 5
Friday November 30-	Policy implementation and expected outcome brief due
Monday December 3-	Quiz 6
Monday December 3-10-	Poster Presentations
Friday December 14-	Hand in final Policy Brief

7) Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1: Comparative Public Policy: Why Compare?

Monday, August 27: Introductions: Concepts and Definitions

- Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press (Pp 1-7)
- Kelechi A. Kalu, 'Agenda Setting and Public Policy in Africa: Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies,' 2004. Ashgate Publishing Company (Pp 69-72)

Wednesday, August 29: Policy Issues and Processes

- Kelechi A. Kalu, 'Agenda Setting and Public Policy in Africa: Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies,' 2004. Ashgate Publishing Company (Pp 72-84)

- Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press (Chapter 1- all)

Friday, August 31: Comparative Politics and Public Policy/Why Compare?

- Richard Rose, 'Learning from Comparative Public Policy: A Practical Guide' 2005. Routledge. (Introduction) **

Week 2: Political Science Basics and Research Tips:

Monday, September 3: NO CLASS (Labor Day)

Wednesday, September 5: Theory, Hypotheses, and Variables

- Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press (Pp 7-21).**

Friday, September 7: Issues of Measurement: Validity and Reliability

- Shively, W. Phillips. 1998. *The Craft of Political Research*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated. (Chapter 4) **

Week 3: Comparative Public Policy in Context

(Q:1) Monday, September 10: Public Policy in Industrial Nations Explained

- Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press (Chapter 3)

Wednesday, September 12: Public Policy in Developing Countries Explained

- Kelechi A. Kalu, 'Agenda Setting and Public Policy in Africa: Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies,' 2004. Ashgate Publishing Company (Chapter 2&5)

Friday, September 14: Global Public Policy Explained.

- No readings (In class assignment)

Week 4: Issues in Public Policy: Trade Policy

Monday, September 17: NO CLASS (Rosh Hashanah)

Wednesday, September 19: The Domestic Politics of Trade Policy

- Thomas Oatley, 'International Political Economy: Interests and Institutions in the Global Economy,' 2004. Pearson Education Inc. (Chapter 3)**

(P:1) Friday, September 21: Trade and Economic Development

- Thomas Oatley, 'International Political Economy: Interests and Institutions in the Global Economy,' 2004. Pearson Education Inc. (Chapter 4)**

Week 5: Issues in Public Policy: Social Policy and the Welfare State

(Q:2) Monday, September 24: Social Policy and Outcomes

- Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press (Chapter 9)

Wednesday, September 26: NO CLASS (Yom Kippur)

Friday, September 28: The Welfare State

- Paul Pierson, 'Three Worlds of Welfare State Research,' *Comparative Political Studies* 33(6/7):791-821. **

Week 6: Issues in Public Policy: Health Policy

Monday, October 1: The Rich Countries

- Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press (Chapter 8)
- Andre Pickard, "Is Obama's Law a Healthcare Revolution?" Globe and Mail, March 25, 2010**

Wednesday, October 3: Developing Countries

- Kelechi A. Kalu, 'Agenda Setting and Public Policy in Africa: Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies,' 2004. Ashgate Publishing Company (Chapter 7)

(P:2) Friday, October 5:

- No reading

Week 7: Issues in Public Policy: Immigration Policy and Democratic Citizenship

(Q:3) Monday, October 8: The U.S. Immigration Debate

- Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press (Pp 100-117)

Wednesday, October 10: Debate/Further Discussion

- No reading

(P:3) Friday, October 12: Democratic Citizenship

- Anne Larason Schneider and Helen Ingram, 'Policy Design for Democracy,' University Press of Kansas; 1997. (Pp 1-7 & 140-145)**

Week 8: Review and Midterm

Monday, October 15: In Class Review

Wednesday, October 17: In Class Review

Friday, October 19: **Midterm**

Week 9: Economic Policy in Context: Privatization and Taxation in Africa

Monday, October 22: Privatization Policy in Nigeria

- Kelechi A. Kalu, 'Agenda Setting and Public Policy in Africa: Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies,' 2004. Ashgate Publishing Company (Chapter 9)

Wednesday, October 24: The Oil Curse and Public Policy

- Karl, Terry. 1997. *The Paradox of Plenty*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Chapter 1).**

(B:1) Friday, October 26: Environmental Policy in Cameroon

- Kelechi A. Kalu, 'Agenda Setting and Public Policy in Africa: Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies,' 2004. Ashgate Publishing Company (Chapter 10)

Week 10: Economic Policy in Context: Fiscal Policy in the European Union

Monday, October 29

- Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press (Pp159-168)

(P:4) Wednesday, October 31

- Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press (Pp 189-192)

Friday, November 2: NO CLASS (Conference)

Week 11: Education Policy in Context: Reforming Higher Education in the UK and US

(Q:4) Monday, November 5: Education Policy Overview

- Charles H. Blake and Jessica Adolino, 'Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices,' 2nd Edition. 2010. Washington DC: CQ Press (Chapter 10)

Wednesday, November 7: Education Policy in the United States

- Review <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED524888.pdf> and be prepared to discuss in class.

Friday, November 9: Education Policy in the UK

- Review <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED524888.pdf> and be prepared to discuss in class.

Week 12: Education Policy in Context: The Power of Unionized Labor in Latin America and Africa

Monday, November 12: No readings

Wednesday, November 14: No readings

(B:2) Friday, November 16: No readings

Week 13: Education Policy in Context: The Power of Unionized Labor in Latin America and Africa continued...

(Q:5) (P:5) Monday, November 19: In Class Assignment

Wednesday, November 21: NO CLASS (Fall Break)

Friday, November 23: NO CLASS (Fall Break)

Week 14: The Role of NGO's and IO's in Shaping Public Policy: A Global Perspective

Monday, November 26: Non Governmental Organizations

- Kelechi A. Kalu, 'Agenda Setting and Public Policy in Africa: Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Societies,' 2004. Ashgate Publishing Company (Chapter 11)

Wednesday, November 28: The Multilateral Trade System

- Thomas Oatley, 'International Political Economy: Interests and Institutions in the Global Economy,' 2004. Pearson Education Inc. (Chapter 2)**

(B:3) Friday, November 30: Discussion of Briefs & Final Presentations

Week 15: Final Presentations

(Q:6) Monday, December 3

Wednesday, December 5

Friday, December 7

Week 16: Final Presentations/Hand in Final Brief

Monday, December 10

Wednesday, December 12

(FB) Friday, December 14

APPENDIX I:

GUIDELINES ON HOW TO WRITE A POLICY BRIEF

A policy brief requires succinct consideration of policy options for a particular audience (e.g., officials, bureaucrats, politicians, development practitioners, donors). This means that the format will differ decidedly from a traditional research paper. Some might say that a policy brief is more “professional” because it is geared towards readers who have a limited amount of time to make a practical decision, while a research paper is more “academic” because it pays more attention to the scholarly roots of particular arguments and judges their merit on intellectual and logical criteria. For this class, we will combine both elements of the “academic” and “professional” aspects in structuring the end of semester policy briefs.

Components of a Policy Brief

Please use the following nine components as guidelines for phrasing the sub-headings in the brief.

1. Executive Summary: This should be a short summary (approx. 150 words) of the purpose of the brief and its recommendations. It typically appears single-spaced on the cover of a brief or position paper. [Because you are not really writing this brief as part of your job, please indicate in an additional sentence the audience for whom the brief is intended, e.g., a particular NGO, government agency, legislator/politician, branch of an international organization. Be as specific as possible. Assume that someone beyond Homewood would appreciate your research and recommendations, and this assignment may turn into a ticket for an internship or full-time employment upon graduation.]

2. Statement of the Issue/Problem: Phrase the topic as a question that requires a decision. This can be as short as one question. Here are a few examples:

- **What role** can the *{any political, social, religious organization of your choice}* play in enhancing the *{political/economic/social}* status of *{any disadvantaged group of your choice}*?
- **Should** *{any organization/government of your choice}* provide humanitarian assistance to people in the *{any war zone/natural disaster situation of your choice}*?
- **How should** *{any country or region of your choice}* respond to the investment interest of *{any multinational corporation or financial institution of your choice}*?
- **Who should** take the responsibility for *{fixing any development problem of your choice}*?
- **When should** *{any country/organization of your choice}* decide to intervene in *{any development problem/crisis of your choice}*?

If you are interested in a particular topic and find yourself wanting to ask a *why* question, then it is probably better suited for an academic research paper rather than a policy brief. In any case, I encourage you to consult with me about both the substance of your topic and the format that you choose to pursue.

3. Background (of the problem): Include only the essential facts that a decision maker “needs to know” to understand the context of the problem. Assume that you have been hired to filter through reams of information on behalf of a very busy and sleep-deprived person. Be clear, precise, and

succinct.

4. Statement of your governments interests in the issue: This is meant to remind the reader of why the issue matters for the country/group/organization that you are advising. If, for example, you were the National Security Advisor for the US, then it would be appropriate to review the US's geostrategic, economic, or humanitarian interest in the problem at hand.

5. Pre-existing Policies: This summarizes what has been done (by others and the entity that you represent) about the problem thus far. Depending on your topic, some of the information may have already been presented in #3 (e.g., perhaps the problem itself stems from some other country or organization's intervention). The objective of this section is to inform the reader of policy options that have already been pursued, if any. Note that the absence of action may be considered a policy decision.

6. Policy Options: This section delineates the possible courses of action or inaction that your organization may pursue. Please provide the decision maker with *at least three potential courses of action*. Some of them may be wildly unrealistic in your opinion, but please pose them as policy options nonetheless. At the same time, it would not be prudent to overwhelm the decision maker with too many choices. I would *cap the menu of options at five choices*--just think of how hard it is to choose your courses each semester.

7. Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Policy Option: Write this section from the perspective of a government official charged with policy making. For clarity, you may present the pros and cons of the options in bullet points or outline format. This may seem like stacking the deck since some options may have only one advantage and several downsides, but it isn't always that obvious. For instance, one measly advantage may conform most fully with the interests of the organization summarized in #4. It is up to you to advise the decision maker if it is worth it.

8. Your Recommendation: After prioritizing the relative pros and cons of the above options, please recommend one option to your audience. Yes, this may require going out on a limb on an extremely complex issue that challenges your ethical instincts. But if you have agreed to advise a particular country/organization/person, then you will be asked to make a recommendation on their behalf.

9. Sources Consulted or Recommended: This is essentially an *annotated bibliography* in the event that the decision maker has the interest and time to read up on a specific issue. Please provide a one to three sentence description and evaluation of each source listed in this section. Aside from standard books and articles, on-line sources and personal interviews may be cited. Please see me if you have any questions about the acceptability of your research materials.

INSTRUCTIONS: You are acting as government official charged with policy making.

- 1) Pick a country on which you would like your policy brief to be written on.
- 2) Identify a policy domain that you feel is worthy of change/improvement.
- 3) Choose another country/countries that has successful policy implementation of the issue you identify in part 2. *Make sure you explicitly state what makes you determine the specific policy

is “successful”

- 4) Identify what specific steps you intend to take, to change the policy. How are you to learn from the other country with the successful policy in the domain you have chosen?
- 5) Explore alternative policy options that you decided not to take. Explain why you went the route you did.
- 6) Discuss the anticipated outcomes you intend to realize through the policy change.
- 7) Write-up your brief following the guidelines above, and present your findings/recommendations in the form of a poster presentation.

APPENDIX II:

GUIDELINES ON HOW TO WRITE SHORT PAPERS

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Locate a electronic, or paper, blog/article/policy brief that discusses the topic covered in class for the week
- 2) Print out the source
- 3) In your write-up, briefly summarize the blog/article/policy brief
- 4) Point out ways in which it relates to class discussion
- 5) Next, explain how **what you have learned in class** has helped you **better understand** the article/blog/brief you are referencing.
- 6) Staple the source behind your paper and turn it in at the beginning of class.

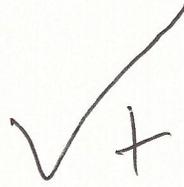
I have attached, below, three sample short papers written in a prior course for template purposes

Kristen Beasley

Professor Olufowote

POLS 250

17 February 2010



Sweden Article Review

“Swedish Electorate Votes for Change” discusses the pattern of voting that has been occurring in Sweden for the last seventy years and the changes that took place in the latest election in 2006. The Social Democratic Party dominated the Swedish government for nearly seventy years and just recently did the electorate decide that it was time for a change. In 2006, a new party became the dominant party in the Swedish government, the Moderate Party. Thanks to Fredrik Reinfeldt, the candidate for Prime Minister in the Moderate Party, this change occurred. Reinfeldt took the issue of welfare and made promises of what he would do differently and this helped to convince the electorate that his party should have control of how the government of Sweden should be ran.

I wouldn't be able to understand this article if we hadn't discussed the different parties in the Swedish government. We discussed how the Social Democrats had control of the entire Swedish government for a majority of the time that Parliament has been running the country. Also, since the party in control of Parliament chooses the Prime Minister, the Moderates were able to elect Fredrik Reinfeldt as Prime Minister, allowing for the Moderates to make changes to the welfare system just as they had hoped to do. He has also promised to create more jobs. Clearly the electorate of Sweden was not happy

with the way the Parliament and previous Prime Minister, Goran Persson, was running
the country.



Swedish electorate votes for change

By Lars Bevanger
BBC News, Stockholm

Sweden will have a new prime minister after the opposition centre-right coalition narrowly beat the Social Democrat government of Goran Persson in Sunday's general election.

Fredrik Reinfeldt has led the conservative Moderate Party to a narrow victory on a promise to reform Sweden's costly welfare system.

Only two percentage points separated his party from the Social Democrats and their left-of-centre supporters.

But this result marks a major shift to the right for Swedish voters.

Central shift

The leading new government party, the Moderates, gained some 10% from the last election four years ago.

Mr Reinfeldt has taken the party to the centre of Swedish politics, promising more jobs and an even better-run welfare system, rather than big tax cuts.

Mr Persson has said he will now step down after 10 years as party leader next spring.

Mr Reinfeldt will head a coalition government comprising three other centre-right parties in addition to his own Moderates.

Few here believe there will be a complete system change with this new government and no considerable changes to Sweden's social model.

Many voters said that they simply felt it was time for change after the Social Democratic Party had dominated Swedish politics for more than 70 years.

Story from BBC NEWS:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/5354934.stm>

Published: 2006/09/18 00:31:08 GMT

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Kristen Beasley



Professor Olufowote

POLS 250

29 March 2010

Indonesia Article Review

“Suharto Re-election in Progress” is an article that describes how Suharto has had so much influence and power in Indonesia. It explains how he has been able to stay in power for thirty years because of his influence over the one-thousand member parliament. The article states that Suharto must only “go through the motions” of reelection, since he will continuously be reelected due to the way the parliament is set up. He has an unfair advantage because he appoints a majority of parliament, while the minorities are elected to office. Suharto has been able to keep his leadership position because he has such great influence over the assembly, and is somewhat satisfying the Indonesian population with his economic policies. However, with the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, where currency basically became worthless, trust in Suharto began to decrease. Only through the advantage of Suharto being able to select the majority of the parliament is he able to keep his seat.

I would not understand this article if we had not discussed in class about how Indonesia’s government is poorly set up. We learned that while Indonesia claims to be a “democracy,” they are really run in a more authoritarian form. Suharto wants the citizens of Indonesia to believe that their votes count, but he still chooses the majority of parliament,

and chooses individuals that will do the things he wants done and strike down the things he is against.

Suharto re-election in progress

Indonesians protest against the rule of President Suharto **President Suharto of Indonesia is going through the motions of being re-elected for another five year term of office by a 1,000 member assembly over which he exercises considerable influence. It is a process that has guaranteed Mr Suharto re-election for the past 30 years. But as our Jakarta correspondent Jonathan Head reports, economic crisis is increasing the pressure on the Indonesian government to start political reform.**

The Assembly which is currently discussing President Suharto's re-election is little more than a piece of political theatre. The dominant factions in the People's Consultative Assembly are staunchly loyal to the 76-year old leader, and are certain to give him a seventh five-year term of office.

It's a system which in the past faced little opposition because of Mr Suharto's record of delivering strong economic growth. But the collapse of the Indonesian currency has caused prices and unemployment to rise sharply - leading to rioting across much of the country, and forcing Mr Suharto to ask for help from the IMF.

Financial analysts say the pervasive corruption and lack of transparency which have characterised business practices under President Suharto have allowed Indonesian companies to build up unsustainable levels of foreign debt.

Some argue that Indonesia cannot restore investor confidence unless President Suharto steps down. But there is little prospect of that in the near future. Even Indonesians who are arguing in favour of political change admit that no-one is yet ready to replace the man who has ruled unchallenged for three decades. But Mr Suharto's commitment to the IMF reforms is still uncertain - he has complained that they are not working fast enough, and he has suggested re-negotiating them.

Neighbouring governments are concerned that Indonesia's uncertain economic prospects are holding back a recovery in South East Asia. The sheer size of the Indonesian market of 200m people, and the importance of its rich natural resources, means what happens there has a profound impact on the rest of the region.

There is also concern over political stability, should President Suharto die or leave office during his next term of office - he has made no preparations for a successor, and it is not clear even what kind of political system would replace him.

For the moment, the powerful armed forces are united in backing him - but there are serious splits about the shape of the post-Suharto era among the senior military officers.

The influence of Islam on the world's largest Muslim population cannot be discounted. Until now fundamentalist Islam has not been visible in Indonesia, but in a country where all other organisations are tightly controlled by the government, Islam remains the only independent force with any potential to challenge the existing order. Indonesia is at a watershed.

Reluctance to change

No-one can be sure how much longer President Suharto will remain in power, but almost every Indonesian understands that the endgame of his so-called 'New Order', has begun. No-one believes he will stand again in five years time. But there is still an extraordinary reluctance among many Indonesians to discuss the post-Suharto era openly.

Years of official indoctrination against open debate, which is believed to strain the ethnic, religious and regional divisions within this heterogeneous island nation, have stifled free thought. Ask a student at one of the best universities here what he or she thinks should happen after Suharto, and you might be given an unrealistically idealistic answer, or as likely you will get no more than a nervous giggle.

President Suharto has taken pride in de-politicising his people, but in this volatile, transitional period, too many people appear dangerously underinformed.

So most Indonesians are watching their political elite go through the familiar rituals of re-affirmation with

indifference. They have not yet been given the chance to determine their own political destinies, but they know that the current crop of leaders will not be in power for long. Change is in the air in Indonesia, but no-one knows what kind of time-table it is following.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/events/indonesia/62915.stm>

Kristen Beasley



Professor Olufowote

POLS 250

14 April 2010

Benin Article Review

“Marxist Leads in Benin Vote for President,” explains the ongoing battle for the presidential position in Benin. Soglo and Kerekou both began competing against one another for this position. This article shows the reader how Benin is a pacted democracy. Benin is a pacted democracy because they removed Kerekou from office without trying him in court for his human rights violations, and just a few years later he was able to run for office again. This article also shares about how Kerekou portrayed a Communist philosophy, while he really practiced an authoritarian government. People began losing interest in Soglo during his term as President and this disapproval gave Kerekou an opportunity to get back into office.

I better understand this article because of the topics we discussed in class. We have discussed how Kerekou was an actor who made the people of Benin believe he was giving them democratic-like rights, while he was still making all decisions and basically keeping himself in office. He ran as a Communist who wanted equality for everyone, but he really was an authoritarian who was only concerned with how to maintain his wealth and the wealth of his cronies. In a pacted democracy, the leader in power is removed without force

and not made to undergo any type of punishment. This is obviously a pacted democracy since Kerekou ran for office again just five years later.

Marxist Leads in Benin Vote For President

Reuters

Published: March 20, 1996

COTONOU, Benin, March 19— The Marxist former military ruler of Benin appeared headed for a comeback today after the country's second multiparty presidential election, according to partial unofficial results.

The West African nation's state radio said partial results suggested that Mathieu Kerekou had 59 percent of votes in the runoff election on Monday, compared with 41 percent for President Nicephore Soglo, who was seeking a second five-year term.

Mr. Kerekou seized power in 1972, mixing Marxist dogma and authoritarian control. In 1990, with Benin bankrupt and on the brink of social collapse, he handed power to a national conference, which introduced multiparty democracy.

Outsiders see Benin as a barometer of democracy in Africa. The popularity of Mr. Soglo, a former World Bank economist who defeated Mr. Kerekou in Benin's first multiparty presidential election in 1991, has decreased. Critics portray him as aloof and distant from the daily problems of Benin's five million people.

The constitutional court, the guardian of electoral independence and arbiter of any disputes, must confirm and formally proclaim the results of the election. State radio said that the head of the court, which annulled more than a fifth of votes in the first round on March 3, citing fraud and irregularities, had received a death threat.

In the first round, Mr. Soglo, 61, won 36 percent of the vote, and Mr. Kerekou, 62, won 34 percent. The nation's 2.5 million voters turned out in force for both rounds.

The radio report said that Mr. Kerekou appeared to have gained support in areas that went to Adrien Houngbedji in the first round of voting. He ran third in that round, with 19 percent. Mr. Houngbedji, once sentenced to death for plotting against Mr. Kerekou's revolution, urged his supporters to vote for Mr. Kerekou.

Bruno Amoussou, who finished fourth in the first round, with 8 percent, did the same, and the voting switch to Mr. Kerekou seemed to be the same in his region.

Benin, which became independent from France in 1960, was one of the first nations in West Africa to dismantle the one-party state after the 1989 collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1996/03/20/world/marxist-leads-in-benin-vote-for-president.html>