



Mahidol University
International College

ICIR 315 Devolution, Privatization, and State Failure

Course Description & Aims:

Decentralization, devolution and privatization of government services are international trends. This lectured-based course seeks to explore and review these trends in a national and international context and focus on the local public sector response. Concerns for efficiency as well as changing notions of the appropriate role for the public sector drive these shifts. Privatization and public private partnerships are perhaps the most controversial form of restructuring. Special attention will be given to the implications of these shifts for citizenship and urban governance. Devolution, Privatization and the State course introduces students to an extraordinary breadth of content and depth of contextualization. This course aims to reflect efforts to promote government responsiveness to citizens – by bringing decisions closer to the community, and to promote economic competitiveness by encouraging developmental over redistributive investments. While decentralization of service delivery is presented as a means to enhance citizen access and involvement, it also helps justify the shrinking of the social welfare state, especially in times of fiscal crisis. Planners are often key architects of these initiatives and need to be aware of their potential and their limitations. Many cities face deteriorating infrastructure and fiscal stress, and as commitment to social welfare erodes, cities are left with increasing responsibilities. New solutions will be critical for planners to help cities address the challenge of linking investments in infrastructure, economic and human development with more participatory forms of governance.

A critical examination of the factors leading to devolution and decentralization in government; the popularity of local autonomy and regionalism in politics; the parallel trend of de-regulation and privatization in business and government; re-defining the role of national and central governments and their responsibilities to citizens; autonomy and regionalism. Students will discuss; and evaluate the effects of neoliberalism; its relationship to state failure; changing trends in international relations.

Lecturer: TBA

Office number and hours: By appointment

e-mail address:

Assessment

Ethics and participation	10%
Student debate on centralization and decentralization	10%
Midterm exam	30%
Student presentation	20%
Final Term paper	30%

Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Describe and explain major social issues linked to privatization.
2. Evaluate the dynamics of privatization and devolution of power.
3. Assess the question of state failure in the context of privatization and devolution.
4. Critically evaluate dominant economic strategies.

Topic No.	Topic
1	Introduction to politics and the state
	Introduction to citizens and social movements
2	The historical origin and formation of modern States
	State, democracy and decentralization
3	Democratic change and society
	Welfare states and spending
4	Centralization and Decentralization theoretical and conceptual assessment
	USA educational system
5	Multi-level government and Local Government
	Unitary and Federal state system explored
6	Local Government and Community Government case studies
	Autonomous region case study
7	Balancing Devolution and Deconcentration
	Analyzing China and Hong Kong case study
8	New Players and Regionalization
	European healthcare system
9	Privatization and the state
	Concept analysis and theory assessment of Liberalism and Neo-liberalism
10	Analyzing Privatization in Thailand
	Analyzing Privatization in Bolivia
11	Analyzing Japanese Kraisek and Koreas Cheabol
	Analyzing European case study on Sweden's Ikea
12	Documentary Film: The Corporation
	State failure and Libertarianism

Assessment Methods & Criteria

1. Student ethics, Class Participation and Attendance – 10%

- Students must attend participate in class discussion, and submit task on schedule

2. Student debate on centralization and decentralization – 10%

- Students will be conducting an informal debate on centralization and decentralization

3. Midterm Exam – 30%

- Students will be given an examination comprised of short answer questions based on course readings and lectures

4. Group Presentation – 25%

- Student will be given the option to choose a particular topic in which to examine and analyzed according to criteria and method discussed in class content during the first half of the course. Work in pairs (2person) and develop a presentation report for the class. Topics can look at new forms of providing or financing public services. Topics could be: club or neighborhood based approaches, shared services, meeting the needs of

informal settlements, a report on the pros and cons of contracting or mixed public/private management techniques in public works or infrastructure provision (current interest is especially high in water privatization and PPPs for highway infrastructure), or how cities are responding to fiscal stress. Identify the key issues and discuss them in depth. Bring in practical case material. Conduct original research (secondary and primary sources).

5. Final Term Paper: Practical policy analysis – 30%

- Each student will write an essay of 3,000 to 4,000 words analyzing one of the following themes – Privatization, State rescaling, Neo-liberalism, Regionalism, Libertarianism, Citizenship. Give particular emphasis to discussing the implications for governance and citizenship (7 to 8 pages 1.5 spaced with bibliography). Note: I am open to other themes; hence students may propose their ideas before submitting the outline.

Assessment criteria for term paper

1. A brief history of the event (remember this is a small essay so avoid a long historical account and concentrate on what is happening now). Clearly state the thesis statement.
2. Organize variety of supporting arguments to thesis statement
3. Use of course content discussed in class is crucial in assessing paper, hence make sure to use relevant terms and theories defend arguments
4. Theoretical aspects of the issue: how do the theories help us understand what is going on?
5. Academic sources such as articles and books can be used. Total citations must be no less than 10 in a Harvard referencing style.

Introduction to Political Structures and Agency

Topic description: In the first week of the course, students will be introduced to the course outline, course requirements, and their expected input. The topic on Introduction to Political Structures and Agency explores basic concepts such as Politics, the State, Government, Citizens, Groups such as Elites and Masses. Moreover, analyze how these basic concepts interact and influence each other.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand the relationship and dynamics between Political Structures and Agency with the emphasis to citizens and governance. Hence, students would be able to conceptualizing the components of Ideal state or system from preliminary basis.

Readings and activities:

- Introduction – Reading: Newton, K & Deth Van, J.W., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, Cambridge UP, NY, 2010, (Introduction chapter).
- Issues in comparative politics – Reading: Powell, Jr. et al, Comparative Politics Today: A World View, (chapter 1).
- Pressure groups and social movements – Reading: Newton, K & Deth Van, J.W., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, (chapter 10).

Historical Origin and Development Modern States

Topic description: The second week focuses on the assessment of the main and highest structure in politics, the State. Lectures start with theories on pattern of establishment, and formation States. Moreover, stages on development of modern States are also probed together with factors such Warfare and Capitalism as catalyst to the formation of modern State.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand mainstream and critical to States theory and apply these to a contemporary model on the development of States.

Readings and activities:

- The development of the modern state – Reading: Newton, K & Deth Van, J.W., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, Cambridge UP, NY, 2010 (chapter1)
- **State Restructuring, Political Opportunism, and Capital Mobility** – Reading: Lake, Robert W., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, Cambridge UP, NY, 2010 (Part 1-1)

Democratic Development

Topic description: Since the course seeks to explore and review decentralization trends in a national and international context and focus on the local public sector response, this week's lecture discuss the implications for governance and citizenship. A brief sketch will be made on history of Democratization, from pre-modern societies such as ancient civilizations through to the development of the nation state and democratic societies. Also discussed are theories on the dynamics of States and Society, and Democratic change due Modernization theory.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand models and theories on governance and citizenship relations, of which are associated to Democratic Development.

Readings and activities:

- Citizenship and the search for community – Reading: Staeheli, Lynn A., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, (Part 1-4).
- States and democracy – Reading: Newton, K & Deth Van, J.W., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, (chapter 2).
- Building the Pillars of Democracy – Reading: Panyarachun, Anand., Center for International Private Enterprise, 2008 (Handout)

Decentralization and USA educational system

Topic description: This week's topic embarks towards the assessment and discussion of Centralization and Decentralization concepts, theories and case studies. In being able to analyze the term with minimal bias, a case study about the USA educational system of which supports the advocacy for Centralization in educational systems despite having a Federal system. Moreover, types of decentralization namely horizontal (branches of government) and vertical decentralization is introduced, hence balancing the theoretical support of both main concepts - Centralization and Decentralization.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand the relationship between Centralization and Decentralization, and able to form their own perspective based on different factors. Hence enable student to discuss and argue prominence and limitations of each concept.

Readings and activities:

- Constitutions – Reading: Newton, K & Deth Van, J.W., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, (chapter 4).
- Activity – in-class group discussion on the Pros and Cons of centralization and Decentralization concepts
- Assessment – Student participation and engagement on discussion.

Multi-level Government in Unitary and Federal state systems

Topic description: This week's topic looks in to the assessment of vertical administration of society (Multi-level government), from Community, Local, Municipal, Provincial, Regional, National to International. All the level of governments are associated to Unitary and Federal state systems, of which can be contextualized depending on its configuration. Lastly, theories of multi-level government such as Philosophical and political defines of decentralized

government, Rational-Choice theory of federalism and local government, and Centre-periphery relations analyzed.

Expected learning outcomes: Students are expected to understand the adherence of states to certain type of configuration such as Unitary and Federal systems, which determines the relationships among different levels of government. Moreover, students are also able to compared and associate types of system to Centralization and Decentralization theories.

Readings and activities:

- Multi-level government: international, national and sub-national – Reading: Newton, K & Deth Van, J.W., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, (chapter 6).
- Activity – Group debate on Centralization Vs. Decentralization will be conducted
- Assessment – The ability to articulate main arguments and cite supporting theories and cases in confirming or defending the groups stance.

Local Government, Community Government and Autonomous Region

Topic description: A continuation on decentralization theory will be explored, specifically on the assessment of Local, Community, Special Status and Autonomous Region - levels of governments. Lecture start with the conceptual analysis to terms, followed with two supporting country case studies from Philippine Barangay community government and Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, and China (special?) administration of Hong Kong.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand different theoretical frameworks for decentralization and devolution processes, hence students can use these frameworks for examining case studies discussed in class. Lastly, students can be able to compare different devolution strategies in unitary states.

Readings and activities:

- The Rise of Local government: An overview – Reading: Bardhan, Pranab and Mookherjee, Dilip. Decentralization and Local Governance in Developing Countries: a comparative perspective, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA. 2006
- Decentralization and Local Governance in China’s Economic Transition – Reading: Keefer, Philip E., Narayan, Ambar., and Vishwanath, Tara., Decentralization and Local Governance in Developing Countries: a comparative perspective, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA. 2006
- Activity – Class discussion on Documentary Joshua

Balancing Devolution and Deconcentration

Topic description: Week seven focuses on the discussion and analysis of the reading - Balancing Decentralization and Deconcentration: Emerging Need for Asymmetric Decentralization in the Unitary State in addressing the argument that “There is no broad-based generalization that can be made about the correlation of federal/unitary states and decentralization”, by supporting stance with theories, models and cross country experiences.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand the Dichotomy principle and Continuum principle of decentralization and deconcentration, that in the continuum principle, decentralization is complement to deconcentration and concludes that decentralization is not an alternative to centralization; both are needed. That, it is simply a matter of proportion, finding the optimum degree for the particular concern.

Readings and activities:

- Balancing Decentralization and Deconcentration: Emerging Need for Asymmetric Decentralization in the Unitary States – Reading: UTOMO, TYRi Widodo. 2009

- Activity – in-class student presentation, particular topic on Decentralization, supported with discussion on weeks' topic.
- Assessment – Conduct original research and being able to bring in practical case material.

Analyzing European and Thailand healthcare systems

Topic description: This week focuses on the assessment and comparison of three case studies on the healthcare systems. Countries such as Thailand, Luxembourg and Switzerland are selected as crucial cases to probe, due to its structurally decentralized but has a comprehensive healthcare system. Week eight also introduces the concept of privatization, and analyzing its advantages and disadvantages on several contexts of discipline - such as politics, economics and social implications.

Expected learning outcomes: For student to understand and analyze the decentralized health care systems of Thailand, Luxembourg and Switzerland. Therefore, enable students to contextualizing Privatization as decentralization strategy.

Readings and activities:

- Decentralization in Health Care: Strategies and outcomes, Reading: World Health Organization, Open University Press McGraw-Hill (2007)
- Privatization as decentralization strategy (part14): The question of decentralization - Reading: Rifat Atun. Decentralization in Health Care: Strategies and outcomes, World Health Organization, Open University Press McGraw-Hill (2007)
- Activity – in-class student presentation, particular topic on Decentralization, supported with discussion on weeks' topic.
- Assessment – Conduct original research and being able to bring in practical case material.

Concept analysis and theory assessment of Liberalism and Neo-liberalism

Topic description: Privatization theory is proponent to the liberal economics school of thought, hence week nine focuses on the concept analysis and theory assessment of Liberalism and Neo-liberalism. Mainly, weeks task argues the advantages of state restructuring and privatization in both national and international context, however also considering the limitations and barriers of liberal economic systems.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand different liberal and neoliberal economic models, and the impacts of state privatization towards governance and citizens.

Readings and activities:

- Restructuring the State: Devolution, Privatization, and the Geographical Redistribution of Power and Capacity in Governance – Reading: Kodras, Janet E., State Devolution in America, Urban Affairs Annual Review
- Eagleton-Pierce, Matthew. Neoliberalism: The Key Concepts. Routledge, 2016
- Eisner, Marc Allen. Regulatory politics in an Age of Polarization and Drift: Beyond Deregulation. New York: Rutledge, 2017

Analyzing Privatization in Thailand and Bolivia

Topic description: After establishing conceptual and theoretical analysis of Neoliberalism and Privatization. Students will be introduced to two polarizing cross country cases, Thailand and Bolivia, both having opposing view on the application and impact of Privatization. Moreover, task is to introduce students to a variety of social issues involved in privatization and to encourage rational thinking about economic issues.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand the historical and current issues surrounding cross country analysis. Moreover, adopting a comprehensive view of Privatizations benefit and limitation for Thailand and Bolivia context.

Readings and activities:

- Decentralizing Bolivia: Local Government in the Jungle – Reading: Faguet, Jean-Paul
- Activity – in-class student presentation, particular topic on Privatization, supported with discussion on weeks' topic.
- Assessment – Conduct original research and being able to bring in practical case material.

Analyzing Privatization in Asian and European case studies

Topic description: The eleventh week, content continues the assessment of privatization by exploring case studies on Japanese Kraisek, Korea's Chaebol, and Sweden's retail company - Ikea.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand the importance of collaboration among different sectors in government, agencies and companies as components of Decentralization, Devolution, Privatization and Deconcentration

Readings and activities:

- Political attitudes and behavior – Reading: Newton, K & Deth Van, J.W., Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, (chapter 9).
- Activity – in-class student presentation, particular topic on Privatization, supported with discussion on weeks' topic.
- Assessment – Conduct original research and being able to bring in practical case material.

The future of States and Libertarianism

Topic description: With special emphasis to state failure, the last week concludes by exploring ideas and theories on what states may develop to. Theories on Libertarianism together with the viewing of a documentary on Corporations would be assessed in order to hypothetically determine the possible future of states.

Expected learning outcomes: For students to understand the process and draw connection between dynamics of privatization and state failure, hence able to adopt a framework in assessing course content and offer predictions based on trends.

Readings and activities:

- Stieglitz, Joseph. Globalization and its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump. New York and London: Norton 2017
- Activity – view documentary film on the Corporation by Michael Moore