

Comparative Politics of Developed Democracies

INTRODUCTION (Part II)

- I. Intellectual History of Comparative Politics as a Field of Inquiry (built from Lane&Ersson, intro-ch. 1)
 - A. **Theoretical Framework:** “We organize our [study]...in terms of cleavages, political institutions, & public policies” (p. 11)
 - B. “Traditional” (to *ca.* 1950s) Study of Politics: 5 Characteristics
 1. *Configurative Description*: just describe from A to Z everything political that exists or happens in some country
 2. *Parochialism*: Western (& predominantly US) slant on identification of issues to be considered
 3. *Formal Legalism*: Excessive focus on the constitutional & legal details of a country
 4. *Absence of Empiricism, Methodology, & Theory*: description & legalism w/ no attempt to relate aspects & outcomes systematically
 5. *Non-Comparative*: despite the name, the field tended to focus on one country at a time (relates to previous problem)
 - C. Continuing Methodological Problems & Debates
 1. Case Study *vs.* Comparative Method
 2. Political Sociology evolving into Political Institutionalism
 3. Newer Debates
 - a. Formal (*i.e.* mathematical) *v.* Qualitative (linguistic) theoretical derivation of arguments
 - b. Quantitative (*i.e.* statistical) *v.* Qualitative empirical evaluation
 - c. Positive theory (positivism) *v.* Interpretation & “Understanding” (interpretivism) as the goal
 4. “Either/Or” divisions somewhat arbitrary in that all involve some degree of other; further, several quite highly related; still, some controversy remains around these divides
 - D. Gabriel Almond & the Parsonian Revolution (mid 1950s)
 1. Influence of Sociology

- a. Gabriel Almond “Comparative Political Systems” (1956)
 - b. Talcott Parsons [*Toward a General Theory of Action* (with Shils, 1951), *The Social System* (1951), & *Economy & Society* (with Smelser, 1956)] brought Weber’s new systematic approach to the study of social behavior (“Sociology”) to the forefront of political science (and social science more generally)
2. Intro’s Central Q: What fosters (stable) (democratic) political development
 3. Theory/Argument: Almond argued Anglo-American political systems stable b/c high degree consensus on political means & ends & b/c political roles of individuals & institutions clearly differentiated & delineated. (As a theoretical conjecture, interesting; empirically, he neither defined nor measured either independent or dependent variables. Still, huge advance over what preceded.)

Socio-Pol Struct (<i>Culture</i>) 6 Political Role Structure	Homogenous	Fragmented
Highly Differentiated	Anglo-American	Continental European
Low Differentiation	Totalitarian	Pre-Industrial (Traditional)

E. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (1959): “conditions necessary for democracy in societies & organizations’ (p. 9)” (p. 19)

1. “Democracy ‘implies
 - a. political formula or body of beliefs specifying which institutions—parties, free press, etc—legitimate (all accept as proper);
 - b. one set of political leaders in office; and
 - c. one or more sets of recognized leaders attempting to gain office’ (p. 45)”
2. Seeks to explain which systems exhibit these characteristics stably & why?; i.e. stability of democracy not govt stability in democracy
3. Democracy requires govt. & opp.; thus democracy cannot exist without cleavages; question which cleavages are “too much”/too irascible, and which factors may serve to mitigate conflict arising out of cleavages
4. Factors facilitating stability
 - a. Economic Development: produces greater income, economic security, & widespread education—all considered conducive in that they form the terms of the ‘class struggle’ permitting the less well-off to take a long-term [and optimistic] view

- b. Class Structure: large middle class good
- c. 2-Party System: claims two-party competition fosters integrative rather than divisive politics
- d. **Cross-Cutting Cleavages:** claims territorial rather than proportional representation help in this regard
- e. Federal, not Unitary, System: (claims concentration of power frequently a threat to democracy; others note Weimar)
- f. Historical development of conflict resolution (problematic?)

Cleavage Structure & Class Stratification	Cross-Cutting	Reinforcing
Highly Stratified	Intermediate	Least Stable
Low Stratification	Most Stable	Intermediate

F. Stein Rokkan: Cleavage Struct & Democratization Process (1967, '70, '83)

1. Four fundamental developmental processes in democratic transformations of Western Democracies (note the historicism)
 - a. Protestant Reformation–divided Catholic/Protestant
 - b. National Revolution–breaking local & regional affiliations (Germany & Italy mid to late 19th century)
 - c. Industrial Revolution–replacing diffuse agrarian & religious loyalties w/ class
 - d. Communist Revolution–international fault lines

CLEAVAGE TYPOLOGY	National/Center	Local/Periphery
Interests/Economy	worker v. employer/owner	primary v. secondary econ.
Ideology/Culture	church v. state	subject v. dominant culture

G. Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy* (1971): The Conditions for & the Degree of Democracy (“polyarchy”)

The Two Dimensions of Political Systems

Contestation	Participation	High	Low
High		<i>Polyarchies:</i> Italy, Finland	<i>Competitive Oligarchies:</i> Switz., Ire.

Low	<i>Inclusive Hegemonies:</i> Hungary, Poland (pre-Dem.)	<i>Closed Hegemonies:</i> Portugal, Spain (pre-Dem.)
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1. Conditions for Democracy: A Long List

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Peaceful evolution of democracy (transferring legitimacy from old to new regime) b. Decentralized economy (avoiding concentration of economic power) c. Economic development d. Economic equality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Social homogeneity f. Elite pro-democratic beliefs (best when authority structures same in most institutions of society) g. Popular beliefs in democratic efficacy & in sincere intentions of adversaries h. Passive or supportive international conditions |
|---|---|

H. Merkl, Almond & Verba: “Political Culture”

1. Peter Merkl, *Modern Comparative Politics* (1970)

- a. Common State of Democracy is Change, Instability, & Disequilibrium
- b. Culture (beliefs, attitudes) explain this best since they change observably (survey research): problems with cultural arguments:
 - (1) Descriptive at best
 - (2) Tautological at worst

2. G. Almond & Sid Verba, *The Civic Culture* (1965): key to democracy is how citizens relate (sub & ob-jectively) to political system

- a. People have attitudes toward:
 - (1) political system
 - (2) input activities of citizens (e.g., voting)
 - (3) output activities of government (policies and programs)
 - (4) themselves as political participants
- b. These configure into three archetypes of society

Involvement in Pol. Sys. 6	High	Low
Knowledge of Pol&PolSys		
High	Participant Society	Subject Society
Low	[Not Considered]	Parochial Society

- c. => Peoples attitudes, (a), defined public orientation toward political system,

(b), which produced politics of identifiable patterns

I. Gordon Smith, *Politics & Society in Western Europe* (1984): linking social to political cohesion

1. Social Cohesion not directly or Necessarily linked to Political Cohesion
2. Governing Institutions structure Actors' Incentives from Voters to Leaders
3. ==> **Sociological Structure Works through Political Institutions to Determine Democratic Functioning**
4. Critique came at point when structuralism & culturalism were losing steam

J. Arend Lijphart: *Consociationalism* (Consensus), Institutionalism, & Democ

1. Social heterogeneity creates impetus to instability, but impetus modified or redirected by institutions
2. ==> two original foci
 - a. **capacity** of pol institutions & pol leaders to respond to stimuli from society
 - b. institutional means of dividing power to diffuse disruptive conflict:
 - (1) Minority representation
 - (2) Division of power: geographic, demographic, or functional
3. Then on elite behavior:

Social Structure 6	Homogenous	Plural (Heterogenous)
Elite Behavior		
Coalescent	<i>Depoliticized Democracy:</i> Switzerland	<i>Consociational Democracy:</i> Austria
Adversarial	<i>Centripetal Democracy:</i> United States	<i>Centrifugal Democracy:</i> Italy

4. Only bottom-right unstable ==> Heterogeneity only a necessary condition for instability, absent consociation it becomes sufficient
5. ***Democracies* (1984): stress again structure of decision-making process mediating b/w social cleavages & instability ==>**
6. Two ideal-types of democracy:
 - a. *The Westminster Model*
 - (1) 1 party, bare-majority govts
 - (2) fused legis&exec pow, & cab dom
 - (3) asymmetric bicameralism
 - (4) Two-party System
 - (5) One-dimensional party-system
 - (6) plurality electoral system
 - (7) unitary & cntrlzd territorial govt

(8) unwritten const & parl sovereignty

b. *The Consensus Model*

- (1) Executive power-sharing
- (2) Sep. powers, formal & informal
- (3) Balanced Bicam & minority rep
- (4) Multi-party system
- (5) Multi-dimensional party system
- (6) Proportional representation
- (7) Territorial & non-terr. fed, decent
- (8) Written const & minority vetoes

K. Suzanne Berger, Gerhard Lehmbruch, Phillippe Schmitter: *Corporatism & Interest Intermediation* (1970s & 1980s)

1. B/w interests created by social structure & policies implemented by govts lie organizations that aggregate, mobilize, & press for policies: Parties + Other actors... (esp. economic actors: unions, employers, banks, etc.)
2. Corporatist Policymaking [DEFINE] credited with successful macroecon. management & thereby facilitation of democratic stability
3. Recent innovations have begun to shift the focus toward the role of firms as employers & allocators of capital

L. Giovanni Sartori: *Parties & Party Systems* (1976): **fractionalization and polarization**

1. Parties do not simply reflect underlying cleavage structure of society ==> independent role of party systems for stability

Party-System Polarization 6	Low	High
Party-Sys Fractionalization		
Low	<i>Bipartism</i> : United States	<i>Centripetal Competition</i> : U. K.
High	<i>Segmented Multipartism</i> : Ireland	<i>Polarized Multipartism</i> : Italy

2. Also emphasizes key role of anti-system parties

M. Comparative Party Research

1. Schumpeter (1942): defined party role
 - a. interest articulation, aggregation, policy-making, & system legitimation
 - b. parties offer voters choice b/w ideologies represented in election manifestos & implemented by govts in office: voters evaluate
2. V.O. Key (1966): do parties set agenda for voters or do voters choose parties?

3. Pateman, Rose, Lawson (*When Parties Fail?*) => parties increasingly failed these roles (?): studied “why stability ended” (?)
4. Strategies of Parties (Rokkan, Otto Kirchheimer): Mobilize a **niche** or manufacture a **catch-all** coalition ==>
 - a. probability of success for party strategy depends on social structure, institutional rules, & strategies of other parties
 - b. Strength: highlights strategic behavior of political actors
 - c. Weakness: tends to explain change by actor mistakes & stability by actor wisdom
5. Comparative Party Research, New directions: why parties at all? “Post-materialist” values stress independence & critical of system => crisis for parties

N. Origins of Modern Institutionalism

1. Douglas Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* (1971)

a. Duverger’s Law & Beyond

b. Relations between voting rules and...

- (1) Voters’ incentives & actions
- (2) Policymakers’ incentives & actions

2. Lawrence Dodd, *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government* (1976)

a. Argues that multiparty parliaments==>coalition govts; coalition govts unstable; so multiparty systems unstable = false

b. “Minimal Winning Coalitions” (DEFINE) William Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions* (1962)

c. Implications

- (1) MWC’s are stable: Single-party majority or Multiparty
- (2) Emphasis on.....willingness to enter coalition and.....informational uncertainty in coalition bargaining...
- (3) ==> Re-emphasis on fractionalization & polarization

d. Extensions:

- (1) Minority governments’ workings: Kaare Strom & George Tsebelis
- (2) Parliamentary behavior: Party discipline; “Constituency”

3. Dodd & *Coalitions in Parliamentary Government* (1976)

a. Introduces notion of Minimal-winning coalitions–MWCs are stable

(1) Single-party governments are usually MWCs, so they're usually stable

(2) Multi-party governments are stable too if they're MWCs

b. Formation of MWCs is a function of **parties' willingness to enter coalitions & informational uncertainty in bargaining with potential coalition members**

c. Minority governments: how they work & the conditions under which they work well (Strom, Tsebelis)

d. Parliamentary behavior: **party discipline** a key factor related to electoral system & government structure

4. Modern Successors:

a. Gary Cox, *Making Votes Count* (1997)

b. Michael Laver & Ken Shepsle, *Making & Breaking Governments* (1995)

O. Political Outputs & Outcomes:

1. Traditionally little focus on what governments actually did (!)

a. All about societal inputs & how political institutions produced governments from them (corporatism exceptional here), but

b. Little or nothing about what policies were produced, *i.e.*, "So What?"

2. **Increasing focus on policies & outcomes produced by structure & institutions == =>**

a. **Focus on Actors' Opportunities, Objectives, & Constraints**

b. **Focus also on outcomes that concretely affect citizens' lives in democracy**

c. **Empirical Analysis: attempt to link differences in policies & outcomes across time & countries to structure & institutions**

3. The Keynesian Welfare State & Successor Policies become a central focus for modern comparative study

a. E.g.: Countries faced similar economic conditions & responded differently, Why?

(1) Partisan differences?

(2) Socio-economic-structure differences?

(3) Institutional differences?

b. Question was originally "Does Politics Matter?" Answer: yes; so new questions: "How Does Politics Matter?"

P. G. Bingham Powell: *Contemporary Democracies* (1982)

1. One of the first systematic analyses of structure & institutions ==> Participation & Stability & Order
2. Fertile ground by then: rich in theory & assumption, empirical vacuum