

NEWSLETTER OF THE *Comparative & Historical* SOCIOLOGY

SECTION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

January, 1993

Vol. 5: No. 2

Chair

Ronald Aminzade
Univ. of Minnesota

Chair-Elect

Ann Orloff
University of Wisconsin-
Madison

Sec'y-Treasurer

David Zaret
Indiana University

Council

Andrew Abbott
University of Chicago

Larry Isaac
Florida State University

Ewa Morawska
University of Pennsylvania

Joane Nagel
Univ. of Kansas

Sonya Rose
Colby College

George Steinmetz
Univ. of Chicago

Newsletter Editor

George Steinmetz
University of Chicago
Department of Sociology
1126 East 59th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Tel: 312-702-0398

THANKS AND GOODBYE

With the next issue, John R. Hall (University of California-Davis) will take over as the editor of this newsletter. John has been an active member of the section and a recent contributor to the newsletter. Special thanks to the following colleagues and friends who have helped us over the past 14 months: Andrew Abbott, Ron Aminzade, Abram de Swaan, David Laitin, Barbara Laslett, Stephen Menell, John Walton, and Eli Zaretsky. We would also like to thank Eric Fink and Jay Hughes for technical assistance.

At the end of this issue you will find a tear-off membership form for the Comparative/Historical section. Ron Aminzade has suggested that section members photocopy and distribute these forms to their graduate students, who can now join for \$5.00.

George Steinmetz
Stephen Ellingson

Future Directions in the Comparative Historical Study of Democracy

John D. Stephens
University of North Carolina

The past decade has seen a proliferation of social science research on the social, economic, and political bases of democracy. This past spring Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Evelyne Huber Stephens (now Evelyne Huber) and I published our contribution to this literature, a comparative historical study of democratization, Capitalist Development and Democracy. I would like to take this occasion to outline what I see as the main lacunae in the field at this point and the most promising directions for future comparative historical research. To state it another way, these are the topics of research whose importance our study revealed to us but which we were unable to pursue given the time (and page!) limitation we had. Before going on to the lacunae, I must briefly outline our methodology and results.

Our point of departure is the contrasting results of past research on the relationship between capitalist development and democracy. Cross-national statistical research has found that capitalist development and democracy are consistently related. Comparative historical studies, by contrast, have argued that economic development was and is compatible with a variety of political forms and that, in some cases and historical junctures, economic development imperatives led to the authoritarian eclipse of political democracy. In our effort to resolve this controversy, we

employed the methodology of analytic induction (or the analytic comparative historical method). Our strategy was to combine the primary strength of the quantitative studies, the inclusion of a larger number of cases and thus the ability to generalize, with those of comparative history, the ability to uncover conjunctural causation and multiple paths to the same outcome and the ability to establish cause by uncovering historical sequence. Our study consists of comparative historical investigation of three sets of countries with the most frequent experiences with democracy: the advanced industrial countries, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Our conclusion is that capitalist development is associated with political democracy because it transforms the class structure, strengthening the working and middle classes and weakening the landed upper class. However, the development of democracy cannot be read off from changes in the class structure; it depends on a complex interplay of social class, states, and international forces.

The analysis in our book is of the social origins of formal democracy and not full political equality or egalitarian social policy. We defined full democracy as a political system with universal suffrage, government responsibility to parliament or an elected executive, and freedom of expression and association. Certainly the most controversial aspect of our analysis will be that we focus on male suffrage as the pivotal turning point. From a moral point of view, this cannot be defended. However, from an analytical point of view, it can, because the conditions for female enfranchisement are different from those of male democracy as the case of Switzerland, the first male democracy (1848) but the last advanced capitalist country to enfranchise women (1971), clearly demonstrates. We made this decision for three reasons. First, gender cuts across all other major social cleavages relevant to the development of democracy: class, religion, region, and ethnicity. Thus gender requires a separate analysis whereas we could incorporate these other social divisions in our analysis, which focused in large part precisely on the question of how the materially underprivileged mass (defined by class, ethnicity, etc. or a combination of these factors) gain entry into the political system and formal political equality. Second, there have been no cases of democratic systems collapsing as a result of efforts to re-exclude women once they have been included, whereas there are many cases of breakdown of democracy motivated by materially privileged groups' efforts to exclude other ethnic groups or workers and peasants. Third, the inclusion of women in the electorate does not change party systems either by addition of parties or by substantial changes in the strength of existing parties whereas the extension of suffrage to workers, peasants, or excluded ethnic minorities always does, generally creating or strengthening parties to the left. To the extent that it had any effect at all, the initial effect of the inclusion of women in the electorate, by contrast, was to strengthen parties of the right marginally, especially religious ones. As one can see, what ties these points together is the differing relationship of gender and the other major social cleavages to the structure of material privilege. And, indeed, when the other social cleavages cut across class rather than being correlated to it, they were much less likely to have played a role in the development or its collapse.

The first lacuna in the literature I would like to point to, then, is precisely the absence of a broad, sustained comparative historical treatment of the introduction of women's suffrage. There are many single-country studies and a few paired comparisons but even the latter are generally parallel demonstrations of theory rather than applications of the analytic comparative historical method aimed at uncovering the causes of differences between the countries. This is likely to have substantive consequences as the number of cases chosen as well as the time frame have implications for conclusions the author is likely to draw. Cases studies or paired comparisons with similar outcomes and short time frames result in emphases on actors' choices and processes, as in the recent studies of re-democratization. By contrast, studies comparing a large number of cases with different outcomes and/or over long time periods are more likely to point to structural features to explain the differences among countries or long-term changes within the countries.

I can suggest a few hypotheses. First, in the first wave of democratization up to the end of WWI, parties of the left were the only consistent supporters of women's suffrage. However, as DuBois (1990) points out, most male socialists wanted to exclude women and children from the labor force and this had implications for their views on political rights for women. It was where autonomous women's organizations existed within the socialist movements that women's suffrage moved up on the agenda of the party. Second, in this period, Catholic countries were much less likely to introduce women's suffrage because the Catholic parties opposed it as a result of the Catholic view of the family and liberals opposed it because they believed that female enfranchisement would benefit the

Catholics electorally. Third, in the post-WWII waves of democratization (immediately after the war and the 1980s), it became increasingly difficult to legitimate regimes with departures from universalism. On formal political equality for women, the two rival superpowers agreed and this was reflected in the principles of a wide variety of international bodies. This new ideological climate meant that the previous, often religious, legitimations of political exclusion were overcome. Even in the Islamic world where the legal systems frequently discriminate against women, only a few countries grant different suffrage rights to men and women.

As a person with three passport-carrying Swiss in my immediate family, I feel compelled to comment on the Swiss case and to propose a hypothesis to account for this anomaly. That an advanced industrial country could continue to exclude women from the electorate until 1971 in the face of all the domestic and international pressures against it is truly remarkable, not to mention disgusting. The interaction of state or constitutional structure with religious and center-periphery cleavages impeded the introduction of women's suffrage at the national level. According to the Swiss constitution, a majority of cantons as well as a popular majority in a referendum is required for the passage of constitutional change or major legislation. This allowed the rural Catholic cantons to block female suffrage. Some of these cantons continued to exclude women from participation in cantonal affairs for another two decades.

The case selection we employed certainly led to some biases in our treatment of ethnicity, state formation, and religion, which further comparative-historical work can correct. We chose the regions with the most democratic experience but also with much variation in regime form, particularly from the

historical perspective of the last 150 years. Based on my limited readings on Asia and Africa (informed particularly by the Diamond, Lipset, and Linz volumes on *Democracy in Developing Countries*) and on Eastern Europe, the interaction of state-building and ethnicity would be much more important for explaining the difficulties democracy experienced in Eastern Europe in the interwar period (and today!) and in Africa and Asia in the post-war period. In the regions we studied (Western Europe, North America, Australasia, Latin America, and the Caribbean), the contours of the territory of the national state were clear, with a few exceptions, by the beginning of the period of struggle for democratic reform. In most of these cases, moreover, a national identity had already been formed. A national political community with some cohesion, though not necessarily value consensus, is a prerequisite for democracy. It is not surprising that in only two cases, Guyana and the American South, of the more than forty cases we analyzed, ethnic division played the central role in the difficulty of establishing democracy or in the breakdown of democracy. By contrast, the new independent states of Eastern Europe after World War I and again after 1989 and of Africa and Asia in the post World War II period were the results of the dismantling of empires or colonial empires. The state borders often did not correspond to national identities and this led to the ethnic struggles that have plagued and continue to plague the countries of these regions. A further specification of the patterns of interaction of state building, ethnicity, and democratization is the second lacuna in the literature and requires, in my view, a comparative analysis of cases in Eastern Europe, Africa, or Asia or studies cross-cutting the three regions.

Another topic in which the inclusion of Asia and Africa in the analysis might be revealing is the relationship of religion and democratization. In our analysis of this topic, we question the contention advanced by modernization theorists that doctrine per se played an important role in the development of democracy. They contend that Protestantism's emphasis on individual responsibility strengthened democratic values which explains why cross-national statistical studies have found that Protestant countries are more likely to be democratic than countries with other religious compositions. By contrast, we argue that it was not so much doctrine that determined a religious group's effect but its role vis-à-vis the state: state churches, Protestant or Catholic, opposed democratic movements while churches and sects opposed to the state were usually pro-democratic. Can this finding be extended to Islam? It is commonplace to attribute the authoritarian features of Islamic countries to Islamic doctrine. A systematic study of countries in which the state elites were allied with Islamic leaders and those in which Islam was opposed by the state might reveal a more nuanced picture. If the doctrinal (or cultural) explanation of the authoritarianism of Islamic countries is modified, then an alternative historical or social structural explanation or set of explanations must be proposed.

A fourth lacuna is the lack of studies of the waves of democratization that have occurred over the last one hundred years (Western Europe 1870-1914, Eastern and Western Europe

1918-20, authoritarian reversals 1921-44, worldwide democratization 1945-55, authoritarian reversals in the third world in the 1960s and 1970s, worldwide democratization since 1980). There is no doubt that the forces which influenced events in different countries were connected. How tightly they were connected and the extent to which they were connected by a Wallersteinian economic logic is an important area for future investigation. In the case of European developments prior to World War I, the alignments on tariffs that were stimulated by the series of recessions after 1870 directly affected the alignments in the struggle for democratization. This is fruitfully explored by Daniel Garst in a forthcoming book on Germany and Britain.

Finally, in research to date on democracy, the interplay of ideology and social structure has remained unexplored. Here I think that we will need to begin by assembling a number of good case studies before we can even begin the process of comparative analysis. Ron Aminzade's forthcoming book, *Visions of the Republic*, which analyzes the transformation of the ideology of democracy and its relation to the development of democratic institutions in nineteenth century France, is an excellent model for what I think needs to be done. Once we assemble a number of such studies we can begin to provide more systematic answers to the question what difference it makes for the fate of attempts at democratic reform how the democratic movement chose to define democracy.

1993 Historical/Comparative Sessions at the ASA Meetings

I. The Origins of Democracy in Europe and America

Yoram Barzel and Edgar Kiser (University of Washington), "The Development and Decline of Medieval Voting Institutions: A Comparison of England and France."

Philip Gorski (U.C. Berkeley), "Revolutionary Calvinism and the Rise of Constitutional Republics."

Carlos Forment (Princeton University), "Group Formation in the Political Sphere: Democratic Transitions in Early Modern Spanish America."

Jann C.C. Rupp, (University of Amsterdam), "The Sociogenesis of Democratic Manners."

Discussant: Gay Seidman (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

II. Political Transitions and Democratization in Eastern Europe

Barbara Wejnert (Cornell University), "Did Democratization in Eastern Europe Diffuse?"

Bronislaw Misztal (Indiana University-Fort Wayne), "Dismantlement of State Socialism and Building Democracy in Poland and Hungary."

Christian Joppke (University of Southern California), "Intellectuals, Nationalism, and the Exit from Communism."

Discussant: Moishe Postone (University of Chicago)

In addition the section is co-sponsoring sessions with the Political Sociology (Jill Quadagno) and Political Economy (Shelly Feldman) sections and will be organizing roundtables (Nicki Beisel). The official A.S.A. program will include four additional sessions (organized by Viviana Zelizer) and a session on historical/comparative methods (organized by Charles Ragin).