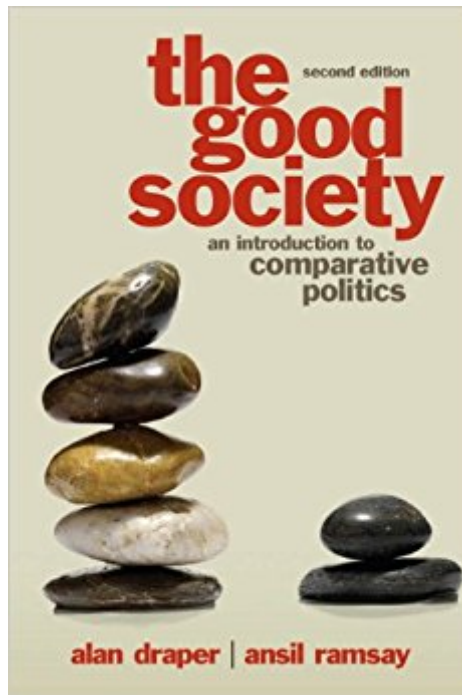




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# The Good Society: An Introduction To Comparative Politics (2nd Edition)



## Synopsis

Combining thematic and country approaches to show students what comparative politics is really about, *The Good Society* organizes itself around a key question—why are some countries better than others at improving their citizens' lives? This brief survey offers a focused look at political institutions and uses in-depth country studies to compare how different institutional arrangements yield different political results. By concentrating on how politics affects citizens' lives, *The Good Society* offers a uniquely relevant introduction to comparative politics that goes to the heart of the field and helps students develop a critical point-of-view.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Teachers of comparative politics will be grateful for this book. Draper and Ramsay have given unity to a wide range of diverse topics in the field by asking how political institutions affect citizens' quality of life. Not only will students be motivated by this theme, but they will learn even more than they realize about diverse concepts, issues, and countries.”  
—Andrew J. Nathan, Columbia University

Alan Draper is Professor of Government at St. Lawrence University. Ansil Ramsay is Professor Emeritus of Government at St. Lawrence University.

If you are looking for a simple-minded, political-agenda-driven textbook, then this is the one for you!

Personally, I don't recommend that you drink the Kool-Aid offered by this book. The first sentence on one of the pages of this extremely political-agenda-driven textbook reads, "If you are a libertarian or an anarchist who believes states are a threat to freedom, you should consider moving to Somalia." Below is the response to this excerpt by liberty-loving Tom Woods, the libertarian who runs LibertyClassroom.com: Here we have an academic textbook literally urging libertarians to move to Somalia if they hate states so much -- in other words, it's written at the level of "You like carrots? Why don't you marry one" from third grade. Seriously, this is exactly the same dumb-guy argument I might encounter on Twitter. "Without a state," we read, Somalia under statelessness descended into a Hobbesian "state of nature where life is nasty, brutish, and short." Then, after two whole paragraphs on the situation in Somalia, we get study questions. If you look really, really closely, you may detect a very slight bias in these questions. VERY SLIGHT, I tell you. "1. Which is preferable, bad government or no government?" "2. Why hasn't Somalia without a state become the paradise that libertarians anticipate?" Now for one thing, was there ever a libertarian who predicted that a stateless Somalia -- or a stateless anywhere else -- would be a "paradise"? More importantly, if we're going to get a picture that's worth anything of life in Somalia without the state, the correct comparison to make is not between Somalia and the United States (the comparison most writers like this are implicitly making), but between Somalia and comparable African countries. And on that front, Somalia during its stateless period comes out pretty darn well. In most metrics of living standards it held steady or improved. In the Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization in 2008, Professor Benjamin Powell and his colleagues wrote: "This paper's main contribution to the literature has been to compare Somalia's living standards to those of 41 other sub-Saharan African countries both before and after the collapse of the national government. We find that Somalia's living standards have generally improved and that they compare relatively favorably with many existing African states. Importantly, we find that Somali living standards have often improved, not just in absolute terms, but also relative to other African countries since the collapse of the Somali central government." Economist Peter Leeson, in *Anarchy Unbound* (Cambridge University Press), reports similar findings -- yes, Somalia ranked low in some categories during the stateless period, but that's where it ranked before statelessness, too, and if anything it made progress in those categories (life expectancy is up, for instance, and infant mortality is down). Does our textbook cite any of this? The question answers itself. The only person quoted in the book is a New York Times reporter. I think I'll take Ben Powell and Pete Leeson.

Such a good textbook. Kindle format is easy to use, and the layout is very pleasing. 10/10 would

recommend.

useful

Biased and intolerant right at the outset. Sentence on first page: "If you are a libertarian or an anarchist who believes states are a threat to freedom, you should consider moving to Somalia." Very "second grade-ish." One might as well reply: "You like government?" [Yes.] "Why don't you marry it!" "Study" (indoctrination) questions you'll soon see: "1. Which is preferable, bad government or no government?" "2. Why hasn't Somalia without a state become the paradise that libertarians anticipate?" No "academic" or "scholarly" junk like this should ever be considered enlightening. How this is offered/required by some post-secondary courses is thoroughly absurd. Stay away.

It is helping me a lot. thank you for your concern )

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Nice quality seems like it never been touched before!

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