Political events

Politics

Comparative politics and to some extent studies in international relations faced some dilemma when its geo-political-economic models did not go hand in hand with the political events of 1989, 1990, and recently 2001. It was predicted by political scientists that China would be democratized in 1989; specifically, it was assumed that the Beijing revolt of 1989 would force China to adopt new reforms that would restore democracy to the country. The prediction collapsed when news of a bloody massacre of students flashed on the television screens.

Thousands of students and civilians were killed in Tiananmen Square, almost 10, 000 were injured. The Chinese government declared martial law in the city, and was inclined to crush any rebellion, be it bloody or peaceful, to retain the Communist Party's control of the government. The geo-political-economic model that predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union and many of the Communist governments in Eastern European countries was widely accepted in academic circles as the possible explanation (the variables considered in the model) for the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. However, the model has one flaw.

It predicted that the North Korean government would also collapse after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Well, almost two decades had passed and North Korea is still standing. Political scientists were still puzzled by this extraordinary deviation from the model. Several models were also presented to explain the deviation but to no avail. It was also predicted that Yugoslavia would have a peaceful separation of republic because it was assumed that if ethnic boundaries are well drawn (the composition of a certain ethnic

boundary would be mostly people who came from such ethnic group), ethnic conflicts would be averted.

Such assumption however was put to test when Milosevic attacked Kosovo killing many civilians. Milosevic also issued several orders to indiscriminately kill civilians who do not belong to their ethnic group. It was also predicted that terrorism would not become a global phenomenon by political scientists in the late 90s. They assumed that the relative economic prosperity of Arab nations would divert Arab nationalism from foreign hatred to global reconstruction of Third World nations and of course increased foreign trade. This was made unusable when the Al-Qaeda destroyed the Twin Towers, killing thousands of innocent civilians.

The models created to predict political events have generally two problems: 1) many of the models considered only few related variables, and 2) the scope of prediction did not take into consideration other areas of the world. With regard to the first problem, some models like the one which predicted the fall of Communist government in China considered only one or two related variables. This limits the possibilities that the model can predict. In other words, to limit events to one or two or three variables would be very deterministic, and as such would make the model inflexible (it can either be called economic or political determinism).

This situation is also added by the high percentage of error (uncertain) of predictability; since political events are necessarily human events, the propensity of changing the action of a human being, can have a significant change in consequent events (such as the actions of a pope or president).

With regard to the second problem, when models are restricted to regions, there is the danger of what Huntington (2006) called political regionalization. In this situation, models are created based on the political events of a selected region. Variables outside the system are rooted out because they are assumed to be insignificant.

Political events in China therefore are connected to the political events of the world and its neighboring states. Political events in countries far from China are not examined. Hence, errors in this case are much lower than the first case but still of significant value. Comparative politics and International studies would have to take more variables in its analysis of political events but should subscribe to the fact that political events cannot be predicted with certainty, for they too are human events (in social sciences, human actions are difficult to predict).