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.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Pol Struct (Culture)</th>
<th>Political Role Structure</th>
<th>Homogenous</th>
<th>Fragmented</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highly Differentiated</td>
<td>Anglo-American</td>
<td>Continental European</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low Differentiation</td>
<td>Totalitarian</td>
<td>Pre-Industrial (Traditional)</td>
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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?)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cleavage Structure 6</th>
<th>Cross-Cutting</th>
<th>Reinforcing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Stratified</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Least Stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Stratification</td>
<td>Most Stable</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLEAVAGE TYPOLOGY</th>
<th>National/Center</th>
<th>Local/Periphery</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interests/Economy</td>
<td>worker v. employer/owner</td>
<td>primary v. secondary econ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology/Culture</td>
<td>church v. state</td>
<td>subject v. dominant culture</td>
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**The Two Dimensions of Political Systems**

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<tr>
<th>Contestation Participation</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Polyarchies: Italy, Finland</td>
<td>Competitive Oligarchies: Switz., Ire.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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
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 & objectively) 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

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<tr>
<th>Involvement in Pol. Sys.</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Pol&amp;PolSys</td>
<td>Participant Society</td>
<td>Subject Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>[Not Considered]</td>
<td>Parochial Society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. => Peoples attitudes, (a), defined public orientation toward political system,
(b), which produced politics of identifiable patterns


1. Social Cohesion not directly or Necessarily linked to Political Cohesion
2. Governing Institutions structure Actors’ Incentives from Voters to Leaders
3. \(\Rightarrow\) 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. \(\Rightarrow\) 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:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Social Structure 6</th>
<th>Homogenous</th>
<th>Plural (Heterogenous)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elite Behavior j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coalescent</td>
<td>Depoliticized Democracy: Switzerland</td>
<td>Consociational Democracy: Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversarial</td>
<td>Centripetal Democracy: United States</td>
<td>Centrifugal Democracy: Italy</td>
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4. Only bottom-right unstable \(\Rightarrow\) 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 \(\Rightarrow\)

6. Two ideal-types of democracy:
   a. *The Westminster Model*
      (1) 1 party, bare-majority govt
      (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

1. B/w interests created by social structure & polices 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


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

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<tr>
<th>Party-System Polarization 6</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Segmented Multipartism: Ireland</td>
<td>Polarized Multipartism: Italy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

   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 govt; coalition govt unstable; so multiparty systems unstable = false
   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”

   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:


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?”

1. One of the first systematic analyses of structure & institutions ==> Participation & Stability & Order

2. Fertile ground by then: rich in theory & assumption, empirical vacuum