

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

Sociology 641
Spring 2003
Wed. 4:10-6:50

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In this course, we will examine the relationship between political conflict, cultural processes, and institutional change. In much of the literature on political sociology, culture is seen as something distinct from political institutions and processes; when acknowledged, culture tends to play a peripheral or “epiphenomenal” role, subordinate to the dominant effects of political and/or economic forces such as states, governments, political parties, policy-makers, class actors, interest groups, and social movements. Many cultural analysts, on the other hand, give causal primacy to such elements as discourse, symbols, and ideologies, often with the effect of reducing politics to nothing more than arrays of symbolic battles. In contrast to both of these approaches, our premise will be that culture, institutions, and political change are necessarily intertwined, but that this interrelationship takes varied forms, depending on social and historical contexts.

This course will not be run as a survey, but rather as an investigation; we will use the readings to think through ways in which cultural processes infuse political institutions and channel institutional change. We will begin by discussing recent developments in the literature on political culture, as focus has shifted from a traditional emphasis on norms, values, and ideologies to more interpretive approaches involving identities, narratives, and practices, and most recently, to the micro-dynamics of political communication. We will then examine how linkages between culture, conflict, and institutional change are treated in a series of in-depth empirical studies. These studies operate at different analytical levels, from macro-historical sweeps to more localized, organizational analyses to the micro-dynamics of political events. They also employ a range of methodologies – including comparative historical analysis, survey research, network analysis, ethnography, discourse analysis and oral history.

I have selected these studies (out of a wide array of possible alternatives!) on the basis of their empirical and analytical richness, as well as their potential contribution to theory-building on the relationship between culture, conflict, and institutional change. All of the authors take a multi-dimensional approach to understanding complex historical phenomena, striving in different ways to incorporate political, social, economic, cultural, and institutional factors. Our task as a class will be to evaluate how successful we think the authors are in understanding these interrelationships, as well as to explore what insights we can draw from these works – individually and in dialogue with each other – for our own theory-building and empirical analyses.

Course requirements

Empirical applications: Because our focus here is on theory-building rather than on surveying the literature, it is very important that all class members are engaged in critical, synthetic analysis throughout the entire course. In the spirit of the case studies discussed in the class, I believe the richest theoretical analysis comes in grappling with the complexities of

concrete historical cases. For this reason, I strongly encourage you to use the class to think through your analytical approach to an empirical case study (or study-in-formation) of your own.

Weekly memos: To help you do this, I am requiring you to write short, weekly memos (1-2 pages only!) in which you react to the reading, evaluate what you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's approach, and consider what you might take from the author for your own analysis. These memos should be written PRIOR to each class meeting; my experience is that they will also greatly enhance the depth and richness of class discussion. *These memos should NOT just be summaries of the readings, but rather places to explore the points that really excited, disturbed, or perplexed you in the reading.* The memos are also a good place to explore how the questions, concepts, and methodologies that we are discussing might apply to your own empirical research.

In-class dialogues: After the first two weeks of introductory articles, each class will consist of two readings: one long book (or selections from it), and one complimentary shorter article that engages the themes raised by the book. While all class members should read the complementary article, each week one student will be responsible for starting us off on a dialogue regarding what the article has to say to the book (and vice-versa). Again, the role of the dialogist is NOT just to give a presentation summarizing the readings. We all know how boring that is. Your job is to get us rolling by raising a few exciting, troubling, or perplexing questions that are raised by the two authors. These questions should be sketched on a short *handout* given to the class. On the weeks that you lead the dialogue, you won't be required to hand in a memo.

Final project: At the conclusion of the course, you should submit a longer (20-30 page) paper in which you formulate your own preferred approach to understanding the link between politics, culture, and institutional change, and describe how this could be applied to an empirical research project. Hopefully, this paper can serve to help develop ideas for your qualifying papers and/or dissertation proposal.

PART I. CULTURE, CONFLICT, AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Week 1. Introduction: linking culture and institutions in political analysis

**** Recommended (good overviews - try to read these on your own time!):**

In The Sociology of Culture: Emerging Theoretical Perspectives, ed. Diana Crane (1994):

- Ewa Morowska and Willfried Spohn, "'Cultural Pluralism' in Historical Sociology: Recent Theoretical Directions," pp. 45-90.
- Mabel Berezin, "Fissured Terrain: Methodological Approaches and Research Styles in Culture and Politics," pp. 91-116.
- Frank Dobbin, "Cultural Models of Organization: The Social Construction of Rational Organizing Principles," pp. 117-141.
- Seymour Martin Lipset, chap. 1 in Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics, pp. 1-24.

Week 2. Political culture: norms, values, or ideologies?

Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, chap. 1 in The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. (pp. 3-42)

Robert Bellah et.al., Preface, chaps. 1,2 in Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (pp. vi. -51)

Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature, pp. 55-71; 108-120

James Scott, chap. 4 in Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts (pp. 70-107)

Week 3. Culture in context: identities, narratives, and practices

Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, "Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization," in Frontiers of Social Movement Theory, eds. Morris and Mueller, pp. 104-129.

Margaret Somers, "Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working Class formation," Social Science History 16:4 (1992), pp. 591-630.

Marc Steinberg, "The Talk and Back Talk of Collective Action: A Dialogic Analysis of Repertoires of Discourse among Nineteenth-Century English Cotton Spinners," AJS 105:736-80 (1999).

Nina Eliasoph, "Making a Fragile Public: A Talk-Centered Study of Citizenship and Power," Sociological Theory 14:3 (1996), pp. 262-289.

PART II. MACRO-HISTORICAL CONTEXTS: POWER, STATES, CONTENTION

Week 4. Power in emergent institutions

Michael Mann, The Origins of Social Power, Volume I. READ CAREFULLY: Chaps 1-4, 16. SKIM: 10-11. ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS TO BE DISTRIBUTED AMONG CLASS MEMBERS

Arthur Stinchcombe, "What Theory in History Should Be and Do," Chap. 1 in Theoretical Methods in Social History, pp. 1-29.

Week 5. Revolution and ideology

Jack Goldstone, Rebellion and Revolution in the Early Modern World. READ CAREFULLY: Preface, Chaps 1,5. ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS TO BE DISTRIBUTED

The Sewell-Skocpol debate:

William Sewell, "Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case," and Theda Skocpol, "Cultural Idioms and Political Ideologies in the Revolutionary Reconstruction of State Power: A Rejoinder to Sewell," Journal of Modern History 57:1 (1985), pp. 56-96.

Week 6. Contentious repertoires and democratization

Jeffrey Paige, Coffee and Power: Revolution and the Rise of Democracy in Central America. Read carefully Introduction, Parts I, IV; ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS TO BE DISTRIBUTED.

Dietrich Reuschmeyer, Evelyne Huber Stevens and John Stevens, chap. 3 in Capitalist Development and Democracy, pp. 40-78.

Week 7. State formation and the institutionalized self

Eiko Ikegami, The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan. READ CAREFULLY: introduction, chaps 1, 16, epilogue. ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS TO BE ANNOUNCED

John Meyer, "The Self and the Life Course: Institutionalization and Its Effects," in Human Development and the Life Course eds. Sorensen et. al. (1986), pp. 199-215).

PART III. ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS: CITIZENSHIP, PARTICIPATION, PUBLIC PRESSURE

Week 8. Instituting citizenship in the nation state

Rogers Brubaker, Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany. READ CAREFULLY: introduction, chaps 1-3, conclusion; SKIM: the rest!

Charles Tilly, "Where do Rights Come From" and "Democracy is a Lake" (exact references will be given later).

Week 9. Civic networks and institutional efficacy

Robert Putnam, Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. YOU SHOULD READ THE WHOLE BOOK (it's tightly written and not too long!); FOCUS ESPECIALLY on chaps 1, 4, 6.

Ann Mische, "Projecting Democracy: The Formation of Citizenship Across Youth Networks in Brazil," in Citizenship, Identity, and Social History, ed. Tilly (1995), pp. 131-158.

Week 10. Publics, interests, and organizational innovation

Elisabeth Clemens, The People's Lobby: Organizational Innovation and the Rise of Interest Group Politics in the United States, 1890-1925. READ CAREFULLY: prologue, chaps 1, 2, 8, coda. ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS TO BE ANNOUNCED.

Mustafa Emirbayer and Mimi Sheller, "Publics in History," Theory and Society 28 (1999), pp. 145-197.

PART IV: MICRO-INTERACTION CONTEXTS: MEANINGS IN ACTION

Week 11. Identities, networks, and recruitment to activism

Roger Gould, Insurgent Identities: Class, Community and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune. READ CAREFULLY: chaps 1-2, 5-7; SKIM: the rest!
Doug McAdam and Ronnelle Paulsen, "Specifying the Relationship between Social Ties and Activism," AJS 99:3 (1993), pp. 640-667.

Week 12: Styles of communication and commitment

Jane Mansbridge, Beyond Adversary Democracy. PAGES TO BE ANNOUNCED.
Paul Lichterman: Piecing Together Multicultural Community: Cultural Differences in Community Building among Grass-Roots Environmentalists. Social Problems, 1995, 42, 4, Nov, 513-534 (????)

Week 13: Discourse, violence, and public drama

Robin Wagner-Pacifici, The Moro Morality Play: Terrorism as Social Drama PAGES TO BE ANNOUNCED.
Michael Blain, "Power, War, and Melodrama in the Discourses of Social Movements," Theory and Society 23:6 (1994), pp. 805-38

Week 14: Dispute, decision, and the memory of events

Beth Roy, Some Trouble With Cows: Making Sense of Social Conflict. READ: THE WHOLE BOOK (a lot of it is story-telling!). FOCUS ESPECIALLY ON: introduction, chaps 6-10.
Marshall Sahlins, "The Return of the Event, Again: With Reflections on the Beginnings of the Great Fijian War of 1843 to 1855 between the Kingdoms of Bau and Rewa," in Clio in Oceania, ed. Biersack (1991), pp. 37-99