Political Inequality in an Age of Democracy: Cross-national Perspectives

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Political Inequality in the Age of Democracy

The world has witnessed the creation of new democracies and the maturing of old ones. Yet, everywhere there is democracy, there is also political inequality. Voices of everyday folk struggle to be heard; often, they keep silent. Governments respond mostly to the influential and the already privileged. Our age of democracy, then, is the old age of inequality. This book builds on US scholarship on the topic of political inequality to understand its forms, causes and consequences around the world.

Comprised of nine theoretical, methodological and empirical chapters, this path-creating edited collection contains original works by both established and young, up-and-coming social scientists, including those from Latin America, Eastern Europe, Greece and the US. Political Inequality in an Age of Democracy addresses the present and future of the concept of political inequality from multidisciplinary and cross-national perspectives.

Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow received his PhD from the Department of Sociology, The Ohio State University. He is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences and Project Coordinator for Cross-national Studies: Interdisciplinary Research and Training Program of The Ohio State University and Polish Academy of Sciences. He is head of the Working Group on Political Inequality, the Committee on Political Sociology (ISA and IPSA).
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Preface

Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow

This is a book about political inequality in modern democracies. Over the past several years I have presented my ideas for an interdisciplinary, cross-national perspective on political inequality; I have also been fortunate to edit and promote the work of excellent scholars across the world on the topic. I guest edited issues of the International Journal of Sociology on political inequality in cross-national perspective (2008), in Latin America (2011), and on global governance (2013; see also a Portuguese language version in Sociologias published in that year). That this book has more than a few chapters on Latin America is no accident. I have been encouraged to study more about political inequality in Latin America by Soraya Vargas Cortes of Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) in Porto Alegre, Brazil who co-edited two of the IJS issues and one Sociologias and has helped me find funds for research visits to their Department of Sociology in 2011 and 2013. I presented versions of Chapter 1 there, as well as during funded visits to the Political Behavior Research Group (POLBERG) in the Department of Political Science at Central European University and, later that year, in that department’s Center for the Study of Imperfections in Democracy (DSC), both in 2011 (Budapest, Hungary). I am grateful for the advice and support of faculty and students at UFRGS and CEU.

Political inequality is a cross-nationally popular topic. I organized several political inequality sessions at the International Sociological Association’s World Congress (Goteborg, Sweden 2010) and Forum (Buenos Aires, Argentina 2012) and the International Political Science Association’s joint conference with the European Consortium of Political Research (Sao Paulo, Brazil 2011). My sessions were variations on a theme, designed to understand political inequality’s conceptual complexity and the range of cross-national empirical studies in modern democracies. Between 2010 and 2012 I organized seven sessions and received dozens of abstracts from around the world. In Goteborg, I was encouraged by Piero Ignazi, the President of the Committee on Political Sociology (ISA RC 18 and IPSA RC 06) to create a Working Group on Political Inequality. Its efforts can be found on the website, politicalinequality.org. Ulrike Scheurkens, president of ISA RC 09 (Social Transformations and the Sociology of Development), has been supportive of the ISA sessions. I invited some of the scholars I met in these conferences to author chapters in this book. Others authors I have known from my PhD
training at the Department of Sociology of The Ohio State University. In addition to the above, over the years I have presented some of these ideas to students at the Department of Sociology of the University of Warsaw, the Graduate School for Social Research at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN) of Warsaw, Poland, and the Department of Sociology at OSU. They were inquisitive audiences and the discussions I had with them made me sensitive to academic jargon; they taught me to avoid such language whenever possible.

My experiences in these academic institutions and professional associations shaped both my own ideas of the concept and study of political inequality and what an edited volume on it would look like. I am an advocate for social science professional associations, especially their major conferences: as intended, in these events I met new scholars I would not have met elsewhere, and had discussions that helped me to develop new ideas. During ISA in Goteborg it was first suggested to me that an edited book would be a good way to present new ideas about political inequality currently not found in the journals.

Institutional support for my research and travel led to this book. In particular, I am thankful for the support of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN) of Warsaw, Poland and Cross-National Studies: Interdisciplinary Research and Training program (CONSIRT), of IFiS PAN and OSU. Institutions are full of people. My research and efforts at promoting the study of political inequality has been amply supported – intellectually, organizationally and financially – by Prof. Kazimierz M. Slomczynski, the head of the unit on Comparative Social Inequalities at IFiS PAN and Director of CONSIRT, and who first encouraged me to pursue the topic of political inequality. I am also thankful for the financial support granted by the past and present directors of IFiS PAN, Henryk Domanski and Andrzej Rychard. The support of IFiS PAN and CONSIRT has led directly to the publications, presentations, and conference sessions listed above, and thus to the creation of an international network of scholars interested in an interdisciplinary and cross-national approach to political inequality.

I am also thankful for the editors at Routledge, including Gerhard Boomgaarden, Emily Briggs and Alyson Claffey for their guidance through the publication process, including their kind indulgence in granting me some deadline extensions.

Dr. Irina Tomescu-Dubrow helped me with everything in this book, including a careful, critical reading of Chapter 1. Words cannot express; thanks are not enough.

Many people and organizations have contributed to this book; they should share in its successes but should take no blame in its failures. I only hope that I have met their support and attention with a useful book.
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We live in an age of democracy. Witnesses to the rise of democratic rule in the last century, Huntington (1991) called our modern era the Third Wave, implying that it is one in a series, and Fukuyama (1992) called it the “end of history,” meaning that liberal democracy would now and forever be the norm. Advertising its benefits, United States Presidents past and present have pushed for democracy across the world. Billions of dollars are spent on promoting it (Coppedge et al. 2011: 248). Thousands of academic articles have been written about it.

Our knowledge of the spread of democracy around the world depends on pro-democracy organizations that publish democracy indicators. Freedom House is one of the most famous and has reported on the state of democracy worldwide since the early 1970s. They conveniently break the world down into three categories based on numerical scores of political rights and civil liberties. Of the 195 countries that Freedom House recognized in 2013, 46 percent are Free and 30 percent are Partly Free.¹ The rest, 24 percent, are Not Free.² According to Freedom House statistics, we know that we are in an age of democracy because three-quarters of the world is at least Partly Free.

Democracy is an unquestionable good. Clearly, modern human societies are better off with democracy, even if democracy’s meaning changes over time. To the Athenians, it was “self-government of a territory by some people who had full rights” (Markoff 2013: 16). Our modern age of democracy has expanded the rules and principles of inclusion, but the essence of it, that “the people rule,” has not changed. Creators of modern nations have inscribed the ideals of democracy on their constitutions and similarly august documents. They contend that democracy is the key to unlock humanity’s great potential. People have fought and died for its ideals.


Yet, as Dahl and the others have observed, everywhere there is democracy, there is political inequality. Political inequality – as both unequal influence over decisions made by political bodies and the unequal outcomes of those decisions
Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow

– is felt most acutely by the disadvantaged who remain outsiders to the political system they help to legitimize and whose interests are chronically underrepresented (Paxton et al. 2007; Griffin and Newman 2008; Bartels 2010; Gilens 2012). Governments at all levels are places where access to political power is constrained and where benefits are allocated unequally. While in 2013 Freedom House claimed 90 nations as “Free,” they do not claim that these countries are politically equal. With this new age of democracy, then, is the old age of inequality.

Modern scholars of political inequality draw inspiration from the American Political Science Association Task Force report (2004) on “American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality.” The authors of the report are the leading US social science scholars working in the field of democracy. The Task Force outlined three major dimensions of political inequality: citizen voice, government response, and patterns of public policy-making. Citizen voice refers to how people transmit their opinions and interests to their representatives. Governments can choose to respond, or not, under the threat of electoral accountability. Patterns of public policy-making can be discerned from studying who gets what and why. The Task Force authors warned that American democracy is imperiled by racial, ethnic and economic inequalities.

While a landmark project, the APSA Task Force is limited to the US and did not discuss several critical issues in detail, such as varieties of democracy and political systems, the impact of neoliberalism, the role of the elite and how feminist and intersectional approaches can improve our understanding of the causes and consequences of political inequality. Glaringly, gender was underemphasized: across nations, women’s parliamentary representation and political participation are important features of the nexus of democracy and inequality.

The aim of this edited collection is to build on previous research and address the present and future of the concept of political inequality. To this end, the book takes explicitly multidisciplinary and cross-national perspectives. It comprises theoretical, methodological and empirical chapters written by both established and young, up-and-coming social scientists, many of who are based in countries outside the United States.

As I detail in the first chapter of this book, there does not appear to be a distinct academic field of political inequality. There are many, many articles about political voice and government response, and about the concept of equality in political philosophy and democratic theory, but rarely are such works placed together in one volume. Unlike economic inequality, for example, whose study is so advanced that there is an academic journal devoted to it (Journal of Economic Inequality, published by Springer and founded in 2003; there are no journals devoted to political inequality, or political equality), the concept of political inequality as a whole has not undergone an explicit and rigorous examination. In terms of topics, theories and methodology, as well as world region, the field is wide and varied. As such, we find scholarship on political inequality everywhere, but nowhere in particular.

A purpose of this book, then, is to help define the field of political inequality as both interdisciplinary and cross-national. I took several steps to create such
a book. The authors were free from unnecessary restrictions on theories and methods, a freedom that maintains authors’ creative and intellectual flexibility. While this is problematic in that concepts are not widely shared, a strength is the creative freedom authors had to identify new and emergent problems and to devise concepts and theories to contend with them. As editor, I start with a chapter on the concept and study of political inequality and end with a concluding chapter that synthesizes some lessons learned from the book. The concept of political inequality has been of interest to a wide variety of disciplines; to properly synthesize what we know about it, we should move towards interdisciplinary knowledge.

A brief outline of the book

The book has three main parts. The first part is devoted to concepts and theories of political inequality and democracy. In Chapter 1, I view political inequality as a complex concept in a multidisciplinary field. The work of social scientists, philosophers and other scholars pose various definitions of political inequality. This diversity points to the idea that political inequality is simultaneously a dimension of democracy and a dimension of stratification. When asking key theoretical and empirical questions, such as, How much political inequality is there? and Is political inequality rising, falling, or staying the same?, we are better off by specifying the type of political inequality – voice, response and their subtypes – and whether we mean equality of political opportunities or of political outcomes.

In the second chapter, Carlos Waisman turns to South America to examine a variety of unequal democracy that he calls “partial democracy.” In South America, high levels of economic inequality combined with a peculiar historical trajectory toward democratic rule. This led to a political system that has many features of Western-style democracy, but in practice is divided into those who are well-organized and can take advantage of their politically and economically privileged position, and those who are lesser organized and are susceptible to manipulation by the elite.

Unequal democracy is not a uniquely South American product, for it has roots in the larger politico-economic system called neoliberalism. Alex Afouxenidis, a political sociologist from Greece, writes a passionate treatise on the consequences of neoliberalism on political voice and government responsiveness. This third chapter fits well into a field of political inequality in being both theoretically engaging and morally compelling. Afouxenidis reminds readers that behind academic books and International Monetary Fund statistics detailing the extent of the latest financial collapse and the worldwide rise of economic inequality are the suffering of real people across the world, whose lives, loves and political interests require more attention than their governments currently pay.

The next part is on methodological issues in the empirical study of political inequality. The first of these, by Melanie Hughes, considers the methodological implications of integrating the concept of intersectionality in measures of marginalized groups’ underrepresentation in national legislatures. Intersectionality is long overdue in moving past its hot-topic buzz-word status and into mainstream and
quantitative social science (Davis 2008; Dubrow 2013). Examining a variety of contexts and ethnically and religiously diverse countries such as Lebanon, Israel, Burundi, Bangladesh, and Romania, Hughes provides methodological guidelines for how to reconsider measurement of representational inequalities.

The following chapter by Solange Simões critically examines cross-national survey methodology on political voice. Simões argues that careful attention to the local history and context of the survey sample and a feminist viewpoint can lead to improved measurement. The author applies this methodology to survey data from Bela Horizonte, Brazil, to show how we gain new insights into the relationship between gender and voice.

The last part consists of four empirical studies. The first two are of elites in Latin America. Elites are key actors in the democratic process and the extent of their power varies from sector to sector and from country to country (for a recent review, see Kahn 2012). Alfredo Joignant and colleagues created a typology of political capital to examine the origins of the top political elite in Chile. They find variations in the route taken by the Chilean elite that helped them enter the profession and make it to the top of the political ladder.

Once in power, the elite in Latin America preside over a very high level of economic inequality. Do they think that this inequality poses a threat to the well-functioning of democracy? They are concerned about it, writes Matias Lopez in Chapter 7, but not enough to prefer drastic changes. There is some indication that countries whose elite feel strongly about the democratic consequences of inequality are more likely to improve their welfare states, if for nothing else than for self-preservation.

Authors of Chapters 8 and 9 turn toward political inequality of voice in contemporary Europe. Domanski (Chapter 8) examines the class structure and argues that expression of political voice enables some classes to not only get what they want, but to also create and maintain class boundaries. Domanski then uses the European Social Survey over a decade’s span to show the extent to which classes differ in expressing their political voice.

Class matters, but ethnicity matters, too. In the final empirical chapter, Tomescu-Dubrow and Slomczynski examine the democratic engagement of two groups that have been at the heart of modern Europe and that are linked by a mutual fate: xenophobes and the ethnically discriminated against. Both groups seek protection from each other. According to theory, they would likely look to government and civil society for this protection. In a series of quantitative models, the authors show that while both groups distrust government, xenophobes are less likely to use civil society to voice their concerns than both the ethnically discriminated and the wider society of which they are a part.

While all authors are generally engaged with the concept of political inequality, they follow their own intellectual lead. Political inequality is a broad, multidisciplinary field, and thus research terms, topics and approaches vary quite a bit. The conclusion, “Lessons Learned,” is an attempt to spot some of the main themes that skip here and there throughout the book and, indeed, through the field. In this conclusion I made no attempt to be comprehensive of all the topics of the book,
or of the field. Instead, I highlighted most of the more interesting thoughts and findings of this book’s authors that suggest where we are and where we could go.

Concluding remarks

That political inequality lives in democracies great and small is a scientific fact. This book strongly suggests that we need to understand better the form, duration and magnitude of political inequality within and across nations. We need to study it systematically, continuously, and diligently, and in an inclusive, open-minded way, inclining our ears to the varied contributions of the many academic disciplines.

What people do with this scientific fact is another matter. It is a fact that jumps the fence of science and runs onto the streets: protesters sang, *We Shall Overcome*. It is a fact that, for some, is worth enduring the worst of hardships: a man in an Ethiopian jail wrote of “the age of democracy” in hope and as a call for help. As scientists, we must be aware that the objective and subjective realities of political inequality inspires people and rouses them to action. It is a fact worthy of a closer look.

Notes

1 This is a climb up from 54 percent of the world in 1973 that was at least Partly Free.
2 As with many famous democracy indicators, they make questionable decisions on the boundaries within and between categories. Freedom House argues that Egypt is Partly Free but Jordan is Not Free. They also argue that Russia is only slightly more democratic than Afghanistan.
3 In 2013, he wrote, “I am confident that America will eventually do the right thing. After all, the new century is the age of democracy primarily because of the United States. Here in the Ethiopian gulag, this alone is reason enough to pay homage to the land of the brave.” According to the *New York Times*, the author, Eskinder Nega, is “an Ethiopian journalist and the recipient of the 2012 PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award, has been imprisoned since September 2011.”

References


6 Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow


Part I

Concepts and theories of political inequality
Proof

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1 The concept and study of political inequality

Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow

In this chapter I bring together multi-disciplinary and cross-national perspectives to explore the concept of political inequality. I hope to reveal its conceptual complexity and ways to understand it. Due to this complexity, no single chapter, or book, could adequately cover the entirety of the concept and study of political inequality. As such, this chapter is a survey of this wide, fragmented field that suggests its potentially interdisciplinary future. I begin with an attempt to map the field.

Mapping the field of political inequality

Many disciplines range across the wide field of political inequality. Political inequality is found in political science literatures on democratic theory and practice, sociological literatures on social stratification and power, philosophical literatures on the nature of equality, law and policy literatures on equality legislation, and potentially in any study of decision-making processes characterized as political, from preindustrial societies to modern ones. Mapping this field highlights how many different disciplines contribute to our understanding of the concept.

To conceive of the map, I took a social constructionist approach because, more than anything else, what scholars actually do defines their field. To sketch it, I employed search engines of research databases to sort through thousands of topics and journals using “political inequality” and “political equality” as key terms. I settled for restrictions: it had to be an English-language article published in a journal1 that is listed in either of two popular research article databases – ISI Citation Database and EBSCO2 – and the article had to have an abstract. I retrieved 156 articles published between 1991 and 2012 where “political inequality” or “political equality” was in the topic, title, or mentioned in the abstract.3

I read and coded each abstract. I based my coding methods on quasi-grounded theory, meaning that I had a few concepts in mind – disciplines, sub-topics, methodology, country focus – but I also allowed other themes to emerge (for this method, see Schwalbe et al. 2000 and Pawlowski and Dubrow 2012). Afterward, I discarded all abstracts where political inequality was either causally included with other inequalities, or was only briefly mentioned, without any sustained effort to define it and understand it as a distinct topic. This yielded 124 relevant articles.4
Before I present the results of this modest analysis, a comment on inclusion is needed. Some may wonder whether this method substantially under-represents research in political science and political sociology. In one interpretation, the core concept of political science is political power (Dahl and Levi 2009: 9). Much of political sociology is about unequal political voice (for an overview of that field, see Janoski et al. 2005). From this point of view, any academic research on political participation, social movements, parties, representation and governance as they exist in modern democracies is, in essence, about political inequality. While these literatures are part of the study of political inequality, only a subset directly engages with the concept as a whole and elucidates its dimensions. For example, Stanley Verba’s classic works on participation is about unequal voice, yet it is his article, “Fairness, Equality and Democracy: Three Big Words” (2006) that is squarely on the concept of political equality (see also Verba 2003). Likewise, while there is a large philosophical literature on equality, very little is focused on political equality, a longstanding gap (see Ware 1981: 392, footnote 1; and Baynes 2008: 23, footnote 6). In this chapter I am especially concerned with research that directly engages with the concept of political inequality and how to measure it, rather than with research that uses it as a backdrop to stage related phenomena. In this way, I most likely left out articles that others would take. However, whether I should include the brigade of political participation articles or not, or the battalion of social movement articles or not, or the platoon of democratic values articles or not, is unlikely to change the substance of the arguments I make below.

The systematic reading of the 124 abstracts of articles spanning 1991–2012 reinforces the point that political inequality research is diverse in disciplinary input, methods and topics. Few clear patterns emerged. The journal articles come from anthropology, archeology, area studies, international relations, law and policy, philosophy, political science, social work, sociology and gender studies. About a third are political science journals, with the rest spread out across the other disciplines.

Rough counts give a rough feel for the methodological, topic and country foci. Methodologically, almost a third of the 124 articles are philosophy and theory driven, and about a quarter are quantitative and feature empirical measures of aspects of the concept. The topics also vary greatly. About a quarter of the coded articles are about the relationship between economic and political spheres, such as campaign finance (of which almost all are about the US) and virtually every study of political participation. After that, the field is widespread, featuring articles on representation, gender, voting, deliberative and participative democracy, racial and ethnic minorities, policy preferences, civil society, global governance, reforming democratic rules, rights and citizenship, among others. Over half of these articles are about a country or a set of countries, and among them, almost half study the United States.

If there is a pattern to political inequality research, one might say that it is driven by political science and law, most often theoretical or analyzing policy, and about modern democracies.
Inequality in the study of inequalities

Unlike other forms of inequality, political inequality is underexplored. Economic inequality is a relevant example. Using the ISI database and a similar method to that of searching for English-language articles on political (in)equality, I compared economic (in)equality with political (in)equality. Two interesting findings emerged. First, if we are to judge by numbers, the study of economic inequality is much more popular than that of political inequality. Second, the vocabulary we use says something about how we identify the phenomena. It appears that academics are more comfortable talking about economic inequality than economic equality, and about political equality than political inequality. Perhaps the norm is to be politically equal yet economically unequal.

What is political inequality?

In answering the question of, “what is political inequality?” I make the following set of arguments that I expand on below:

- Political inequality can occur in any structure with an identifiable political process.
- Political inequality, like all other forms of inequality, is meaningfully distinguished by equality of opportunities and equality of outcomes.
- Political inequality is both a dimension of democracy and a dimension of stratification.
- Political inequality interacts with other inequalities.
- Political inequality can be a social structure.
- While we know that political inequality exists, there is no evidence that political equality ever existed.

In most works, the definition of political inequality is more implied than explicitly stated (Dubrow 2010). Other works, such as Griffin and Newman’s (2008: 6–7, chapter 2), carefully and usefully define political equality (though limited to the American experience). I examine several definitions of political inequality that are

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Source: ISI Citation database: 1945–2012.
in the literature. I end the section with an interdisciplinary definition that can be applied across a variety of social and political systems.

Most definitions can be traced to the distinction made in the classic social stratification literature on equality of opportunities versus equality of outcomes (Kerbo 2003: chapter 1; see also the philosophical literature, e.g. Ware 1981: 393; Baynes 2008: 15; and Roemer 1998: 1–2). Briefly, equality of opportunities is about access to the political decision. Equality of outcomes refers to the law, symbols, policy or other output that is the result of the political process. Most definitions are based on the idea of equality of opportunities, but they could be modified to include outcomes, as well.

A popular definition usually posited in terms of equality of opportunities is what I call the “distributional approach”: political inequality is structured differences in the distribution of political resources. According to this definition, one group has greater or lesser access to or acquisition of political resources than another group (Ware 1981: 393–394; Wall 2007: 416). Many years ago, Max Weber (1946) argued that the tripartite scheme of class, status and party is but “phenomena of the distribution of power within a community” (181). The distributional approach is reflected more recently in the 1996 American Political Science Association presidential address, in which Lijphart warned that “the inequality in representation and influence are not randomly distributed but systematically biased in favor of more privileged citizens” (1997: 1).

The notion of “political resources” is an appealing analogy to economic resources, yet it presents dilemmas for concept and measurement. A primary issue is that political resources are anything one can use to influence a political decision. Moreover, the means of wielding these resources varies by level – individual, group organization or country – and by context. Some simplify by equating material resources in modern democracies – money, most of all – with political power (Winters and Page 2009; Brady 2009: 98–99). This is problematic, as social scientists have long argued that political resources are context-dependent and therefore can be more than just economic. Weber (1946) viewed power resources of political organizations as almost anything, while Dahl (1996) defines political resources as, literally, “almost anything” – including money, reputation, legal status, social capital and knowledge, to name a few – that has value and can be used to achieve political ends. Political resources can be drawn from social or psychological factors – material, ideational, a personal attribute, a group level attribute, an authority position, a network connection – or an action, such as political participation (Dahl 1996; Yamokoski and Dubrow 2008; Wall 2007: 418; for an exhaustive review of the political resources literature, see Piven and Cloward 2005: 38–40).

Identifying the mechanism by which political resources are distributed poses further dilemmas. Who distributes these resources? Is distribution done in the same manner across all political interactions and if not, by what rules does it vary? And, if political resources can be distributed, does the “distributor” hoard all of the resources that are important for the political interaction, or are there some resources that are beyond the hoarder’s control? We face these dilemmas when we strictly define political inequality as a matter of distribution.
An interdependency approach, as inspired by Piven and Cloward (2005), poses a way out of the dilemma by regarding political inequality as outcome of a relational process – and not merely distributional one – between opposing political actors. Key to the interdependency approach, political influence is found in the range of actions an actor can take within a political interaction. Piven and Cloward (2005) argue that even apparently powerless actors actually have great potential for political influence, which turns the drawback of the distributional approach into a strength: “from this perspective, power resources are the attributes or things that one actor can use to coerce or induce another actor . . . almost everyone has something that can be used to influence somebody” (37). In the interdependency approach, political power is inherently relational and resources are replaced with potential actions. Still, similarly to the distributional approach, actions used to influence governments and other political decision-makers are context-dependent: they must be appropriate to the task at hand; characteristics of the relationship between the interacting groups reveal possible (political power) actions. The interdependency approach circumvents the problematic assumptions of (a) a hypothetical cache of ready-for-use political resources, and (b) a mechanism of resource distribution that is external to the interaction.

The interdependency approach has its own shortcomings (Piven and Cloward 2005: 39–40). For one, it does not account well for the use of physical force, a powerful resource that the state wields in any political interaction. This leads to the other troublesome assumption that all sides in a political skirmish have equal potential for political gain. The interdependency approach assumes equality of political opportunities. Yet, when the state wields physical force, or at least threatens it, the interactions appear to be imbalanced.

Let us consider another definition rooted in the idea of equality of opportunities that is popular in political science and philosophy. Paraphrased from Dahl and Lindblom (1953: 4), political equality is when everybody’s preferences are equally weighted in political decisions (see also Verba 2003: 663; Ware 1981: 393; Agne 2006: 433–434; and Baynes 2008: 9). In this definition, political inequality is unequal weight in influence over political decisions. The definition of “everybody” matters, of course: Everybody could mean all citizens, or it could mean all who are potentially impacted by the decision. As Agne (2006) put it, “it is often assumed that democracy requires that the people affected by a decision should be able to participate in making it” (433). Agne (2006) makes a strong case that this standard is hard to implement at higher levels of aggregation, such as regional or global governance, and should be replaced with different formulations of autonomy and freedom from dominance (for a summary, see ibid.: 453; on rights to political equality at different levels of administrative aggregation, see also Bohman (1999: 500–503)).

Sorokin’s sociological definition is similar but simpler, in that its main criterion focuses solely on the structure of the political process (1959 [1927]): Political inequality is the existence of authority divisions. Here, we speak of political inequality when groups have unequal political input into the decisions that affect them. Sorokin’s definition implies that the hierarchical structure of authority matters for
the magnitude of political inequality, in that the more layers of authority between
the citizen and the decision, the greater the political inequality. Growth in political
complexity exacerbates this inequality. More people mean more diverse inter-
ests, demands and services and thus greater complexity of state organization
(echoing Weber’s theory of inexorable bureaucratization). Sorokin’s political
stratification may be simple but its implication for eliminating political inequality is
troublesome: Only in a landscape without authority divisions whatsoever would
all groups would have equal say in legislation and policy. As Sorokin himself
admits, not even in hunter-gatherer societies do we find that political world is flat,
let alone in modern ones (69).

We can fashion an alternative definition rooted in inequality of opportunities
if we merge Dahl and Lindblom’s and Piven and Cloward’s insights with Sorok-
in’s: Political inequality is the extent of structured differences in influence over
government decisions. Here, individuals, groups and organizations are defined
by how much political influence they can exert (i.e. their potential of political
influence). This view does not preclude the distribution of political resources; nor
does it depend on it. It is the distance between actors and the characteristics of
their interaction that shape political influence. Most importantly, this definition
explicitly recognizes that political power and influence is rooted in the stratifica-
tion structure, a topic that I discuss below.

Other definitions shift the focus from opportunities to benefits, such that
political equality is when outcomes are equal (Griffin and Newman 2008: 6–7,
chapter 2). Ware (1981: 401–406) makes the case for considering political outcomes when evaluating the extent to which a democracy is politically unequal.
Democracy theorists and philosophers argue whether we need to distribute these
benefits equally, or whether some should get more than others because of their
historically marginalized status (in discussing the American experience, Griffin
and Newman (2008) call this the race-conscious egalitarian standard). What this
means for the study of political inequality is that the response side of the politi-
cal process is as important to think about as the voice side. In this case, political
inequality is the extent of structured differences in the outcomes of government
decisions.

These definitions lead us to a critical question: What is equal in political
equality? Is it equal voice or equal response? Is it equal opportunities or equal
outcomes? If it is equal opportunities for voice, then political philosophers such as
Rawls (1971), Ware (1981), Sen (1999) and Baynes (2008) point to an important
element of the distribution of political resources. Being that political equality is
tied not only to political rights, but also to political liberties, i.e. the freedom to
engage in political processes, and we need to consider (a) those who, through
brute luck (Baynes 2008: 2) or social misfortunes are not equally endowed with
the resources to influence politics in the same way as others, and (b) those who
simply choose not to engage politically (see also Verba’s 1999: 247–248 distinc-
tion between “they can’t,” “they don’t want to,” and “nobody asked”).

There is also another question, more philosophical in nature, worth considering:
Is political equality “real,” can we achieve it, or is it rather the ideal, theoretical
endpoint of the continuum of political influence? The definitions I presented lead to different answers. From a Sorokin perspective, government is part of the overall political stratification structure. Since government makes decisions, the structure itself is unequal. Therefore, political equality is strictly theoretical.

From a distributional perspective, political power is often thought of as something that the government distributes. If so, both perfect political equality and inequality could be achieved in totalitarian systems where all power concentrates with the elite. Put simply, if the government distributes zero political power to the masses, then everyone outside government has the same level of political power: Zero. Perfect equality among the masses is achieved and perfect political inequality between masses and elites is also achieved.

The interdependence approach turns this question on its head, as it assumes political equality rather than political inequality. In the interdependence approach, all actors inside and outside the decision-making body potentially have the same level of influence over the final decision. Political equality can be achieved because in all power situations each actor has potentially equal power to influence the outcome. What looks like political inequality is just wasted potential. We can call this the “liberation narrative”: If political inequality is built through these interactions, it can be un-built through them, thereby liberating the politically weak.

Liberating interactions do not square with most people’s political experience. The mainstay of political life is inequality of influence; reminders that the losers in political interactions have potential for influence, too, do not change the scoreboard. Yet, it is the promise of democracy that the scoreboard can be changed. This promise leads to the idea that political equality and political inequality are dimensions of democracy.

**Political inequality as a dimension of democracy**

To understand that political inequality is a dimension of democracy, consider the following. The democratic literature on political equality makes two statements. First, political equality is the foundation of democracy. Second, where there is democracy, there is political inequality (Bohman 1999: 500–501; Rueschemeyer 2004: 76; Verba 2003: 663, 2006: 500; Wall 2007: 416).

In *On Political Equality* (2006), Dahl finds that while the ideal of political equality is central to modern societies that feature democracy, the relationship between political equality and democracy remains opaque:

> the existence of political equality is a fundamental premise of democracy. Yet its meaning and its relation to democracy, and to the distribution of resources that a citizen can use to influence public decisions are not, I think, well understood.

(i)

We can conclude that that political equality is an ideal, and that a constant in democratic life is inequality.
Many contemporary discussions of political inequality are debates about whether and how equality in democratic governance can be achieved (Verba 2006: 505; Dahl 2006; Rueschemeyer 2004). Democratic institutions set the rules of political process and guarantee formal rights of political participation to a wide variety of citizens, but not to all of them.

The coexistence of democracy with political inequality leads many to question whether the proposition that all interested participants can enjoy equal influence on the governance decision or in its outcomes is realistic. A frequent conclusion is that we should seriously consider acceptable limits in who should be unequal and how to manage this inequality while still claiming that we live in a democracy (Meuller 1992: 987–990; Verba 2006: 508–510; Bohman 1999: 500–503; Agne 2006). That political equality cannot be fully achieved by establishing formal rights led some scholars to ever more finely parse the concept of democracy; typically, they differentiate “formal” from “participatory” democracy. The underlying assumption is that political inequality is an unfortunate, and possibly unavoidable, dimension of democracy.

**Political inequality as a dimension of stratification**

Political inequality interacts with all other forms of inequality, and as such it is also usefully understood as a distinct dimension of stratification (for examples of interaction with economic inequality, see Griffin and Newman 2008; Bartels 2010; Gilens 2012; for gender inequality, see Paxton et al. 2007). Indeed, many classic theories of inequality contend that political processes influence resource distribution, no matter the political system (Weber 1946; Lenski 1966). The idea that political power stratifies societies has a long, uninterrupted history. Weber (1946 – this must be the year of the translation; when was it written? Does it matter?) suggested a uniquely political dimension of stratification with the political organization concept called “party”; he argued that party is distinct from the class and status orders and it directly impacts life chances. While sociologists credit Weber with prying political organization from economic reductionist, unidimensional theories of inequality (Lenski 1966: 408; Kerbo 2003: chapter 4), it was Sorokin (1957[1927]) who coined the term “political stratification.” Sorokin thought that along with economic and occupational forms, political stratification directly impacts social and cultural mobility.

Borrowing from Weber and Sorokin, Lenski (1966: 44) argued that the distribution of power is central to understanding inequality. Lenski contends that in modern market societies political power is very closely connected to wealth inequality, an idea that foreshadowed legions of quantitative analyses exploring how economic resources influence the political process (e.g. Winters and Page 2009). The field of political economy has long recognized the impact of economic inequality on politics (Anderson and Beramendi 2008; Jacobs and Soss 2010: 345–347).

Decades of empirical research have clearly shown how position within the social, political and economic structures impacts political influence, including those of
gender, ethnicity, and class, to name a few. In 2004 the American Political Science Association Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy concluded that inequality in government influence is a function of economic and social inequality (see also Bartels 2010 and Gilens 2012). This review of empirical literature for once confirmed what we read in the newspapers: (1) inequality is embedded in political decision-making processes, and (2) it interacts with other forms of inequality. What the APSA 2004 also pointed out was how few studies there are about the causes and consequences of political inequality.

The “politics stratifies societies” argument assumes that political power is a type of power and that politics has recognizable, if not entirely clear, boundaries (see also Rueschemeyer 2004: 77). Political inequality is a creature of the political process. This view does not reduce all political processes to political inequality; it merely points out where we suspect it. From the equality of political opportunities side, the study of political inequality is a hunt for these structured differences in individual, group or organizational influence over government decisions. From the equality of political benefits side, it suggests how we should view any situation in which political processes systematically and historically lead to a pattern of unequal political outcomes.

In order to hunt for political inequalities of opportunities or outcomes we would benefit from a conceptual framework that delineates their different types. Naturally, this would entail a description of generic political processes in which inequalities of various types can be found.

**Conceptual framework for political inequality**

The 2004 American Political Science Association Task Force on Inequality in American Democracy is a strong foundation on which to build a conceptual. The APSA Task Force identifies three foci around which political inequality revolves: citizen voice, government responsiveness, and patterns of public policy making. The upshot is that the disadvantaged are lesser represented and lesser involved in political participation, government officials are less inclined to be responsive to the preferences of the disadvantaged, and public policy often fails to address the needs of the disadvantaged. Comprising the most well-established scholars of American politics, the APSA Task Force carries considerable intellectual weight. However, as the Task Force intended, theirs is just a place to start, rather than a final word.

I suggest two adjustments that broaden the scope and simplify the structure of the APSA Task Force schema. First, I remove “citizen” from citizen voice because political inequality of voice potentially happens to everyone affected by the decision of the decision-maker, even to non-citizens. Next, I reduce the tripartite scheme to two – voice and response – since “government responsiveness” and “patterns of public policy making” are, at root, two types of response.

Figure 1.1 presents a conceptual diagram of political inequality that consists of an interlinked set of components and that can be applied to a wide array of contexts across levels of decision-making, time and place, and a simple, interdisciplinary
vocabulary. The point of this conceptualization is to simultaneously clarify and complicate by making explicit the elements that comprise the concept and the relationships between them. The diagram describes a generic political process: the purpose of the diagram is to indicate where political inequality can be found. In sum, the aim of the model is to show various types of political inequalities and how these political inequalities interact.

Voice refers to how constituencies express their interests to decision-makers directly or through representatives. Voice has two main components, participation and representation, and each has subcomponents. Participation can be electoral – such as voting or standing for office in elections – or non-electoral, such as attending a demonstration, contacting a public official, or joining a political organization, among others. Representation means that a person or an organization interprets the political voice and transmits their interpretation to the decision-making body. Government representation refers to those individuals and government agencies whose function is to listen to the interests of their constituency. Examples include parliamentarians, Ombudsmen, and special offices directed by the government. Non-governmental representatives include NGOs that can be non-profit or for-profit and whose function is to transmit the interests of their selected constituency to decision-making bodies. Non-governmental organizations can be non-violent or violent. People and organizations who interpret voices may or may not be expressly or directly appointed by their constituency. The totality of these organizations is what some refer to as civil society.
Response refers to how decision-makers act and react to their constituencies and is expressed via policy and symbols. Policy can be defined as a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions to achieve specific outcomes with the intention of providing specific guidelines for future, related decisions (noting that policy can be formulated to attack multiple problems at once). Policy has two main forms: formal and informal. Formal policy refers to legislation, judicial precedent or executive directives that are written and have the force of codified law. Informal policy consists of rules that lack force of codified law yet impact how decisions are made. For example, when a political party leader directs the organization to include more minorities in their candidate lists, this can either be formal within the party rule book or an informal rule, something that the rank-and-file know about but on which there is no paper-trail.

Symbolism is a response that does not set firm guidelines for future decisions. Symbols are often publicly expressed in limited-time events, such as a speech on the parliamentary floor or introducing – but not passing – legislation. Symbols also manifest in commemorative events such as “Black History Month” in the US.

Symbols and policy differ not by their intent, but by whether the response they elicit is a recognizable directive to guide future action and the extent to which the directive is enforced. To declare a “War on Poverty,” for example, is symbolic in the absence of policy measures. Enforcement is a bright line between policy and symbolism: loosely enforced policy is tantamount to symbol. A complicating factor is when policy is in the form of a symbol, such as the “resolutions” and other non-binding statements (Tomescu-Dubrow et al. forthcoming). ‘Symbolic policy’ is expressed as policy but carries the “force” of symbol.

In sum, political inequality is a particular form of power inequality whose domain is all things related to political processes. It is a multidimensional concept – composed of voice and response – that occurs in all types of governance structures, from social movement organizations, to local councils, to national governments, on to global governance. A flexible concept of political inequality can be applied across nations and across time and across all types of political decision-making systems.

Key research questions
Consider the following key empirically oriented research questions that, if we are to take the study of political inequality seriously, scholars must directly address:

- How do we measure political inequality as a whole?
- How much political inequality is there? And is political inequality rising, falling or staying the same?
- How does political inequality interact with economic, gender, racial, ethnic, educational, and other inequalities?
- How does social and political change impact political inequality?
- What are the consequences of political inequality on peoples, societies and social structures?
Although the concept of political inequality is fundamental to modern theories of democracy and social stratification, these questions have few satisfactory answers. One main reason is that, while there are some exemplary empirical studies (e.g. Griffin and Newman 2008; Bartels 2010; Gilens 2012), none take on the whole of political inequality, especially in cross-national perspective.

**Empirical studies of political inequality**

I examine costs and benefits of how political inequality has been studied empirically. To do this, I make the following arguments that I expand on below:

- Each definition of political inequality implies how it is empirically measured.
- As a multidimensional phenomenon, it may be impossible to create a single empirical measure of political inequality; the best that has thus far been achieved are measures of its sub-dimensions.
- Political systems vary in the form, duration and magnitude of political inequality; these aspects of political inequality should be assessed empirically, rather than assumed to be constant in all political systems.

At the outset we should recognize three key problems in measuring political inequality. The first is how to measure influence. Political influence is notoriously difficult to measure as it is an interaction process that is more inferred from the interaction rather than directly observed (see Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Dahl 2006: chapter 6). The second problem is that the array of possible political resources is both close to endless and heavily context-dependent. In cross-national perspective, this is further complicated by needing a measure that is functionally equivalent across nations. Dahl (2006) argues that a cross-national measure does not, and may never, exist:

> to estimate gains and losses in political equality we lack cardinal measures that would allow us to say, for example, that “political equality is twice as great in country X as in country Y.” At best we must rely on ordinal measures based on judgments about “more,” “less,” “about the same,” and the like”.

(78)

A third problem is whether political equality is a real, empirically visible end of the continuum; if political equality never existed – if it is an ideal – then does a theoretical endpoint belong in an empirical measure? If we conceive of political inequality as we do of economic inequality, then political inequality must be understood as the distance between two groups, i.e. “to distinguish perfect equality from a state of inequality” (Allison 1979: 865). Income inequality is often measured by the distance between those with more income and those with less. In contrast, political inequality is the distance between those with a lot of potential influence and those with less. Unlike income, we do not actually see what is measured, and we can only infer it from its outcome. We have never seen perfect
political equality. A cross-national measure of political inequality seems as much a fantasy as a society that is completely equal politically.

**Types of empirical studies in political inequality**

There are many empirical studies on the causes and on consequences of political inequality and they range from small-scale qualitative and social psychology experiments to large-scale cross-national quantitative studies. The purpose here is to classify their types; there are too many to adequately summarize all of them.

Empirical studies of political inequality tend to fall into two broad camps of voice and of response. Most voice studies are about the inequality of opportunities, especially their causes, and typically point to how social, economic and other forms of inequality are associated with inequality in political participation and representation. There are two main types of voice studies. There is a “concentrations” conception of political inequality that measures the extent to which some groups occupy strategic, privileged and scarce political positions. A popular way is by measuring descriptive representation, i.e. the extent to which the parliament resembles the demographics and life experiences of the citizenry (Mansbridge 1999; Paxton and Kunovich 2003). Most concentration measures do not explicitly account for whether descriptive representatives are actually concerned with substantive representation (Celis et al. 2008). Whether this matters depends on point of view: the concentration of wealthy men in positions of political power worries supporters of descriptive representation, but those who consider that delegative representation works well enough are not bothered by it.

A second type of voice study is on efforts individuals and groups make (or, in the case of non-participation, do not make) to achieve political decisions favorable to them. “Efforts” measures include psychological engagement with politics (e.g. Solt 2008), voter turnout (e.g. Gallego 2010) or other forms of political participation (e.g. Verba et al. 1978; Teorell et al. 2007). Psychological engagement, such as knowledge and attitudes toward politics, are preconditions for political action, but attitudinal measures do not capture behavior directly.

Studies of response by decision-makers form the other broad camp of empirical political inequality research. Most work here is devoted to understanding which groups benefit most from the political system. Response studies are typically about equality of outcomes and almost all focus on the US Griffin and Newman (2008) show that whites tend to have their policy preferences realized as policies more so than racial minority groups (see also Griffin and Flavin 2011). Both Bartels (2010) and Gilens (2012) studies of public opinion and policy find strong evidence that the US government is substantively more responsive to the preferences of upper level income groups. Both Bartels and Gilens question whether the pluralist democracy that Dahl (1961) found in New Haven lives in the contemporary national scene (Bartels 2010: 1–2; Gilens 2012: 1). Because voice and response are intertwined, the literature on policy feedback also informs this variant of empirical political inequality studies (Campbell 2012). Response studies focused on political inequality are rarer than they should be, especially in the
cross-national literature. Although such studies require over-time data – response suggests causality, after all – the effort is necessary to show why political inequality matters.

The types of empirical research I have discussed engage with particular aspects of political inequality, and there is not a single study that could be characterized as truly comprehensive. Voting, for example, is simply a measure of political inequality of the electorate, and should not be confused with political inequality of non-electoral voice, let alone with government response. At the same time, too few explicitly identify the form of political inequality they empirically analyze (a good exception is Griffin and Newman 2008: chapter 2). If political inequality can achieve a kind of conceptual clarity, both theoretical and empirical studies must at least be clear as to what kind of political inequality they are talking about.16

Concluding remarks

Political inequality is a concern for all those who interact with political systems. Scholars since Aristotle have written about it. Citizens have created social movements to eradicate it. What is it about political inequality that it is of such long-standing and widespread concern? Perhaps that its conduct and outcomes have tangible consequences: on a societal level, political inequality guides policies on everything from economy to culture; on a personal level, its very existence bothers people in the same way any perceived injustice is troubling.

Political inequality is intrinsic to our political systems, and we know surprisingly little about it. Political inequality is like other major forms of inequality – economic, educational, gender, ethnicity, to name a few – in that it is studied in a variety of disciplines and from different theoretical perspectives. Since it always intersects with at least one of these inequalities (and generally more than one), clearly identifying boundaries is hard. There are few overviews of the concept as a whole. We often end up with limited, or group-specific, empirical studies.

While it is clear that much has been written about this important topic, there is little indication that political inequality is considered a major field of study in its own right in any academic discipline. Instead, we find pieces of research here and there, and the term, “political inequality” (or “political equality”) as a whole, comprising both voice and response, has yet to attract systematic scholarly attention in the same way as its sibling inequalities (economic, gender, race, ethnicity, education, and health, to name a few). Political inequality is analytically distinct from other forms of inequality; it deserves its own theoretical treatment and empirical analysis.

In political inequality, I find a potentially productive field in need of more cultivation. As such, this chapter offers more “what has been done” than “what should be done.” I do offer some prescription. First, to know what’s growing here, we need to build a modest fence to separate the concept from other forms of inequality. Total separation is not desirable; it would be detrimental to the field if this fence impedes seed-drift of creative ideas and theories from across academia or in research on under-studied groups. Next, as I mention above, we need to be clear
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as to the type of political inequality that we study. Being clear will also allow us to better show why and how political inequality matters (in addition to claims of whether it is rising, falling or staying the same).

Finally, we need to move towards interdisciplinary and cross-national perspectives. While disciplinary knowledge has led us this far, we need more attempts at bridging disciplines to create an emergent field that yields knowledge that all disciplines can consume. At the same time, we need to think beyond individual nations and cultivate a more cross-national research agenda. There may be aspects of the various types of political inequality that span space and time, but we need to look for them.

Notes

1 In this map I do not include books. There are many books on the subject, and in this chapter I make use of many of them, but as of now there are no databases that list book subjects and are reliably countable. For example, Google Books lists over 34,000 books as “political inequality,” and over 370,000 for “political equality.” By contrast, The Ohio State University library, one of the largest in the world, lists 441 books with “political inequality” and over 1900 for “political equality.” It would be impossible to figure out why Google lists so many, and improbable to figure out why OSU lists comparatively fewer.

2 There are problems with such databases. First, their criteria for a journal’s inclusion are not specified. While ISI has journal inclusion criteria posted on their website, it’s not specific enough to know how they choose one journal over another. EBSCO is completely opaque and posts no such information. Moreover, the filters offered by such databases are not clear. How do they define “topic”? “Or “relevance”? Any investigation using filters will always yield an imperfect database. But, there should be some usefully recognizable boundary between political inequality articles and those not about politics or inequality. Thus, such methods offer a rough sketch rather than a fine-tuned drawing.

3 The earliest abstract my search turned up is from 1991. It seems that before then, fewer articles were published that had political inequality as a focus, or the practice of appending abstracts to articles was not as widespread.

4 A list of these articles is available on the website, politicalinequality.org

5 Articles in law journals, when they talk about political inequality, are either free ranging essays on political inequality (Parker 2000 and 2005) or on interpreting concepts of specific law cases such as equal protection and vote dilution (Gerken 2001) or the Establishment clause and the political liberty of religious groups (Feldman 2002). The former are interdisciplinary, surveying political science, psychology, sociology and law to offer speculations and opinions. The latter eschew speculation and tend to offer narrow prescriptions. Campaign finance and other economic influences on political speech are frequent topics as these are laws long debated in American law and policy of equality.

6 Philosophers of political equality question the basic assumptions political scientists and other social scientists have about the topic; for example, philosophers ask, What, exactly, has to be equal?

7 Wall (2007: 416) argues that “The ideal of political equality holds that political institutions ought to be arranged so that they distribute political standing equally to all citizens,” which places it in the equality of opportunities camp.

8 “Their means of attaining power may be quite varied, ranging from naked violence of any sort to canvassing for votes with coarse or subtle means; money, social influence, the force of speech, suggestion, clumsy hoax and so on to the rougher or more artful tactics of obstruction in parliamentary bodies” (Weber 1946: 194–195).
Verba (2003) defines political equality as “the extent to which citizens have an equal voice in governmental decisions” (663). This is clearly an equality of opportunities approach. Baynes (2008) summarizes the equality of opportunities literature as defining political equality as “equal opportunity for political influence, including the introduction of themes and topics, access to deliberative forums, and influence on final decisionmaking [sic]” (15).

Sorokin (1957 [1927]) argued that political stratification occurs in any context in which there is differential political authority: “If the social ranks within a group are hierarchically superposed with respect to their authority and prestige, their honors and titles; if there are rulers and the ruled, then whatever are their names (monarchs, executives, masters bosses), these things mean that the group is politically stratified, regardless of what is written in its constitution or proclaimed in its declaration” (11).

Verba argues that in modern democracy, on the grounds of fairness, we should distinguish between intentional and unintentional inequalities. An intentional inequality can be justified as “fair,” such as the disenfranchisement of felons, but unintentional inequality cannot be justified, for example if that felon disenfranchisement disproportionately disenfranchises African Americans. If the inequality is unfair, it is unjust and therefore should be removed.

Huber et al. (1997) is emblematic of this approach. They define formal democracy as a combination of four elements: “regular free and fair elections, universal suffrage, accountability of the state’s administrative organs to the elected representatives, and effective guarantees for freedom of expression and association as well as protection against arbitrary state action” (323). Participatory democracy is a combination of the four elements of formal democracy plus “high levels of participation without systematic differences across social categories (for example, class, ethnicity gender)” (324).

Sociologists studying social inequality tend to underemphasize politics as a distinct dimension of inequality. In the introduction to their massive reader, Grusky et al. (2008) do not list political inequality among the core fields of inquiry and they give it passing-mention in their exhaustive list of things that stratify society (3–6). Kerbo’s (2003) bestselling social stratification textbook narrowly situates political inequality in terms of governance outputs that favor some classes over others (39–45). Political sociology gives even less direct attention: neither political inequality nor its obverse appear in the index of the 800+ page *Handbook of Political Sociology* (2005).

See also the review symposium of the 2004 APSA Task Force report in *Perspectives on Politics* 2004 2(4): 651–690.

Contrast this with the idea of other political scientists who declared that the sociologists’ ruling elite model popularized by Hunter (1953) and Mills (1956) has been “demolished” (Bailey and Braybrooke 2003: 103–4).

A drawback is that the language can be a bit awkward. For example, instead of referring to differences in voting, we would refer to it as political inequality of electoral voice; instead of differences in government policies, we would refer to it as political inequality of formal policy response. As Gerring (2004) noted in writing about specificity in general, “This may involve some sacrifice in narrative flow, but it is rightly regarded as the entry price of social science” (345). Scholars in the field should try to create a language of this specificity that is both simple and interdisciplinary.

References


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2 Inequality and partial democracy

South America in comparative perspective

Carlos H. Waisman

This chapter discusses whether it is possible to have a high-quality democracy in a very unequal society. The empirical focus will be on South America. All the polities in this region are democratic, but these democracies vary substantially in terms of their quality. It is well known that Latin America is not the poorest region of the world, but it is the most unequal.¹

This is my argument in a nutshell; I will explain and expand on it below:

1 There is an elective affinity, in Max Weber’s sense, between a dualized society, i.e. a very unequal society, and the type of democracy I call “partial.”
2 The underlying mechanism in this relationship between social structure and political regime is the congruence between (a) politicians’ typical orientations and (b) the forms of political action characteristic of the organized and the disorganized sectors of society.
3 This is an equilibrium regime, i.e. one that tends to persist because it generates strong inertial forces.

My point of departure is Ralf Dahrendorf’s proposition that the central cleavage in modern societies is the one between the organized and disorganized sectors, i.e. between groups that have a high capacity for organizing and mobilizing in defense of their interests and values, and those that lack this capacity, or that have it only intermittently.² I explore the implications of this cleavage for political institutions in highly unequal societies.

Conceptualizing the issue

I begin by clarifying a few basic concepts. I will use the term “democracy” in Robert Dahl’s sense, which became standard in the social science.³ A polity will be called democratic (“polyarchic,” in Dahl’s terms) if and when it satisfies, to a substantial extent, three basic criteria: inclusiveness, competitiveness, and institutionalization of basic civil and political rights. Inclusiveness means that the most important positions of executive and legislative authority are elective, and that the largest possible proportion of adult members of the polity is able to participate in these elections. Competitiveness means that not only are elections
competitive, but also (and very importantly) that the opposition is allowed to function unhindered between elections. Finally, basic civil rights (due process, association, religious practice, speech, etc.) and political ones (voting, running for office, etc.) are institutionalized when they can be effectively exercised by the broadest possible proportion of citizens.

The quality of a democracy consists of ordinal variables that may vary along any of these dimensions: whether authorities are elected, whether suffrage is universal, whether elections are competitive, whether opposition to those who exercise power is permitted, whether civil and political rights can be exercised by everybody or only by elites, etc.4

For the purpose of my argument, I emphasize a particular dimension of the quality of democracy: the extent to which there are effective institutional limits to the power of the ruler. The establishment of these limits has always been the focus of liberal constitutional design.5 The boundaries in question may be enshrined in laws that determine what the ruler can or cannot do, or may be based on practices considered legitimate by all the important social and political actors. In any case, these laws or practices are institutionalized when they effectively limit the power of the incumbent of the executive, i.e. the President or Prime Minister. There are two polar types in this regard, republican and plebiscitarian democracies. The underlying criterion is the extent to which power is concentrated in the hands of the executive.

A republican democracy is based on the separation of powers – in the case of presidentialism – or on the subordination of the executive to the Parliament – in the case of parliamentarianism. In the parliamentarianism, “subordination” means that the Parliament elects the Prime Minister and the cabinet, and that it can, in principle, fire them through a vote of no confidence if it disagrees with their policies. For the democracy to be of high quality, in both forms of institutional design there should also be a judiciary with extensive powers of judicial review.

A plebiscitarian democracy, on the contrary, is a regime in which the executive controls the Parliament and the judiciary.6 The extreme case would consist of parliaments and judiciaries that rubber-stamp whatever the executive decides. However, such polities could still be democracies, albeit of a low quality, if they satisfy minimally Dahl’s criteria: elections that are competitive and based on universal suffrage, opposition parties that are allowed to function, and if both the supporters and the opponents of the government enjoy basic civic and political rights.

In contemporary South America, Uruguay, Chile, and Colombia are more republican, and Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia more plebiscitarian. Brazil and Argentina occupy an intermediate position, Brazil closer to the republican type and Argentina to the plebiscitarian one.7

Democracies, of whatever quality, should be distinguished from two non-democratic regimes that are superficially similar: what Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way,8 following Juan Linz,9 have called “elective authoritarianism,” and what Larry Diamond has called “pseudo-democracy.”10 Both are formally democratic, in the sense that they have elections, parliaments and judiciaries, and government and opposition parties. However, in these regimes centralization of
power in the hands of the executive is very high, and higher than in a plebiscitarian democracy, and incumbents consistently use the laws, the judiciary and the power of the state apparatus (regulatory agencies, tax authorities, etc.) against their opponents. Under elective authoritarianism, some degree of competitiveness remains, so that a victory by the opposition is at least possible, e.g. elections are usually rigged but once in a while opposition candidates may win; the judiciary obeys the executive but in a few cases judges rule against the government. No such uncertainty exists in a pseudo-democracy, which conforms to the ideal-type of authoritarian regime. In contemporary South America, Venezuela is close to the elective authoritarian model, and there are no pseudo-democratic regimes.

The institutionalization of new democracies

We may approach the subject by inquiring whether there are institutional prerequisites for a high-quality democracy, and to examine whether these prerequisites are present in South America.

We are dealing with the possibilities of institutionalization of democracy in transitional societies: almost all the countries in the region were under military rule until the 1980s (nine out of ten “Ibero-American” ones, Venezuela at that time being the only exception). The processes of political transformation initiated a generation ago was led by elites and was aimed at establishing institutions that allow for high levels of inclusiveness, competitiveness, and enjoyment of civil and political rights, i.e. republican regimes.11

The basic premise of institutionalism is that incentive structures, when maintained in time, become institutionalized in the long run, i.e. they eventually regulate individual and collective behavior (in most cases).12 A central point is that, as transplanting plants is hazardous, the same occurs with institutions: a plant may not grow at all in a new environment, or it may do so but have different characteristics than in the original milieu. In the 1980s and 1990s, the dominant segments of the political elites and most of the citizenry in the countries we are discussing, and also in central and Eastern Europe, pursued the establishment in their societies of institutions similar to those of the West; they should have been aware that democracy does not grow everywhere, and that, even if it does, it will not necessarily resemble the models these actors were trying to emulate.

Now we realize how unlikely it was that an institutional transplant could transform a country like Iraq into a polyarchy, in Dahl’s sense of the term, as some American neo-Conservatives expected in the beginning of this century; but South American countries belonged to Western civilization in terms of their religion and language, received the impacts of the Reformation and the Enlightenment, and had experienced (in most cases) the democratic and (in some cases) the industrial revolutions, etc. And democratization was for them an endogenous process, rather than something imposed from without.13 These countries appeared, to both their elites and external observers, as plausible candidates for the instauration of the typical Western political institutions.
What these elites and observers missed is that successful institutional transfer occurs only when the social structure and institutions of the recipient society are congruent with the new institutions being established. It is the level of this congruence what determines the degree of conduciveness of a society to institutional transfer. To this issue I now turn.

The foundations of republican democracy

If republican democracy can take root – and reach the level of stability of “institutionalization” – only if it is compatible with properties of the larger institutional framework of the society, we must attempt to conceptualize these prerequisites. I argue that this political regime presupposes economic, social, and political foundations, and that, once transplanted, republican democracy will work if they are present to a substantial degree. These foundations are economic, social and political.

Economic

The economic institutions consistent with a republican democracy are those that (a) allow for long-term economic growth, rather than being self-limiting, (b) produce elites (capitalists, professional, labor, etc.) that are autonomous vis-à-vis the state, and (c) generate strong pressures for accountability.

Open-market economic institutions meet these requirements, but two other frameworks present in several South American countries at the time of the transition to democracy do not: the partially autarkic economies based on import-substituting industrialization (ISI), and the rentier economies centered on the export of natural resources in high demand and with few substitutes, oil being the typical example. By now there is substantial evidence that ISI, or autarkic development, is self-limiting in the long run, because it leads to the formation of large non-competitive manufacturing sectors and spawns business and labor elites dependent on government protection for their survival; for these reasons autarkic development generates weak demands for accountability. The cause of the latter is that accountability implies groups of citizens that view themselves as principals and government officials as their agents, and this situation is incompatible with the extreme level of dependence on the government characteristic of capitalists, labor, and other social actors in the autarkic situation. Of course, I am referring to an economy in which protection is strong and generalized, i.e. it encompasses most capital and labor in the society, and it is unconditional and unlimited in time. Trade barriers that protect small sectors, or are conditional on future competitiveness, or temporary, would not have these systemic consequences.

Finally, oil-export economies, unless they develop in societies with diversified and competitive productive sectors and republican polities already in place (Norway is the obvious example of this situation), are subject to the Resource Curse. They experience strong cyclical fluctuations, following the dynamics of commodity markets, and generate a government whose revenue takes the form of rent and
does not depend on domestic taxation. These institutions generate an incentive structure that orient governments toward policies designed to maintain the country’s current position in the international economy, and that for this reason neglect measures aimed at productivity growth in agriculture, manufacturing, or services; and that thrusts capitalists and other social groups to focus on the distribution of rents allocated by the government, rather than on production for competitive markets. Obviously, this institutional setting is not conducive to strong pressures for accountability.

**Social**

The central social prerequisite for a high-quality democracy is, following Alexis de Tocqueville, the existence of a strong civil society, i.e. a network of voluntary associations that effectively represent the most important interest groups and value communities in a society. A civil society of this type fulfills two basic functions in relation to democratic institutions: it limits and balances the state, and it generates demands for accountability.

This argument refers to a strong civil society. Neither Tocqueville nor contemporary theorists that discussed these issues, such as Ernest Gellner, have theorized civil society strength. Of course, this attribute is of variable intensity and there is no reason to assume that it will necessarily develop once a civil society is in place. In an effort to conceptualize the problem, I have proposed three dimensions of strength that are implicit in the Tocquevillean argument and also in contemporary discussions of the issue, such as Gellner’s: density, autonomy, and self-regulation. By density I mean the extent to which all major groups and interests are organized and mobilized; autonomy refers to independence vis-à-vis the state; and self-regulation denotes the degree to which conflicts among the constituent units of civil society develop within the institutions of the democratic state. A civil society can be called “strong” when it has high levels of these three properties.

**Political**

Finally, a republican democracy presupposes a strong state, i.e. a state with substantial extractive, regulatory and distributive capacities. The state’s regulatory capacity involves the ability of both the judiciary and administrative agencies to enforce the rules that structure the markets for goods, labor, and capital, and to preserve and deliver public goods. Without a substantial regulatory capacity, it would not be possible for the state to serve as the last-resort guarantor of contracts. Second, the state should also be able to manage adequately the distribution of resources: health and educational systems, and pensions and other social policy programs. Republican democracies, which by their own dynamics tend to develop substantial welfare states, would not function adequately without very high distributive capacities. Finally, the exercise of both the regulatory and the distributive capacities presupposes the ability to raise revenue through taxation, i.e. a satisfactory level of extractive capacity.
Inequality and partial democracy

At the time of the transitions in the region, in the 1980s and early 1990s, the presence of these prerequisites of republican democracy was variable. While the economic and political foundations sketched above existed in some cases, the social foundations were weak everywhere. As for the economic institutions, Argentina, and to a lesser extent Brazil, still had quite autarkic economies. Chile had also had an extreme form of ISI in the past, but it had already dismantled protectionism under the military dictatorship. Venezuela, on the other hand, was a typical example of a rentier-type oil economy. With respect to state strength, it also varied a great deal in these countries: the state’s extractive, regulatory, and distributive capacities were more substantial in Chile and Uruguay than in Brazil or Argentina. The states of Venezuela, and more so Bolivia and Paraguay had quite feeble capabilities. But there was a constant: all these societies had very high levels of inequality, with large proportions of their urban and rural populations under the poverty line and without formal and continuous insertion into labor markets. As I will argue, this type of social structure produces a weak civil society.

The social foundation is, then, the Achilles’ heel of democracy in South America. Since the weakness of civil society is the factor common to all the countries in the region, in what follows I will focus on this issue.

The politics of dualized societies

Dahrendorf argued that the central cleavage in modern societies is the one between the organized and the disorganized sectors. On one side, there are the elites, middle classes, and organized labor: groups with a strong capacity to organize and mobilize for the defense of their interests and values. On the other, the poor, the marginal, the excluded, who are either individually isolated or integrated into communities that are themselves isolated from the rest of society, and who lack these capabilities; they are susceptible to manipulation by the elite.

In this regard, South American societies are not qualitatively different from those of Western Europe or North America, but what varies radically is the proportions of the population in each sector: the disorganized pole represents about 5–15 percent in the advanced democracies, but one- to two-thirds of the population in South American countries. It makes sense to view the population of these societies as consisting of two large poles, the organized and the marginal. The criterion behind this distinction is the capacity for dense, permanent, and autonomous organization for the defense and advancement of the groups’ interests and values.

This brings us to the issue of civil society formation and the fact that social classes have a differential capacity for participation in civil society.

Civil society in the West and other regions came into being as a consequence of the breakdown of the communal, ascriptive communities characteristic of pre-industrial, pre-urban social structure. The new capitalist institutions generated groups with different propensities for independent and continuous association in voluntary organizations. Elites always have had such capacity, but it is non-elites that have varied in this regard. A proposition appears consistent with the evidence:
there is a positive correlation between a group’s location in the class hierarchy and its capacity for autonomous collective organization.

The cause of the elites’ high capacity for organization lies in their (usually) very small size, as Mancur Olson has pointed out, and that their control of resources, economic, political, or cultural, renders their interests transparent, to use Max Weber’s term, with which he referred to the working class but that obviously applies to elites as well. The middle classes, both urban and rural, have also shown a high capacity for organization. Aristotle justified his argument that these groups are the best social base for a constitutional polity in that they are more secure and “more rational in their judgment.” He did not explain this proposition, but one may surmise what he meant: that this group’s greater “security,” or stability of its position in the social structure, was conducive to more moderate and institutionalized types of political behavior.

Industrial workers have also shown a high potential for autonomous organization. Karl Marx contended that this is due to their participation in the productive process (their “productiveness,” as Nikolai Bukharin has called it), and that the division of labor, i.e. that workers toil alongside each other and carry out complementary tasks, fosters interaction among them and the formation of a common culture.

The poor have a low capacity for sustained autonomous collective organization. Familiar causes have been adduced for this: deprivation and dependency (Marx, and also Aristotle, who referred to the poor’s insecurity as a hindrance to their participation as citizens in a constitutional polity), susceptibility to manipulation by elites or other outsiders (Marx), etc. Political apathy is frequent among the poor, and this could be explained by Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: in a situation of extreme deprivation, people’s attention and energy are likely to focus on the satisfaction of basic individual and family needs, such as food and shelter, rather than on collective action and political involvement.

Transitional societies and partial democracy

A dual society of the type I have described is conducive to a variety of democracy that I call partial. The essence of a partial democracy is the bifurcation of the polity: civic articulation between the state and the organized sector of society, and non-civic with the marginal one. This articulation is civic when citizens face the government, make demands and offer support. They see themselves as principals and view the officials as their agents. Non-civic articulation, on the other hand, could be based on state corporatism or clientelism. In these cases, both officials and citizens see the officials as the principals and the citizens as their agents. Politicians’ interaction with the organized pole, i.e. elites, middle classes, organized labor, is based on exchange: demands and supports versus political platforms or actual policies. As for the marginal pole that consists of the urban and rural poor and the informal workers, it is available as a political base with potential for dependent participation.

Transitional societies vary in terms of the relative size and strength of each sector. Broadly, there are two patterns. The first is when one of the two sectors
prevails, and the aggregate polity looks predominantly republican or plebiscitarian. However, the “other” option still exists in the background, as a latent alternative to the political regime on the surface. The manifestation of this duality is a cyclical shift of the polity between more republican and more plebiscitarian phases. In the second case, there could be a stalemate between the two poles, and the aggregate polity is split, with a bi-facial state confronting a dual society. In this case, republicanism and plebiscitarianism coexist in the same state.

The mechanism underlying partial democracy is a convergence between politicians’ orientations and the forms of political action characteristic of the groups in each of the two poles.

Politicians’ goals are the same in all polities: to be elected to office, to remain in office for as long as possible, and to further their political careers beyond the current office. The forms of political action that prevail in the organized pole, made up of organizations that represent different interests and values, are those of institutionalized participation in a democratic polity, from lobbying and demonstrating to involvement in political campaigns. The marginal pole, on the other hand, may show instances of autonomous and sustained organization, but it is structurally susceptible to apathy, short-lived riotous collective action, and dependent participation, either state-corporatist or clientelistic.

What characterizes dependent participation is the fact that it is based in a relationship of exchange, in which the poor receive material benefits, such as jobs, wage increases or better working conditions, welfare stipends, or pensions, allocated in a discretionary and conditional manner, as a quid pro quo for their support for a politician or party. Dependent participation is state-corporatist when these benefits are granted to an organized collectivity (e.g. a trade union), and the grantor is typically an organization (a government agency, a ruling party).31 Clientelism, on the other hand, is the situation in which benefits are, in a particularistic manner, bestowed upon specific individuals, and usually by other individuals (politicians, government officials).32 These discretionary, and therefore revocable and contingent mechanisms of allocation of benefits should be distinguished from the ones characteristic of the universalistic welfare state, which are statutory and unconditional.33

*Partial democracy as an equilibrium regime*

The dualized social structure and the convergence mechanism I described above generate strong inertial forces that institutionalize partial democracy. Republican, plebiscitarian and authoritarian tendencies, which may be intense, give rise to countervailing trends. The net result is the development of centripetal pressures toward the hybrid and combined forms.

Democracy and capitalism are complex, multi-stranded institutions, and thus the source of hybrid regimes. Going back to Dahl’s conceptualization, the inclusiveness component is more easily transferable than the others, such as competitiveness, institutionalization of rights, or the limitation of the power of the executive. The reason is that these multiple dimensions of democracy have
a differential congruence with the broader institutional structure of the recipient societies, i.e. their economic institutions, their civil societies, and their states’ capacities.

The proposition I advance is that inclusiveness is more susceptible to institutionalization than the other components of democracy. In almost any society, it is structurally possible to shift from appointment of the highest officials of government to elections with universal suffrage. When the concentration of power in the executive is relatively low, generating and establishing stable incentive structures for the legitimation of opposition, for the rule of law, and for the effective establishment of civil and political rights is a much more complex process that depends on time and the level of its congruence with other institutions of the society.

This conclusion is not only inconsistent with classic modernization theory, which would expect that all capitalist, urban industrial societies generate conditions hospitable to a democracy of reasonable quality, but also with institutionalism, for which new normative frameworks, if sustained in time, end up becoming the effective incentive structures of a society. This state of affairs is also compatible with the multiple modernizations research program that expects processes of social transformation to have variable outcomes as a function of cross-societal differences in institutions and cultures.

Partial democracy is a distinctive type of polity with great potential for institutionalization. It is not an aberration, or merely a stage in the development of republican democracy in transitional societies. Given the high number of transitional societies in the contemporary world, partial democracy is likely to become more frequent than other varieties of democracy. Most constitutions in these societies contain the norms characteristic of liberal, republican democracy. But in the end, the institutionalized regimes are likely to resemble the low-quality variety called partial democracy.

Notes
4 On the dimensions of the quality of democracy, see Larry J. Diamond and Leonardo Morlino (eds), *Assessing the Quality of Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).
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(1994), 1: 55–69. However, the emphasis here is on concentration of political power, while his is on the absence of accountability, an obviously related characteristic of these polities.

7 For discussions of contemporary South American political regimes, see Larry Diamond, Jonathan Hartlyn, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds), Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999); Jorge I. Dominguez and Martin Shiffer (eds), Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Peter H. Smith, Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Kurt G. Weyland, Raul H. Madrid and Wendy Hunter (eds), Leftist Governments in Latin America: Successes and Shortcomings (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Laurence Whitehead, Democratization: Theory and Experience (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

8 Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

9 Juan Linz, Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).


11 For an overview, see Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Smith, Democracy in Latin America, and Whitehead, Democratization.


Carlos Waisman


18 See Waisman, “Autonomy, Self-Regulation and Democracy.”


23 For a discussion of this process, see Gellner.


31 State corporatism was an component of both fascist and communist regimes, but much weaker and less coercive forms were present in the classic Latin American populist regimes, like those of Juan Peron in Argentina and Getulio Vargas in Brazil in the middle of the twentieth century, and the PRI regime in Mexico for much of the twentieth century. These Latin American regimes veered between plebiscitarian democracy and elective authoritarianism.


Inequality and partial democracy


34 See Waisman, “Institutional Congruence and the Sources of Multiple Modernities.”


36 See n. 12 above.

3 Neoliberalism and democracy

Alex Afouxenidis

This chapter may well begin with Erich Fromm’s *Fear of Freedom*, originally published in 1942, as it provides for a set of humanitarian principles which give meaning to the idea of freedom. Fromm (1960 [1942]) argued that, although “history is centered around the effort to gain freedom from the political, economic, and spiritual shackles that have bound men” (1), the outcome has been a replication of these inequalities. In this class warfare between the disadvantaged and the advantaged, “classes that were fighting against oppression at one stage sided with the enemies of freedom when victory was won and new privileges were to be defended” (1). It is a sobering reminder of how struggles over political equality and personal liberty can end unexpectedly, and badly.

In the current globalized era of increasingly harsh economic and social conditions, extreme inequality, poverty, mass migration and diaspora, environmental degradation, civil wars, urban discontent, homelessness, racism and sexism, apathy and de-humanization, disillusions, however eloquently served by governmental and other officials on the state of the world, or of separate nations, have to be consistently discredited by anyone who conceives and understands society as a just and egalitarian space. People are suffering everywhere as a direct result of elitist and coercive neoliberal political choices that dominate the global landscape with an ever increasing intensity.

In *The Jobless Future* (1994) Aronowitz and DiFazio noted that “...the terms *crisis* and *catastrophe*, are ordinary components of social communication” (39). In the current economic crisis and catastrophe, the conceptual underpinnings of their argument are still with us. We live within a continuous state of crises and catastrophes: from the cities to the farms, people are increasingly distressed. In the so-called “west,” but also in the “east” and “south,” people live in difficult and often dangerous circumstances and try every day to cope in an environment that does not offer much in return and in which money rules absolutely.

Hidden behind statistics and other empirical evidence that indicate increasing poverty, inequality and destitution at local and global levels are people telling often sad, hopeless stories. These people, their families and their communities are deemed insignificant for they are up against the larger – and by default supposedly more important – forces shaping global affairs, namely the market, neoliberal capitalism, deregulation and the sprawling of “democracy.”
It is profoundly ironic that the most celebrated theme of neoliberal ideology, namely that of the free individual, is a mirage (see Kapur 1998: 191–192). As one reflects upon the countless analyses and informed criticisms on the impact of neoliberal ideology and strategy, it becomes increasingly clear that the main constitutive element of this sort of “philosophy” is related to the idea of ignoring fundamental human needs. This conceptualization has generated a rupture with respect to western classical liberal discourses such as those, for example, put forward by J. Locke, J.S. Mill or J. Rawls. While strongly suggesting personal autonomy they also forcefully argue that if the needs of individuals are not adequately met, then liberty will be limited.

And, we could argue, so would liberal democracy. Neoliberal economic and social policies have relativized, if not done away with altogether, the idea that in order for them to be instigated some sort of liberal democracy is needed (Afouxenidis and Kourtelis 2013). This is a brutal and deeply cynical ideological formation devoid of any elementary ethical stance. We know that although there have been, in macro-historical terms related to capitalist development, savage moments (as Chomsky has correctly pointed out on many occasions; see for example, Chomsky 2010), there was always a basic idea propounded by both the Right and the Left that the main characteristics of human freedom cannot be ultimately denied.

The claim, namely that neoliberal ideology has displaced liberalism and that it has trivialized the idea of individual freedom, is at the center of our argument and the main concern of this chapter. The pervasive ideological force of neoliberalism has had a deep impact on people’s lives, identities and beliefs despite its obvious failure to sustain any meaningful sense of “economic growth.” As this chapter is written we invariably turn to the present era of economic and social depression. In many western nations and in the Eurozone, economies are being restructured and reformed and governments are in a continuous state of instability; this process increases political and other forms of inequality. As a result, political crises have become everyday occurrence; demonstrations, often violent, are commonplace. In the streets of great cities in the global South and East, people are trying to get a hold of history but are, once again, up against a renewed hegemony of suppression and authoritarianism.

**Leftist critiques of neoliberalism**

Over the past 30 years, there have been many original and insightful analyses on the origins, policies and results of neoliberalism (Harvey 2005; Ong 2006; O’Connor 2010; Westra 2010; Comaroff 2011). A substantial number of critical understandings of neoliberal ideology and policy come from various strands of the Left and from the realm of Marxist political economy. These analyses have provided for a vast array of alternative and alternating points of view on the inner workings of neoliberalism, using aspects of political philosophy, economics and wider social science and human geography. They provide us with various discourses that help us understand the advent of neoliberalism as a major, transformative global economic and political process (Sklair 1991).
Interestingly enough, liberals and the Right have not seriously and with rigor contested the ideology of neoliberalism. There are a few notable exceptions (Stiglitz 2002) that in intellectual and pragmatic terms conceive of neoliberalism as a particular problem that interrupts the road to economic “development” and that requires immediate measures towards its reversal. These approaches are illustrative of the current state of affairs, especially with regards to the destruction of local and global economies. Yet, they tend to miss the overarching ideological context of neoliberalism. In other words some of these approaches are reactive to current events and not to a long-term process (see also Szahaj 2005: 68).

Thinking about democracy – within the framework of political liberalism – and how consensual and collective decisions can be made, Talisse argues in favor of deliberative democracy. Talisse lays down ten basic ground rules that substantiate argumentation within pluralist society. This form of democracy would create “a civil society of reasonable citizens [that] is necessary to the development of a proper democracy, a ‘republic of reasons’” (Talisse 2005: 115). In this respect, politics (and political human beings) are reinstated, since people have to respond collectively to real political problems (see also Warren 2002: 698).

Some of these ideas are programmatic at best; under the present circumstances it is difficult to imagine an easy retreat of neoliberalism across the globe. The ideological formulation of neoliberalism is firmly located outside the realm of modern consensual politics.

Images of Neoliberalism

The neoliberal ideological agenda uses the language of freedom and individuality to promote a basically dehumanizing and oppressive status quo. Humanity was re-defined vertically and horizontally along and across the usual bi-polarities: poor/wealthy, in/out of work, males/females, gay/straight, western/non-western, north/south, black/white, moral/immoral, productive/un-productive, and private/public. The question, in this respect, is not so much whether these categories actually exist, but rather how and in what ways they are used to generate and reproduce a vocabulary and a subsequent series of political practices which justify and augment their presence.¹

The current language of neoliberalism is rooted in the past. Jameson (2012) forcefully reminds us that although we are living well into the twenty-first century, “an older political economy totters forth, like a shade, and offers us a prodigious new development, namely the reinvention of the market, something about as exciting as the reinvention of the wheel” (2–3). Despite the various strands of neoliberal politics and the slightly different language used in various parts of the world, there is a deeply homogenizing and totalitarian view promoted and practiced.

Fukuyama’s (1992) case and Huntington’s (1996) thesis have also provided us with similarly violent, almost biblical, narrations on the state of the world in late modernity. Fukuyama’s core argument is the inevitable dominance of neoliberal capitalism that, under the auspices of hegemonic powers such as the USA, will spread everywhere. The free market system encapsulates history’s end since
people’s drive towards equality, freedom and justice will be finally achieved. Huntington, on the other hand, is more cautious. He does accept the spread of free market neoliberal capitalism, but does not see that as a prerequisite for the adoption of the neoliberal system of values across the world. For him, the hegemonic west and the USA seem to be retreating from global domination. Thus, conflicts that in the past were characterized by economic forces will be replaced by cultural and religious clashes.

These are a few, yet prominent, examples of political atavism. They are an attempt to generate images of societal structures that are based on rather simplistic and elitist belief systems. In cultural terms, they advocate exclusivity of the “west” over all others, intentionally promoting ideas which view the “west” as a single, all-embracing cultural unit. In political terms, the market and economic “freedom” are dissociated from the inner workings of democracy. If democratic procedures and processes contradict neoliberal thinking, then they may be overlooked. In this sense they represent non-secular political manifestos of how “we,” or rather “they,” would like the twenty-first century world to be.

History has taught us that, to make the world fit into a particular political and ideological project, one must gain and hold power at various layers of society. But this is not enough. The relative success of neoliberal political practices rests on a mixture of rhetoric, force and absolute control of the major local and global institutions such as the state and the international financial organizations. In addition, it is also very much based on the slow or rapid fragmentation and, ultimately, severe erosion (if not destruction) of diverse agents such as public actors, pressure groups, civic organizations, think tanks, educational institutes and a variety of other structures that are main underpinnings of contemporary democracies. This is a vital – and thoroughly counter-democratic – idea by the proponents of neoliberal strategy: intervention in the world requires control and restructuring of major societal institutions in conjunction with undermining and displacing many other associational formations that bestow meaning to a democracy.

**Contextualizing neoliberal politics**

Much of the rhetoric of neoliberalism that is advanced by its advocates around the world involves the following three elementary ideas:

- The state’s singular purpose is to safeguard private and commercial interests.
- Only the free market can guarantee an efficient economy and rational resource allocation.
- Individuals are solely responsible for their actions.

Interestingly enough, there is no validation on the positive connection between liberalized, deregulated economies and their impact on democracies (Milner and Mukherjee 2009: 2). On the contrary there is ample evidence to suggest that increases in poverty and inequality generate conditions that curtail democratic processes (NDRI 2009). Additionally, there has never been a convincing
argument on how nations recover from multiple economic crises in relation to the political system (Chan 2002).

There is an intrinsically intolerant theme in the above three ideas: any country that does not integrate into the world economy by following these principles will be left “behind” and will not be able to take advantage of the benefits of economic re-organization (Rodrik 1997). These rhetorical arguments simply do not account for the fact that powerful vested interests ideologically support the world economy (Drake 2010).

There is also a tautological element: If, for example, the market is not functioning properly then it is the fault of the state. At the same time, if governments have lifted protections but the market is not delivering the “goods,” then it is the fault of individuals who are not making the “right” decisions. This theoretical cacophony is used by high-ranking officials of international organizations, national political representatives, and various analysts and the media to justify neoliberal economic policies across the world. Recent examples include the post-2008 crisis where this language has been used extensively to exonerate the failures of the global market economy by passing the blame onto local governments and populations.

The argument is usually coupled by a moral stance: If populations and governments follow the “virtuous” path then they will be treated with respect and will be allowed to join, as “competent” actors in the world economy. Salvation depends on a top-down, fixed notion of moral integrity. This fusion between morality and economic ideology has been consistently reproduced in various parts of the world with a religious vivaciousness indicative of political intention (for the case of Africa, see Mensah 2008: 3).²

The remarkable universality of neoliberal discourse used across the world shifted popular debate in the “west” away from issues of the inner workings of the global monetary system and its impact on economies and populations towards ideas about applicable policies. Issues of increased social and political inequality are being transformed into individual or governmental choices. Complex patterns of social inequality and poverty are reduced to ideas about individuals helping themselves. Vast economic discrepancies between countries and regions are similarly reduced to governments not following the right “mix” of policies and structural reforms. The “debt trap” is not a matter of uneven power relations and the politics of domination; it is reduced to a technical issue resolved by teams of experts who live outside of the political arena and who understand “what needs to be done.”

Four areas of democratic organization

The powerful fable used to legitimize economic and social intervention operates within the four major areas of democratic organization, namely the economic, political, social and cultural spheres.

In the economic sphere, the role of national and international institutions, such as the IMF, has been extensively exposed by many analysts who showed that the local and global economies have been restructured through a variety of coercive means, including debt collection and repayment, structural adjustment programs
and severe cuts in jobs and welfare coupled with precarious types of employment (Chossudovsky 1997; Miller 1997). The main neoliberal idea here is that societies and countries have to shift away from policies related to integration and replace them with policies – and the corresponding ideologies – of divergence. Economic growth therefore does not need to translate into growth of equality (Bauman 2011: 50). Thus, divergence and the growing gaps in political and social inequality have to be accepted as systemic norms (see Pieterse (2002: 1027)).

The economy has a staggering impact on the political and social areas of democratic societies. The nature of political systems has to be altered to accommodate for increased inequality, inequity and exploitation (Wise and Covarrubias 2012; Tropman and Nicklett 2012). This is coupled by a reduced public sphere and an enlarged, dominating private sector through the diminution of political participation and a reduction of the state’s capacity to organize civil life. This represents a substantial turn against pluralist democratic life (Rapley 2004: 11). Traditional forms of political organization (political parties, elections, trade unions and pressure groups) alongside more recent contemporary forms of civic organization (civil society organizations, institutional agents, NGOs, movements) are only relevant within the context and organizing principles of the neoliberal agenda. Since neoliberal politics have fragmented the public sphere, civic groups are compartmentalized, weakened and are losing the capacity to deal with large and powerful domestic and international agents and global market forces. The premise of civil society enhancement, so prominent during the 1990s, never really became an integral part of the political process.

In an enforced alteration of political culture, the façade of a well-organized democracy is only required to make it somewhat more respectable to the eyes of people. At the same time, those who propose alternatives to neoliberalism and privatization (McDonald and Ruiters 2012) are deliberately discredited. New social movements, spontaneous civil organizations, urban/local neighborhood associations, larger demonstrations of discontent such as the Indignados in Spain, and digital activists, to name a few, are systematically suppressed and negatively labeled. Individuality, personal opinion and group organization are only allowed if they are ideologically correct. That these new civil society articulations are slowly developing a new variety of cultural politics that looks at the world with a highly critical gaze requires further empirical investigation.

Neoliberal politics have also played a significant role in the realignment of the cultural area. In global terms, neoliberalism has become part of popular culture packed with iconic symbols such as Thatcher and Reagan and reactionary representational references to anti-statism, individuality, the values of advertising, fashion and consumerism (Nelson and Crossberg 1988; Fine and Leopold 1993), global media and the film and television industry. Neoliberal cultural strategies have delimited cultural products and what people learn about cultural production (Street 2000). Culture, as related to commodification, has been reduced to homogeneous forms (for the eerily enduring impact of neoliberalism on popular culture, see Williams 1989: 130–131). Last, but not least, the language of neoliberalism has dominated public life by constantly reproducing ideas about the benefits of
private ownership, state dysfunctionality and market inevitability (Centeno and Cohen 2012: 331).

Add yet, as Fromm predicted, opposition by the disadvantaged continues. Neoliberalism’s dogmatic persistence on global governance has produced a variety of imaginative new ways to oppose economic hegemony (Cupples, Glynn and Larios 2007). Such manifestations that use cultural forms to disrupt and oppose “free market” policies may generate a renewed vocabulary of contestation, a different narrative about the world.

Conclusion

There are four major postulates of the previous analysis which can be briefly summarized as follows:

- Neoliberalism has distinctive features from liberalism and therefore it is worthwhile to examine it as a separate ideological platform.
- The neoliberal ideological formulation is fundamentally authoritarian totalitarian for it reduces all human action to the purpose of the market. The same goes for the various institutions in society.
- A consequence of the above is that in practical political terms, the local and global neoliberal agenda is made workable only via the promotion and enforcement of a repertoire of non-democratic practices.
- Neoliberals use the rhetoric of individual freedom as a marketing tool to justify their political existence. The central premise of neoliberal ideology is contrary to any deviation from idealizing the market and thus opposed to all forms of individual desire or determinacy.

Although some writers are optimistic on the reversal of the neoliberal political project, mostly because of the effects of the current crisis (Wade 2009), we are less so. Over the past 30 years the system has gone through various crises and despite massive reactions from people and organizations across the world, neoliberalism has nevertheless survived. Neoliberal ideology has not been fundamentally challenged, especially by those groups which hold power, mostly because they have not been seriously threatened in financial or political terms. In the post Global Financial Crisis, the defenders of neoliberalism deployed their economic, political, social and cultural strategies. In the economic and social domain, mass unemployment, precarious and cheap labor, coupled by further cuts in welfare and social security budgets have left the system relatively unscathed. The same goes when one looks at social and political inequality, the widening gap between rich and poor and instances of extreme poverty within and across nations and regions. Individuals, families and communities are victimized; and yet it seems that this sort of abuse is taken for granted. In historical terms these sorts of phenomena are not new. They have occurred before especially if we are to take into account the history of colonialism and imperial capitalism. However, there is room for optimism found in the histories of emerging struggles, cultural politics and shifts in political repertoires that occur during
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turbulent times. Chomsky (2012: 25) has rightly observed that even in the midst of the Great Recession during the 1930s, people looked positively into the future.

There are, therefore, alternatives to the neoliberal political culture which can be located firmly into the positive feeling of hope and empathy, together with a thoughtful understanding of the opportunities that lay ahead. This is a demanding exercise but, in the end, far more rewarding for individuals, intellectuals, activists and organized civic groups that contest orthodoxies and deny inevitabilities.

for Maria K, with love

Notes

1 Consider the American cultural representations during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Denzin 1991). As Denzin put it, “The New Right’s attacks on the liberals and their proposals to teach the literatures of racial and ethnic minorities was thus justified, because these ‘radical’ individuals were undermining the patriotic agenda of the American school system” (6).

2 The influence of this idea has been dramatic even in populations which feel threatened by neoliberal economic policies in Greece, Portugal and Spain (Tsatsanis 2009).

References


Part II

Methodological considerations
Proof

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4 Crossing intersections

Overcoming the challenges of cross-national research on the legislative representation of women from marginalized groups¹

Melanie M. Hughes

Women make up more than half the world’s population, but they have long been underrepresented in electoral politics. Most countries have never elected a woman president or prime minister, and in national legislatures – institutions often expressly designed to represent “the people” – women typically hold less than one-quarter of the seats. Over the last two decades, the face of national legislatures has changed: the number of women in parliament more than doubled (from 9 percent to 21 percent), for the first time a country elected to parliament more women than men (Rwanda), and the number of countries without women in their elected national legislature dwindled to three (Micronesia, Qatar, and Vanuatu). Women, although still outnumbered by men in almost all elite political bodies, have made significant inroads.

As more women move into national politics, scholars have successfully identified many of the key political, structural, and cultural factors that influence women’s legislative success (Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes 2007). For example, the existence of proportional representation (PR) electoral systems and, more recently, gender quotas can increase the number female parliamentarians (e.g. Dahlerup 2006; Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Krook 1997; Paxton, Hughes and Painter 2010; Tripp and Kang 2008). Women’s movements, international organizations, and political leaders have drawn from this knowledge to press for political institutions and electoral rules known to facilitate greater inclusion of women in politics.

Although cross-national research on women’s access to political power has moved forward with great speed, quality and abundance, it tends to ignore a basic fact: not all women are the same. Feminist scholars, in particular, have been critical of the ways in which researchers tend to study the forces of marginalization in compartmentalized ways (e.g. Crenshaw 1989). That is, by focusing on women as an undifferentiated collective, we ignore intersectionality: the ways that race, ethnicity, class, religion, language, and sexuality intersect with gender to impact women’s identities, interests, and outcomes (Collins 2000; Choo and Ferree 2010; Crenshaw 1989; Hancock 2007; Thornton Dill and Zambrana 2009). The intersectionality paradigm calls for researchers to examine the disparities in access to political power between women from marginalized groups – here called “minor-
ity women”2 – and majority women (and men of either status). The intersectional challenge also requires a re-examination of the factors that influence women’s legislative success, and to question whether they operate similarly for all groups of women (Hughes 2013a).

Across countries we have limited information about which women are gaining power, which women remain excluded, and why. A primary reason is that intersectionality in women’s political representation has received little empirical attention. For the most part, only a handful of studies in Western countries like the US and Canada have explored the dynamics of minority women’s legislative representation (e.g. Black 2000; Fraga et al. 2005; Smooth 2001; but see Htun and Ossa 2013). Without comparative research scholars cannot understand how the intersecting identities of minority women influence their political representation across different contexts (Weldon 2006).

In order for cross-national intersectional research on women’s political representational inequality to proceed, however, we first must develop a methodology. In this chapter, I discuss three challenges for such scholarship: selection, comparability and measures of legislative success. In terms of selection, how do we identify “minorities” across countries? Attached to the selection problem is that of comparability: how can we compare minority women who live in very different societal contexts? I discuss methodological guidelines for researchers to identify and compare minority women across countries and time. Finally, I discuss the problem of using “percent women in parliament” as the standard measure for women’s political inclusion, and some possible solutions. Throughout, I address these challenges by drawing from data that breaks down national legislatures around the world by both gender and minority status (see Hughes 2011, 2013b).

Before I turn to the methodological challenges of research on minority women’s legislative representation, I first outline the case for intersectionality as an important concern for political inequality scholars.

**The case for intersectional research**

Disaggregating the category of “women” is important for at least two reasons. Practically, because minority women may have political interests distinct from other groups, it is important to gauge the degree to which minority women are able to represent themselves politically (e.g. Bratton, Haynie, and Reingold 2007; Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2011). If only women benefiting from the privilege of majority status are represented in the policymaking arena, policy interventions targeted towards women as a group may ineffectively serve the special needs of minority women (Crenshaw 1994; Hancock 2007). Similarly, if minority group rights are articulated by only male voices, the culture that is receiving protection or advancement may be anti-feminist (Okin 1999). Taken together, these statements suggest the importance of ensuring that the political voices of minority women are heard.

Treating women as a single collective also has important implications for scholarship: by ignoring minority women’s differences, we may do a poor job explain-
Crossing intersections

ing why women are better represented in politics in some countries compared to others. In some contexts, factors related to gender alone might explain inequality. Take Qatar, for example, where no women were elected to the national legislature in 2010. All Qatari women – whether Arab or South Asian and whether Sunni, Shiite, Christian or Hindu – were governed by an all-male legislature. In places like Qatar, majority and minority women alike are excluded from politics (or are substantially underrepresented) on the basis of sex alone. In other countries, however, it may be gender’s intersection with race, ethnicity, and religion that best explains the legislative outcomes of women. Without attention to forms of marginalization other than gender, we may miss important parts of the story.

To illustrate this point, consider the composition of national legislatures in Burundi and Israel, countries where ethnic and/or religious minorities comprise between 15 and 20 percent of the population. First, we will do what is typical of comparative research on women’s legislative representation and look at the percentage of women represented in each country’s national legislature, shown in Panels A and B of Figure 4.1 below. In Burundi, women comprise almost a third of the legislature, 31 percent, whereas in Israel, women occupy less than half that share of seats (just 14 percent). Typically, then, researchers would search for explanations for the political success of women in Burundi or the political failures of women in Israel, and these explanations are usually about gender. For example,

![Figure 4.1](Figure 4.1) Breakdown of seats in Burundi’s and Israel’s national legislatures by gender and minority status
we know that the rate of women’s labor force participation in Burundi is more than 50 percent higher than in Israel (World Bank 2013). Higher numbers of women in paid work may mean a larger pool of women willing and able to compete against men for political office (Paxton and Hughes 2013). Mystery solved?

Before we accept the plausible explanation presented above, let us take our thought experiment even further and break down the legislatures of Burundi and Israel not just by gender but by majority/minority status (the Hutu majority vs Tutsi and Twa minorities3 in Burundi and the Jewish majority vs Arab Muslim, Christian Palestinian and Druze minorities in Israel). See Panels C and D in Figure 4.1. What becomes clear from this exercise is that women from majority groups in both Burundi and Israel are represented at similar levels – both around 14 percent of legislative seats. But, when we compare the political representation of women from minority groups, they hold 18 percent of seats in Burundi (greater than their population share) and zero seats in Israel (although these groups make up 19 percent of the population). This second comparison calls into question our first explanation. It appears likely that what explains the underrepresentation of women in Israel is not just about gender, but about the ways gender intersects with minority status to exclude minority women from political representation altogether.

Certainly, these examples are not definitive. I do not mean to imply that we can just look at the breakdown of seats in a national legislature and know immediately why inequalities in electoral representation take a certain shape. What I hope to show instead is that within-group differences in the political representation of women can be meaningful; if we acknowledge these differences, we might generate different explanations for cross-national variation in women’s political representation than we would otherwise. In methodological terms, we want to avoid the potential aggregation bias that might arise from treating women as a monolithic group.

If we take seriously, then, that minority women’s legislative representation is an important topic for social scientists to pursue, we must next consider the potential obstacles. I begin with issues involving group identification and selection.

Who are the minorities? Identifying salient divisions across diverse societies

A first challenge to research on minority women across countries is determining which groups should count as “minorities” in a given society. One clear obstacle is simply the magnitude of diversity that exists across the world. During the early 1990s, Fearon (2003) identified more than 822 distinct ethnic groups making up at least 1 percent of the population across 160 countries. The racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic composition of societies also differs widely from one country to the next, even for neighboring states. Given this diversity, it should come as no surprise that sources of data on minority groups disagree, focusing on different social cleavages and aggregating data in different ways.

Even if scholars could agree on an exhaustive list of distinct racial, ethno-linguistic, and religious groups that captures the diversity of populations across coun-
tries, not all social cleavages are equally relevant across time and space. In broad terms, some societies are largely organized along linguistic lines, while in other countries the most salient divisions are religious. In most countries, several axes of disadvantage contribute to the social and political marginalization of individuals. In a single country, marginalized groups could include indigenous peoples, racial minorities, as well as the descendants of specific immigrant populations.

Within these broad categorical distinctions, dynamic contextual factors determine which groups are considered “minorities.” For example, across much of the West, ethnic minority status is determined, in part, by patterns of immigration and the historical relationships between countries of residence and countries of origin (Bird 2005). The salience of ethnic and religious divisions also changes significantly across time. For instance, although Irish Catholic immigrants faced widespread discrimination in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contemporary research often includes the descendants of Irish Catholic immigrants as part of the English-speaking, Christian, Caucasian majority. Overall, conceptualizations of ethnicity remain rooted to specific geographic and historical contexts (Bird 2005).

A further problem of identifying “minorities” is that group size does not necessarily translate to group advantage or marginalization. While most small groups can be considered “minorities,” some small groups are socially, economically, and politically dominant. Two well-known historical examples include whites of European descent in South Africa and Sunni Muslims in Iraq. In some countries, no single group constitutes a majority. If groups are equally sized, majority/minority dynamics can be even more difficult to determine.

In sum, identifying contextually sensitive social divisions across societies poses numerous challenges. Yet, overcoming obstacles to group selection is both necessary and possible. To demonstrate, I examine the case of Lebanon.

Who are the minorities in Lebanon?

Lebanon is politically organized along religious and sectarian lines under a system called confessionalism. Following the provisions of the Taif Agreement, which was negotiated to end decades of civil war in Lebanon, Christians and Muslims are each entitled to 50 percent of seats in the country’s National Assembly. Christian and Muslim sects also share political leadership.4 In addition to these three sects, the government officially recognizes 15 other religious sects – 11 Christian, three Muslim, and one Jewish – ranging from less than 1 percent to 6 percent of the population. Both absolute and relative size of Lebanon’s religious groups is widely disputed; due to political sensitivities, a national census has not been conducted since 1932, prior to Lebanese independence.

Maronite Christians, estimated to be the third largest sect in Lebanon, have historically been politically dominant. France separated Lebanon from Syria in part to create a state in the Middle East with a dominant Christian majority, and Lebanon continues to have the largest population of Christians in the region. During French administration of Lebanon in the early twentieth century, Maronite...
Christians were allocated the majority of political positions, including the presidency and command over the military. Following the Taif Agreement, some of the political power afforded to Maronite Christians during French colonialism was shifted to Muslims. But Maronites continue to benefit from the constitutionally guaranteed division of political positions.

Different Muslim sects have distinct political histories in Lebanon. During French colonization and the transition to nationhood, Sunni Muslims – the second largest sect in Lebanon – actively fought for resources and patronage. Thus, historically, leaders from the Maronite Christian and Sunni Muslim sects together formed the central governing structure of the country (Ajami 1986). Shiite Muslims are numerically the largest of Lebanese religious sects, but historically, they have been marginalized (Corstange 2007). Although Shiite Muslims fought for and gained greater representation over time, power-sharing in Lebanon today still reflects many of the social and institutional inequalities of yesterday.

Several distinct ethnic groups are also present in Lebanon, including Arabs, Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, Kurds, and Persians, but these groups are largely positioned based on religion, rather than ethnicity. For example, Kurds in Lebanon are identified almost exclusively as Sunni Muslims. One exception to the dominance of sectarian divisions in Lebanon involves the Palestinian refugee population. In 2005, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) registered over 400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, approximately 10 percent of the country’s population. The vast majority of Palestinian refugees are Sunni Muslim, but they are denied citizenship and face numerous social and economic restrictions.

Historical context is our best guide to identifying the “minorities” in Lebanon. Without reference to sect, Muslims make up a majority of the country and Christians are the minority. With reference to sect, no single group constitutes a majority. Large sects such as the Maronites, Sunnis and Shi’a could be considered the majority, while smaller sects like the Druze and Protestants the minority. Once accounting for Lebanon’s history, neither of these initial options seems acceptable. Instead, Maronite Christians and non-Palestinian Sunni Muslims appear to be the dominant groups, while all other religious sects, as well as Palestinian Sunni Muslims, could be classified as “minorities.”

Table 4.1 presents population estimates and political representation by religious group and by gender for Lebanon’s 2005 National Assembly. Maronite Christians held the greatest share of seats of any sect in the National Assembly, while Shia and Sunni groups each held slightly fewer. Overall, therefore, Shiite Muslims were underrepresented compared to their share of the population, while Sunnis and Maronite Christians were both slightly overrepresented. Some religious sects received no representation at all. Only 11 of the 18 officially recognized sects in Lebanon were elected to the National Assembly in 2005.

In Lebanon, religion interacts with the power structure to shape the demand for women from different sects. Only six women, 4.7 percent of seats, were elected to Lebanon’s National Assembly in 2005 and all of them were members of historically dominant groups: four were Maronite Christians, and two were Sunni Muslims. The consistent exclusion of Shiite women from political power suggests
that multiple forces of marginalization interact. Disaggregating the category of “woman” thus provides new, meaningful information about the obstacles to political empowerment that women must overcome.

Methodologically, we are still left with problems of cross-national comparability. In the next section, I make a case that comparative intersectional research is both possible and useful.

### Intersectionality in a cross-national framework

To date, research on marginalized women’s representation in electoral politics has largely been limited to studies in the United States and other Western industrialized countries (Takash 1993; Black 2000, Smooth 2001; Scola 2006). Existing research also often focuses on a single group, such as black women, Latinas, or Native American women (e.g. Simien 2006; Smooth 2006; Fraga et al. 2005; Prindeville and Bretting 1998). Much of this research delves into the complexities of minority women’s identities and lived experiences. Given these complexities, it is reasonable to ask whether minority women’s political experiences are comparable across countries and across different types of marginalized groups. For instance, could studying Arab women in Israel have anything to teach us about the experiences of Kurdish women in Turkey or Hindu women in Bangladesh?

In the terminology of cross-national methodology, we face the classic problem of functional equivalence (Przeworski and Teune 1970); in this case we need to measure “minority” as an intersectional concept across different countries and times. Two approaches to this problem are evident. We could focus on one type of marginalized group, regardless of differences in salience of group identity across countries, e.g. only women from religious minorities. Or, we can consider salience, which might lead us to focus on religious minorities in one country, linguistic minorities in another country, and a mix of both in a third country. Though both approaches have their merits, cross-national research that includes a range of marginalized groups is especially useful for research on the institutional underpinnings

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Table 4.1 Unofficial population estimates and 2005 election results for Lebanon’s Chamber of Deputies by religious sect and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Legislative Seats</th>
<th>Group Seats by Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunni Islam</td>
<td>25–30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shi’a Islam</td>
<td>41–49%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Muslim</td>
<td>4–7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maronite Christian</td>
<td>16–25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>9–12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Since no official data on the religious composition of Lebanon has been collected since 1932, these numbers reflect the range of unofficial estimates from the CIA and the World Bank, supplemented by additional sources.
of political inequalities. The cases of Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi show the potential benefits of this approach to cross-national intersectional research.

**Comparing gender and ethnic/religious quotas in Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi**

Overall, Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi appear to have little in common. Located on separate continents, Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi range widely in population size and demographic composition. The majority of Bangladeshi citizens are Sunni Muslims, most Romanians are Christian Orthodox, and in Burundi, Catholicism is the dominant religion. Romania’s economy, though battling corruption and disinflation, has a GDP per capita three times higher than Bangladesh and more than 13 times higher than Burundi (CIA Factbook 2007).

Politically, Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi could not be more different. Following decades of communist rule, Romania today is a relatively stable democracy with close ties to the West, joining both NATO and the EU in recent years. Bangladesh, via coups and martial law, has experienced only interrupted periods of democratic rule. It can be worse: Burundi’s first democratically elected president was assassinated in the early 1990s, resulting in a 12-year civil war fought along ethnic lines. After international parties helped to negotiate a ceasefire in 2003, Burundi held regular elections in 2005.

During the mid 2000s, Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi used different institutional rules to govern the political incorporation of women. As Table 4.2 summarises, all three countries had rules facilitating women’s inclusion in one form or another. Bangladesh and Burundi both required a certain percentage of parliamentary seats to women at the national level: 13 percent in Bangladesh and 30 percent in Burundi. Romania, alternatively, adopted a weak national gender quota in 2004 that required candidate lists for parliamentary elections include both male and female candidates (IDEA 2007). In the same year, the largest political coalition in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Gender Quotas</th>
<th>% Women in Parliament</th>
<th>Ethnic / Religious Quotas</th>
<th>% Minorities in Parliament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>national:13% reserved seats</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>national but no mandated threshold; dominant party has 30% quota</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Ethnic minority parties not reaching 5% vote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>women 1 of every 5 names on party lists; co-optation ensures women are 30% of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total seats</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>threshold still afforded representation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mandated division of seats by ethnicity:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60–40%, except 3 reserved seats for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>indigenous minority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Romania, the Social Democrats, began requiring that at least 30 percent of its candidates be women. Across the three countries, women’s political representation was the highest in Burundi (31 percent), followed by Bangladesh (15 percent), and then Romania (11 percent).

What Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi have in common is a similar majority/minority structure: all three countries have a religious or ethnic majority group that makes up 80–90 percent of the country’s population (Muslim Bengalis, ethnic Romanians, and Hutus), a significantly sized minority group that makes up at least 5 percent of the population (Hindu Bengalis, ethnic Hungarians, and Tutsis), and one or more smaller minority groups. However, for 2005 and 2004 elections, only Burundi and Romania had formal rules requiring the representation of minority groups. Burundi mandated a 60 percent–40 percent Hutu–Tutsi split, in addition to reserving three seats for the Twa, or pygmies. All political parties competed for 101 seats, but following the elections 18 additional members were co-opted to ensure that the quotas were met. In Romania, if a minority ethnic group’s political organization did not receive 5 percent of votes, the threshold required to earn seats outright, the ethnic group was still afforded a representative in parliament. Bangladesh, by contrast, used no formal mechanisms to facilitate the representation of minority groups.

How did these policies impact the political representation of minority women? Table 4.3 presents data on the principal religious and ethnic cleavages in Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi, sorted by population size, along with data on political representation broken down by group and sex. To begin, in Bangladesh, Hindus were significantly underrepresented compared to their share of the population. Whereas approximately 16 percent of Bengalis are Hindu, they held only 2 percent of seats. When Bangladesh adopted a quota to increase women’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.3</th>
<th>Population estimates and political representation by ethnic or religious group and by gender for Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi, 2004–2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bangladesh</strong></td>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Groups</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Romania</strong></td>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hunan</strong></td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Groups</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Burundi</strong></td>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutsi</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twa</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
numbers, Hindu women did not benefit from the measure. The case of Bangladesh suggests that the adoption of gender quotas in absence of policies regulating ethnic and religious differences may contribute to the exclusion of minority women. In countries like Bangladesh, parties have few incentives to recruit minority women candidates.

Romania, unlike Bangladesh, adopted policies to facilitate the political representation of both women and minorities. But these rules combined in ways that did not advance the political representation of minority women. The Hungarian minority is politically organized as the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) and in 2005, the party reached the 5 percent threshold required to achieve representation in the legislature. In the absence of a national-level gender quota that stipulates list position, however, UDMR included no women in winnable positions on its party list: of the 22 seats occupied by the Hungarian minority, not a single seat was held by a woman. Unlike the Hungarian minority, the Social Democratic Roma Party did not reach the 5 percent threshold. Since the Roma make up about 2.5 percent of the population, the provision of a single seat means that the Roma were underrepresented, and the single Roma seat was occupied by a man. Seventeen other smaller ethnic groups entered the Romanian national legislature through the same rule exemption as the Roma, each afforded a single seat and producing political overrepresentation of these small ethnic groups relative to their population share. Just two of these 17 ethnic minority parties elected a woman. Overall, the combination of gender and ethnic provisions in Romania did not advance minority women’s political representation.

Like Romania, Burundi regulated the political representation of women and ethnic groups. Unlike Romania, however, Burundi balanced both gender and ethnicity through the same mechanism: co-opting seats. Because a Tutsi woman can help fulfill the 40 percent ethnic and 30 percent gender requirements, the combination of ethnic and gender quotas has increased Tutsi women’s political numbers. In fact, of the female members of Burundi’s National Assembly, 54% were Tutsi. Moreover, of the 18 co-opted positions, half were Tutsi women. Moreover, of the 18 co-opted positions, half are Tutsi women. In Burundi, minority women’s dual identities (as both women and members of minority ethnic groups) benefit them politically. But, this duality also benefits majority men: if parties had instead satisfied the quota by including Tutsi men and Hutu women, Hutu men’s share of seats would necessarily decline. Mathematically, including more minority women allows majority men to hold on to a greater share of seats in the legislature. Overall, then, it appears to be institutional configurations (and not women’s high labor force participation rates) that explains the political success of ethnic minority women in Burundi.

Comparing the effects of different policies regarding the political incorporation of women and minority groups improves our understanding of intersectionality. Bangladesh and Romania both demonstrate that the different logics and structures of gender and ethnic quotas can leave minority women behind. Burundi shows that at least in some contexts, occupying more than one marginalized group can sometimes provide minority women with strategic advantages.

Even if we are able to identify disadvantaged groups across countries and
accept that obstacles to comparison can and should be overcome, another challenge remains: measurement.

**The measurement challenges of capturing intersectional variation**

Measuring the political incorporation of women from marginalized groups is far from straightforward. Unlike studying women, who make up a fairly consistent share of the population across countries, the size of minority female populations worldwide varies considerably. Further, analyzing groups at the intersection of gender and minority status allows for measures that highlight differences across groups of women or between men and women from the same group. With each analysis the researcher must decide whether to assess minority women’s legislative representation relative to their population share or to the political representation of minority men or majority women.

For academics, government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations, women’s share of seats in the national legislature, i.e. the “percentage of women in parliament,” is the most popular cross-national measure of women’s political status (Hughes 2013a). This measure of all women tells us nothing about how minority women fare in politics. One way to understand where minority women fit into the picture is to subdivide women’s legislative representation by majority/minority status (e.g. Black and Lakhani 1997). Minority women’s share of total legislative seats tackles a fundamental question: in a given country, are minority women politically represented at all?

Minority women’s share of all seats is less useful if we want to draw comparisons between majority and minority women, two groups with very different shares of the population. An alternative measure, then, is women’s representation as a share of their group’s seats in the legislature. Although explicitly a measure of women’s success relative to men’s, these statistics are usually employed to compare electoral outcomes across groups of women (e.g. Darcy and Hadley 1988; Scola 2006). However, measures of women’s success relative to men may be less informative for groups that comprise only a small fraction of a country’s population. For small groups, relative measures are typically unstable as the election of even one woman (or man) can drastically change the measure. Assessing relative performance also completely ignores those groups that are unrepresented, even if they are sizeable minorities.

Although women’s share of group seats can be useful for making comparisons, the measure still does not directly account for differences in group size within or across countries. To explicitly account for population size, researchers have designed a wide variety of measures to assess how proportionally seats in a legislative body are distributed (Benoit 2000). Proportionality indices most often treat political parties as the groups of interest (e.g. Gallagher 1991; Loosemore and Hanby 1971), but they have also been used to gauge the political representation of ethnic minorities across countries (Ruedin 2009). Proportionality indices are agnostic about the origins of disproportionality. That is, increasing
the representation of minority groups beyond their population share creates disproportionality in the same way as does the overrepresentation of majority groups.

A fourth approach, then, is to weigh the legislative representation of minority women against their share of the population—a direct assessment of how proportionally minority women are represented. Although not particularly useful for comparisons between minority women and majority women or minority men, such measures are likely an important place to start for researchers hoping to explain variation in minority women’s political success worldwide.

Using more than one measure is typically necessary. Take the case of Cyprus, for instance, where the underrepresentation of Turkish Cypriot women is a function of the withdrawal of the entire community from institutions of central government in the 1960s; all ethnic Turks—both men and women—lack representation in Cyprus’s national legislature. In countries like Cyprus, the lack of minority women representatives in absolute numbers is partially informative; yet, it is also important to know that minority men are unrepresented.

A final consideration for the measurement of minority women in politics is the diversity within the “minority women” group. For example, following 2004 elections in Panama, Afro-Panamanians were excluded from politics entirely, whereas indigenous groups (who represent a smaller share of the population than Afro-Panamanians) were represented in the national legislature but only by men. To avoid aggregation bias, it may be necessary to measure minority women’s political representation at the group level rather than the country level. As with all measurements of cross-national intersectionality, there are tradeoffs between presenting complexity and being able to make sense of the information.

Conclusion

Investigating politics at the intersection of gender and minority status across countries faces many challenges, and researchers are only beginning to consider how the intersecting identities of minority women influence their legislative representation across different contexts. Identifying relevant and comparable social divisions and tackling problems of measurement are main barriers that researchers must cross to study minority women across countries. In this chapter, I show that these complications can be, and should be, addressed.

First, I argued that by taking contextual factors into account, it is possible to identify salient social divisions across societies and to define a set of disadvantaged or “minority” groups. The case of Lebanon shows that numerical size is not necessarily the best way to determine minority status. Instead, researching historical and contemporary social and political inequalities across countries informs how to interpret the representation of women from different ethnic or religious groups.

A second problem involves comparability across countries. Yet, I contend that intersectionality research stands to benefit from drawing comparisons across
countries. Exploring institutional differences across Bangladesh, Romania, and Burundi – countries with vastly different social, economic, and political contexts – I showed that it is not just possible, but useful, to study minority women’s political representation across countries. Specifically, I showed how certain institutional configurations can exclude minority women, while others can provide minority women with strategic advantages.

Measurement provides another obstacle to the analysis of minority women’s political representation. Measures of minority women’s representation relative to minority men, majority women, or to their population share each serve a purpose. But, it is especially in combination with one another that we can understand the larger story of political inequality in a given country.

The importance of intersectional research on political inequality goes beyond explaining variation in the political outcomes of minority women. Even for political inequality researchers who are not particularly interested in the outcomes or impacts of minority women, intersectional research reminds scholars to be wary of aggregation bias. Understanding differences within groups may be the key to explaining broader variation in political inequalities across time and place.

In all, this research suggests that despite many obstacles, cross-national research on minority women’s political representation can and should move forward. Acknowledging differences among women may be a difficult step for cross-national research on legislative diversity, but it is an important one.

Notes

1 I thank Pamela Paxton for her comments on earlier drafts of this chapter. I also gratefully acknowledge the support of the National Science Foundation, P.E.O. International, and the Coca-Cola Critical Difference for Women Program at The Ohio State University. To contact author: Melanie M. Hughes, Department of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh, 2405 WWP, 230 S. Bouquet St., Pittsburgh, PA 15260; hughesm@pitt.edu.

2 In this study, I apply the term “minority” to describe racial, ethnic, and religious groups that face social, economic, and/or political marginalization, either by law or by custom. Small groups that are politically dominant are not included here as “minorities,” regardless of their group’s size. I also limit my analysis to race, ethnicity and religion, excluding disadvantage by other axes such as sexuality and disability.

3 Identifying the Tutsis as a marginalized minority group is questionable. Even though Tutsis have always been a numerical minority in Burundi, they held economic, political and military power in the decades after Burundi’s independence. However, since democratization in 1993, Hutu political parties and candidates have dominated every multi-party election. Although both Hutus and Tutsis see themselves as marginalized (MRGI 2008), political power has rested squarely in Hutu hands in recent years.

4 After 2005 elections, for example, the President was Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister was Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the National Assembly was Shiite Muslim (US Department of State 2007).

5 Because no official demographic data has been collected in Lebanon since 1932, I report the range of population estimates identified by different sources.

6 Notably, one Greek Orthodox woman did win a seat in the 2009 parliamentary elections. Two Maronite Christian women and one Sunni Muslim woman were also elected. But none of the 27 Shiite representatives were women.
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References


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Crossing intersections


5 Are imported survey questions under-measuring political and gender participation in the global south (. . . and north)?

Solange Simões

A great deal of theoretical thinking and sophisticated explanatory models are often employed in the analysis of political participation inequalities. We often painstakingly look into the possible theoretical limitations and generality of our findings. It is also certainly true that survey researchers often acknowledge problems of data validity and seek to use the state of the art in survey methodology to improve it.

Yet, the question “What are we measuring?” has not been as central to research endeavors as theory and data analysis. In this chapter I argue that this question should gain a greater centrality in survey research in general, and particularly when it comes to cross-national surveys and in the replication of “validated” measures in different socio-political contexts.

I will present and discuss the methodological and theoretical issues involved in designing a question to measure participation in associations (political and non-political) in the Belo Horizonte Area Surveys (BHAS),¹ I conducted in a major metropolitan area in Brazil. In this survey we sought to avoid the uncritical replication of measures, and in this chapter I will address validity issues involved in the replication questions designed and first used to measure civic activism and associational life in the United States and Europe, and subsequently employed in major cross-national surveys. I argue that by contextualizing the usual international measures of membership to political associations, we improved the validity of our measurements, and impacted the results in very sociologically significant ways. First of all, our measures disclosed levels and types of participation that the “imported” questions did not address and that lead to the under measurement of participation in political associations in general. Second, I show that this under measurement particularly impacted participation by gender – in fact our contextualized measures revealed that women participate more than men in most types of non-political and political associations.

I will start with a cursory presentation of the methodological issues and of my experiences with cross-national surveys, which led me to question the non-contextualized replication of survey questions, and to critically consider issues of comparability and validity. I will next present the methodological work involved in the design of the Belo Horizonte Area Survey questions, followed by the presentation of the findings and a discussion of how they disclosed higher levels of participation in general, and among women, in particular.
The art and science of asking questions

We collected the data on our measure of participation in political associations as part of the larger study on social inequality in Brazil, entitled the Belo Horizonte Area Surveys (2002, 2005, 2008). For the current study, we use data from the BHAS 2005 module on civic and political participation, one of nine modules on various dimensions of poverty and inequality.

The BHAS was modeled after the Detroit Area Study (DAS), a practicum in survey methodology used to train graduate students at the University of Michigan, that also served for over a half century as an important vehicle for developing and testing state of the art approaches to survey methodology. Inspired by the DAS model, the BHAS was designed as a primary data collection approach to tackle methodological issues in survey research in the context of developing societies or the global south. More specifically, the BHAS sought to contribute to the development of the state of the art in questionnaire construction and field work, especially in the context of using structured questionnaires to interview respondents that were highly heterogeneous in terms of educational levels and socio-economic status, including large segments of uneducated and illiterate respondents.

In my work as a co-principle investigator and the survey methodology coordinator for the BHAS, I strongly believed that the link between theory and empirical evidence should not be relegated to the analysis of the data. Data gathering or data “construction” should be guided by the same scientific rigor and effort to link theory and empirical evidence, i.e. the quality – validity and reliability – of the data is (or should be) a *sine qua non* condition for analytical work. I drew upon the long and established methodology of survey research that posited that question wording and questionnaire design must be guided by rigorous experimentation – beyond experience and intuition – given that we, as social scientists, “construct” rather than “collect” data. This happens in so far as our instruments of data collection – in the case of the survey method, the questionnaire – can produce “response effects”: part of what we measure might be an effect of our instruments and modes of data collection. The implication for survey methodology is that we need to consistently resort to the use of *epistemological vigilance* (Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron 1991), seeking to detect and address the likely response effects.

Split ballot experiments conducted in the 1970s and 1980s with question wording, format, sequence, etc. (such as the *classic* Schuman and Presser 1981) have been successful in the showing various types of response effects produced by survey instruments. However, the theoretical explanation for the production of such effects would only more rigorously be developed in the 1980s and 1990s with important publications and experiments by psycholinguists and cognitive psychologists. They start by defining the survey as, on one hand, a social interaction guided by the social and linguistic conversation rules and, on the other hand, a series of cognitive tasks performed by the respondents (Seymour, Bradburn and Schwarz 1996).

The psycholinguists argue that the attempt to understand how respondents understand the questions in a survey inevitably leads to search for information about how people understand the world around them and how they communicate
Imported survey questions

with each other. Consequently, the survey interview can be best understood as a conversation in which respondents conduct their reflection and produce responses in a social and “dialogue” specific context (Schober 1992). The survey interview should be analyzed using the principle of cooperation, one of the structuring elements of conversation, which posits that individuals expect their dialogues are clear, accurate relevant and non-redundant. From a cognitive perspective, the answer to a question requires making four cognitive tasks: interpreting the question, searching for memory information on a behavior or an opinion, formatting the answer, and editing it (Strack and Martin 1987).

This theoretical framing allowed cognitive psychologists and socio-linguists to understand the production of response effects and to explore the factors that influence the interpretation of questions and production of answers by respondents, and how the inferred meaning might differ from the intended meaning (Floyd 1995; Converse and Presser 1986; Bradburn and Sudman 1982). These are central issues in the epistemological and methodological disputes concerning the scientific status of the survey, often labeled as positivistic and as a sociological artifact.

While the rigid standardization of the questionnaire has been often criticized, even seen as “imposing the problem” under investigation (Bourdieu 1995), the study of communicative and cognitive processes allow us to understand the standardization of the survey instrument as a necessary standardization of meanings. The objective of standardization is then the correspondence between the meaning intended by the researcher and the meaning interpreted by the respondent – a key factor in the validity and reliability of the data.

In our use of survey methodology we sought to apply this methodological knowledge to the design of cross-national surveys and/or in the critical replication of survey measures. In order to do that we sought to develop a state of the art structured pretesting for a global south context and conducted split-ballot experiments with question wording, question format, question order, use of semi-filter (DK) in the wording of the question, and mode of data collection mode (Simões and Pereira 2007).

Our challenge and objective was to contribute to the development of survey measures in socio-cultural contexts significantly distinct from the ones in which survey methodology was originally developed, and especially among mass publics with highly heterogeneous levels of education and information, a common factor in the global south, and a key element in the evaluation of the correspondence between the intended and interpreted meanings – certainly not an easy task.

Although we did not conduct a split ballot experiment for our question on participation in associations, we did introduce and measure a distinction between formal and informal participation, generating data with which we could assess the effect of a contextualized measure of participation.

The BHAS Sample

Before I discuss the items, a note on who is in the sample. The Belo Horizonte Area Survey used probability multi-stage cluster sampling procedures to collect
a total sample of 1122 respondents in the metropolitan area (with a population of about 4 million people). The BHAS sought to develop rigorous probabilistic sampling procedures for a typical developing country metropolitan area containing several large shantytowns and various types of informal dwellings. In the 2005 wave, given concerns with the listing of these fast changing shanty town dwellings and the overall urban structure, the BHAS sampling also included an extensive and thorough update of the block listing of the census tracts selected in the multi-stage cluster sampling design (for a detailed explanation of the sample design see Suyama 2007).

**Cross-national surveys, question replication and contextualized empirical indicators**

One of the main and recurrent criticisms of survey methodology is the lack of contextualization. Prior to the BHAS, my experience with the coordination of cross-national survey research highlighted the challenge of comparability and validity when designing questions to be asked in different languages and different social contexts. My first experience with cross-national surveys – the *Global Environmental Survey* – began by focusing on the need to organize various international workshops to bring together researchers from the global north and the global south in order to take into account, in all stages of the survey, and especially in the conceptualization and design, the input and contextual knowledge of all participants. In those workshops, issues of meaning and practice of various environmental attitudes and behaviors in different countries were often raised (Simões 1991; Ester, Vinken, Simões and Aoyagi-Usui 2003; Ester, Simões and Vinken 2005). We even engaged in a large cross-national pretesting of the questionnaire and organized international workshops to consider the findings. An extreme illustration of the issues of comparability and validity, among several others, we have the pretesting of a question to measure environmental activism, which was being replicated from a major cross-national environmental survey. Among the items in that battery, one asked the respondent “in the last two months, did you go for a walk on the beach or in the countryside?” – well, imagine asking this question (as we actually had to do in the pretest) to a rubber tapper living and working in the middle of the Amazonian rain forest. . . .

For the sake of comparability the focus on orthodox standardization of question wording, format, sequence, and the like prevailed. I often wondered if by asking the “same” question in Brazil, the Netherlands, China, Japan, the United States or South Africa, we would be actually asking different questions. Should comparability be rather evaluated as conceptual correspondence, and therefore should we be able to use contextualized specific empirical indicators in order to improve validity? Serious and various concerns with issues of validity often emerged.

I had to tackle this very issue in another cross-national survey that I coordinated – the 2005 *Social Hubble Survey on Poverty and Inequality in Brazil and South Africa*, comprising the *Belo Horizonte Area Survey* and the *Cape Town Area Study*. One of the many challenges was designing a valid and
comparable question to measure social capital. Among the empirical indicators of strong and weak ties, we had empirical measures of networks individuals can resort to when in need of favors. Using focus groups as part of the question design and pretest phases, it was evident that some of the favors in the list provided by our South African colleagues (such as “borrowing a ladder”) lacked relevance and meaning in the Brazilian context, and this was especially the case if we considered social class. We decided then to adopt an “unorthodox” approach, and used contextualized empirical indicators seeking comparability at the conceptual level.

Another challenge of contextualized empirical measurement was measuring participation in political and non-political associations. In the next section I look into the theoretical and methodological issues involved in the replication of such question.

**Measuring participation in political and non-political associations**

For the design and pretesting of the BHAS we employed and sought to contribute to the state of the art in survey methodology, particularly in a global south context. The BHAS was a collective institution building endeavor, which brought together the majority of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG)’s faculty and graduate students in the departments of sociology and anthropology and the political science department, collaborating with specific modules for that omnibus survey. The pretest allowed the faculty and students to collaborate exhaustively in the operationalization of concepts. In my role as one of the PIs and the survey methodology coordinator, I had the privilege to sit down with them and thoroughly evaluate the research questions, concepts, empirical indicators and survey questions. The two political scientists PIs for the module on civic and political participation questioned the validity of widely replicated international measures of participation in political and non-political associations. In their view, those questions failed to take into account the distinction between formal and informal participation. The issue was that by replicating those questions we could be under-measuring participation in Brazil, given that much of the participation in associations in Brazil did not require and was not limited to formal membership. Civic and political activism in Brazil in the last decades, in the contestation of the military dictatorship and later in the transition to democracy, had been composed of classic organizations such as trade unions and political parties, as well as by new social movements demanding better living conditions (housing, sanitation, urban services and structure) for the working classes, and organized around human rights and issues related to access to the environment, culture, health, and education.

I was concerned that the wording of the World Values Survey questions, for instance, when using terms such as “belong to” or a “member of,” might actually under-measure voluntarism and participation. The A098 – A0106 Active/Inactive membership WVS item for nine different voluntary organizations reads, “Now I am going to read out a list of voluntary organizations; for each one, could you
Solange Simões

tell me whether you are a member, an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization.” The choices are: active member, inactive member and not a member. The E025-E029 Political action item for five different forms of political participation reads, “Now I’d like you to look at this card. I’m going to read out some different forms of political action that people can take, and I’d like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never, under any circumstances, do it.” The choices are: have done, might do and would never do.

Our challenge was to design a question that:

- Would account for both informal and formal participation that allows respondents to consider non-formal types of participation – not being a card-carrying member – as legitimate answers. In our conceptual definition of participation we included both formal and informal dimensions – the difficult task was to design a question that would allow the respondent to interpret participation as we intended.
- Would allow the respondent to think of a more comprehensive range of associations.

This involved rethinking not just the wording, but also question format and mode of data collection.

In what concerns question wording, we sought to use in the Portuguese language original various synonyms for the word association, distinguishing between, and clearly defining of, what we meant by formal and informal. We also asked for the complete name of the association in order to double check whether the named association belonged to the specified category. In fact, it turned out that in the case of human rights associations respondents tended to name charity organizations. Being that the case, we could not classify this type of participation as political, which was originally intended. The questionnaire item read as follows: “Now I would like to know about the associations, organizations, or groups in which you participate formally (as a member) and also those in which you only participate in activities (participate informally).” There were five different questions:

- What is the name of this association?
- Do you contribute with money to this association?
- In this association do you participate in activities?
- In this association is your participation seen as (or called) voluntary?
- Are you a member (formally belong) in this association?

Format and mode of data collection for that specific question was also pretested, and we found out that starting by handing out a card with the list of associations to the respondent and asking him to mark the associations which he participated in, avoided causing embarrassment of those who did not participate in any or only a few. It also allowed for time-saving and more efficient asking of the follow-up questions for each association.
Expected and surprising findings

Expected findings

Given the distinction made between formal and informal participation and its inclusion in the wording of the question, coupled with a separate follow-up question on whether membership was formal or not, we expected that we would find a higher level of association compared with other studies.

We found the following:

- 42.9 percent of the respondents declared participating in at least one of the 14 types of associations.
- 37.9 percent of the respondents declared participation in at least one non-political association.
- 11.2 percent of the respondents declared taking part in at least one political association.

Although we could not find similar association measures in other surveys of the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area for a strict comparison, in other studies the usual rate of participation in associations (political and non-political) is usually about 15 percent, compared with the BHAS of 42.9 percent in at least one type of association (Neves and Helal 2007).

The 14 types of association included consumer’s protection associations (0.4 percent); community/neighborhood associations (that deal with housing and/or urban improvements issues) (3.8 percent); political parties (1.2 percent); business’ and owners’ associations (0.9 percent); student movements (0.7 percent); worker’s unions (1.1 percent); professional associations (2.9 percent); Participatory City Budget (1.1 percent); charity associations (7.9 percent); sports or recreational associations (5.6 percent); minorities rights associations (3.1 percent); religious associations (25.9 percent); nonreligious youth groups (0.9 percent); self-help associations (0.6 percent); and associations related to specific issues such as culture, education, and health (4.5 percent).

As noted above, we also distinguished political and nonpolitical associations. By distinguishing the political and the nonpolitical, we did not seek to equate the political to the state. The political here referred to the occurrence of strategic interaction or some form of conflicting interaction with consequences that bind, potentially at least, all people in a given territory (Reis 2000). Moreover, we considered political participation as the attempt to influence the distribution of social goods and values (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Warren 1999, 2001). Political associations did not include self-help organizations or recreational associations whose main activities include providing aid and leisure to its members. In addition, nonpolitical associations are not involved in interest conflict or aimed at influencing conflict regulation (Bueno and Fialho 2009). For further discussion see Fialho (2008).

We classified the following as political associations: consumer protection associations, community/neighborhood associations (that deal with housing and/or
urban improvement issues), political parties, business’ and owners’ associations, student movements, workers’ unions, professional associations, and the Participatory Budget. As nonpolitical associations, we considered charity associations, sports or recreational associations, minorities rights associations, religious associations, nonreligious youth groups, and self-help associations.

**Unexpected and surprising findings: Women participate more than men**

Our most striking finding was that women participate in a larger number of associations than men. We distinguished between genders the associations that presented a statistically significant difference in participation. These associations are charity, religious, community/neighborhood, sports or recreational, and workers’ unions. Women participate more in charity associations, religious associations, community/neighborhood associations, and workers’ unions. Men participate more only in sports or recreational groups. All others did not present a statistically significant difference in participation between genders.

A total of 48.2 percent of women participate in at least one association, whereas 37.4 percent of men take part in at least one association. Distinguishing political from nonpolitical association, women are still more active than men: 13.5 percent of women participate in at least one political association and 8.9 percent of men participate in at least one political association; 42.9 percent of women participate in at least one nonpolitical association, whereas 32.6 percent of men take part in at least one nonpolitical association.

We had a couple of ways to consider the plausibility of women participating more than men in political associations:

![Figure 5.1 Gender differences in associations in Belo Horizonte 2005](image)

*Source: BHAS 2005*
a) According to Inglehart and Norris (2003) analysis of the *World Values Survey*, the worldwide “rising tide” of women’s civic and political activism leads to an average difference of only 4 percent less in women’s participation as compared to men’s.

b) Internally to our own survey, strikingly, women’s propensity to be more politically engaged was the case for both civic activism and protest activism. We had also included measures of political activism that found women to be more active than men. In the following types of activism, there were statistically significant differences between men and women, and in all of those kinds, women participate more than men:

- 32 percent of women whereas 23.7 percent of men participate in fundraising campaigns;
- 17.9 percent of women participate in boycotts, whereas 12.9 percent of men take part in boycotts;
- 27.9 percent of women whereas 18.5 percent of men participate in public demonstrations.

c) We also found reassurance in a time-use research data for Belo Horizonte, which showed that women spend twice as much time as men in volunteer work and meetings (women spend 27 minutes a day compared with 14 minutes by men). This time use study of the Belo Horizonte Metropolitan Area was also conducted in 2005, and I had participated working as the consultant for a parallel survey to the diaries. As can be seen in Table 5.1 below, women spend more time (minutes per day) in volunteer work and attending meetings.

### Table 5.1 Minutes spent in daily activities during the week and percent of minutes per activity by gender, 2005 Belo Horizonte Metropolitan Area time use study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily activities</th>
<th>Minutes spent per day</th>
<th>Percent of total minutes per activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid work</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household and family care</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer work and meetings</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social life and entertainment</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and outdoor activities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies and GAMES</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass media</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified time</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filling in the time use diary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Minutes</strong></td>
<td><strong>1440</strong></td>
<td><strong>1440</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table constructed by Neuma Aguiar (2005), Principal Investigator of the time use study.
Although these findings can be seen as consistent with an international trend of a “rising tide” of women’s political participation, this result is still remarkable in any current comparative approach – especially for an emergent global south country. Ours was certainly an exciting empirical finding, but how could we explain it? After all, consistently with our theoretical assumptions, we collected data that would allow us to explain why women participate less. Inglehart and Norris (2003) showed a rising tide in gender equality, but we found ourselves having to explain reverse gender political inequality. Below I briefly summarize our explanatory hypotheses and findings (Simões et al. 2009).

The political inequality theoretical model we used (including structural, cultural and family circumstances factors as independent variables) did explain the expected differences we found among women and among men, but, interestingly, did not account for the unexpected reverse inequality between men and women in our survey. Confirming the theoretical model, among women and among men those individuals with more structural and cultural resources showed higher levels of both civic and political activism. However, and contrary to expectations, women participated more than men even when we controlled for structural and cultural factors.

Our findings invited further analysis to both better understand what was being measured and allow for more informed interpretations. Left with the challenge to explain the unexpected empirical finding in the absence of a theoretical framework and corresponding empirical data, we engaged in extensive data exploration and found very interesting as well as plausible clues to unveiling the factors shaping women’s greater participation in the public sphere.

From a historical perspective we knew that women in Brazil had moved from the private sphere into the public sphere as mothers and housewives. In the 1960s women were recruited and mobilized as mothers and housewives to support a military coup and lead the then largest street demonstrations in the history of the country, the Marches of the Family with God for Freedom (Simões 1985). In fact, in the 1970s and 1980s, in the context of transition from military rule to democracy, women were again recruited and organized as mothers and housewives, but this time by progressive social movements. A new female consciousness concern with family survival emerged as working class women joined community associations, mothers clubs and other social movements opposing the military dictatorship and fighting for social justice (Simões and Matos 2009).

Drawing on this historical perspective and against conventional wisdom, our analysis of the our survey data of the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area led us to test and find corroboration for the hypothesis that family roles are both constraining and enabling factors of those Brazilian women’s engagement in public action (for more, see Simões et al. 2009)

Last, I would like to evaluate the impact of the new question we designed on the measurement of women’s participation in political associations.
Imported survey questions

Evaluating our new measure of participation in associations

Participation in associations and activism in Brazil since the 1970s, especially among working class women, was part of the social movement demanding better conditions of living and opposing the military regime. It tended to be informal, meaning that participation very often did not entail formal “membership.” If we look at the percentages of participation in Table 5.2 we find out that among participation in neighborhood/community associations (housing, urban services and infrastructure) is the highest (3.5%) after trade unions (3.8%). It is noteworthy that participation in neighborhood/community associations presented a statistically significant difference in participation between genders.

As noted in a section above, the wording and format of the BHAS question was designed to allow respondents to consider as legitimate answers a wide range of types of participation – therefore the distinction between formal and informal.13

In order to test the impact of our question compared with imported questions that asked about membership, ideally I would have conducted a split ballot experiment. In the absence of that, I found another way we can evaluate the impact of our wording to measure participation in associations including both formal and informal. After asking about respondents to circle participation – formal in informal – in all types of associations, a follow-up question asked if the respondent is a member of the association. This question about formal membership is then interpreted as: (1) Member = participation is formal and (2) Not a member = participation is informal.

Looking at the participation in associations we can distinguish between formal and informal participation in associations. This allows us to interpret the difference between “participation” and “membership” as an under-measurement of par-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political association</th>
<th>Participate: formal and informal</th>
<th>Formal member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood or community association</td>
<td>3.5% (39)</td>
<td>2.4% (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade unions</td>
<td>3.8% (42)</td>
<td>3.6% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory budget</td>
<td>1.2% (11)</td>
<td>0.9% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>1.2% (14)</td>
<td>0.9% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional associations</td>
<td>2.6% (29)</td>
<td>2.0% (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/owners associations</td>
<td>0.8% (9)</td>
<td>0.8% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student association</td>
<td>0.7% (7)</td>
<td>0.5% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>0.4% (5)</td>
<td>0.1% (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
participation when the respondent is asked only about membership or even belonging – as it is the case of the World Values Survey items.

Another question we raised was whether the limitation to membership or formal participation particularly impacted participation by gender. Given that women participate more than men, we expected that even if the measurement reduced participation for both men and women, the impact would be stronger in the case of women’s overall rate of participation, as shown in Table 5.3.

Moreover, taking a closer look at those who participate in neighborhood/community associations (urban services and infrastructure):

- 67 percent (27) of the respondents participate formally and 33 percent (13) participate informally.
- Among those who participate, 13 percent are men and 87 percent are women.

Table 5.3 Differences in political associations between men and women in formal and informal participation and being a formal member in percent (n in parentheses), BHAS 2005 (N = 1122)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Association</th>
<th>Participate: Formal and Informal</th>
<th>Formal member</th>
<th>Changes in gender participation and formal membership only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Diff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood or community association</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>+4.9 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade unions</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>+2.9 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional associations</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>+0.8 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/owners associations</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>+1.30 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student association</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>+1.0 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>+0.3 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory budget</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>+0.5 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Party N</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>+0.3 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N                                         | 535 | 586   |       | 535 | 586   |       |                                             |

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We can also see that less-educated working-class women comprise the great majority of those respondents who would be under-measured in the case of participation in neighborhood/community associations (urban services and infrastructure). Among the 33 percent of the respondents who only participated informally:

- 9 had a family income of only up to 10 Minimum Wages (2005 values).
- 9 classified themselves as working class.
- 10 only had up to secondary education.

Furthermore, among those 33 percent:

- 7 were women with family income up to 10 Minimum Wages (2005 values).
- 8 classified themselves as working-class women.
- 7 were women with only up to secondary education.

Our new measure disclosed the under-measurement of working-class women’s participation in a historically and contextually important political association.

**Implications and concluding comments**

In the sections above I presented theoretical and methodological arguments, and empirical evidence, in support of our assertion that by not distinguishing nor including the formal as well as the informal dimensions, survey questions under-measured participation in political associations in the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area.

An unexpected finding was that women participate more than men – and we presented historical, theoretical and evidence supported interpretations for such surprising finding, given prevailing counter conventional wisdom as well as scholarly research. Despite the small numbers for several types of participation in associations, a key type of participation in associations – neighborhood/community – presented statistical significance for difference between gender. This was also the type of association with higher participation, and in which women represented the vast majority of participants.

Another type of association with statistical significance between gender is workers’ unions, with 30 women in a total of 42 members. However, given the nature of association to trade unions – basically formal membership – we only had a few cases of informal participation.

What are the theoretical and methodological implications of those findings? First, I would also like to point out the implications of the findings for the feminist researcher approach to survey methodology. Lack of contextualization is often pointed out as a serious limitation of survey methodology by researchers from various schools of thought, and often even more forcefully by feminist researchers in their (a) criticisms of positivism’s failure to identify the contextual aspects built into scientific practices and (b) claims that scientific pursuits must be culturally grounded (e.g. Sprague 2005; Harding 2008). This critical approach from a
feminist research perspective is applied to survey methodology by Harnois (2013), who points out that feminist have expressed concerns with quantitative survey research claiming that it ignores the contextualized lives of respondents. Adding to this epistemological concern, in their review of feminist approaches to survey methodology, Miner and Jayaratne (2013) argue that “the feminist perspective is most applicable during two specific points in the research process: the development of research questions and the interpretations of findings . . . The middle of the survey research process should be the least influenced by the feminist or any other perspective, because it is during this stage that accepted survey research protocols should be followed” (304).

It was our concern and work with the operational definitions and measurement of participation in the “middle stage” of questionnaire design that allowed for the disclosure of a dimension of women’s participation that would otherwise having been hidden. Thus, I view this study as one instance in which the feminist approach to survey methodology would have failed to fully grasp the extent and dimensions of female participation in political associations in the BHAS.

After this cursory consideration of the implication of this study for feminist survey methodology, I find that the distinction between formal and informal dimensions might also be relevant for the refinement of the theoretical definition and valid measurement of participation in associations in other developing world or “global south” contexts. Such distinction might have theoretical as well as methodological implications and should be tested in those contexts. Recently, a lot of attention has been given to what has been called global sociology, and the need to produce theory that is actually capable of linking the global and the local. Given the dominance of sociological theory produced in the so called global north countries on the one hand, we should inquire how that theory might be too close to the empirical contexts where they were produced. On the other hand, we should not be just positing the “specific realities” of the local contexts that those theories ignore or cannot account for. The greater challenge is to use the conceptual distinctions and contextualized measurements for the refinement of “global” concepts and theories. In other words, we should also be able to generalize from the empirical contexts of the global south.

Moreover and beyond the local/global, global south/global north controversies, one could also question if the distinction between formal and informal dimensions of participation in associations might be relevant for the theory and empirical investigation of participation in associations by class and gender within the global north. For example, would informal participation be also relevant for the investigation of working-class and women political association in other contexts? A global sociology should strive to produce theory and empirical measurements from various localized global contexts with the potential of generalization.

Survey methodology is often used by sociologist to test theories and make empirical generalizations to the universe the samples were drawn from. I find at least two problems with this premise. First, it was often the case that those theories, although often not tested in the global south, were used for generalizations of both theoretical and empirical nature to the global south. With the advancement
of a global sociology, we do have a growing number of cross-national surveys that, although concerned with understanding and taking into account the local contexts, are still often an exercise of replication of questions “validated” in the global north. This is not a blame to be borne by the global north researchers alone – researchers from the global north and south, we are all – even if for different reasons and different extents – guilty of that. A “global survey methodology” will require a substantive dismantling of the international division of intellectual labor, with a growing participation of equal researcher partners from the global north and south in all stages of development of cross-national surveys – from conceptualization to data collection, analysis and publications.

Notes

1 The BHAS is part of a series of initiatives by Brazilian PIs and American collaborators from the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research, who engaged in the overall goal of filling a major gap in the quantitative methods training of Brazilian social scientists. These initiatives have included a yearly training program in quantitative methodology at UFMG, and it integrates the teaching of survey methodology with research through the Belo Horizonte Area Survey (BHAS).

2 The BHAS 2002, 2005 and 2008 waves conducted extensive pretests of the questionnaire, developing a highly structured and rigorous pretest methodology combining focus groups, cognitive interviewing, and a comprehensive standardized interviewer report for each interview conducted. For a detailed account of the data design and collection methodology developed for the BHAS see Simões and Pereira (2007).

3 While an Adjunct Faculty Associate at the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research, I co-coordinated the following cross-national surveys: the Global Environmental Survey in Brazil, China, Japan, Canada, the Netherlands and Germany; the Social Hubble Project on Poverty and Inequality in Brazil and South Africa; and the Social Hubble Module on Gender Inequality in Belo Horizonte, Cape Town and Petrozavodsk.

4 The Global Environmental Survey (GOES) was an international comparative project on mass public and decision makers’ attitudes and behavior concerning global environmental problems. The GOES surveys were conducted in Brazil, China, Japan, China, the Netherlands, Germany, and Canada. Research workshops were conducted in Palo Alto, Barcelona, Oslo, Belo Horizonte, Ann Arbor and Kobe. The findings were published in P. Ester, H. Vinken, S. Simões, and M. Aoyagi-Usui (eds) (2003), Culture and Sustainability: A Cross-National Study of Cultural Diversity and Environmental Priorities among Mass Publics and Decision Makers, Amsterdam: Dutch University Press.

5 The Social Hubble Project on Inequality and Poverty in Brazil and South Africa. An international comparative project, housed at the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research, was conducted through the Belo Horizonte Area Survey 2005 and the Cape Area Study 2005.

6 The two UFMG’s political scientists collaborating in the “Participation in Associations and Political Participation Module” were Leonardo Avritz and Fátima Anastacia.

7 The participatory budget is a model of public administration that aims to meet the demands and foster participation and representation of civil society in city budget decisions through regular consultations at neighborhood and city level assemblies. The most successful experience of this type of policy that became a basic and inspiring model for cities throughout the world has been developed and implemented in the city of Porto Alegre (Brazil) since 1989. Various experiences in city participatory budgets
in Brazil, and their implications for democratic governance are presented and analyzed in Avritzer and Navarro, 2003.

8 In BHAS 2005 data, human rights associations are classified as non-political because the types of the associations in which people declared to take part are mostly charity-based associations, which are not involved in interest conflict or aimed at influencing the regulation of the distribution of social goods and values (see Bueno and Fialho 2009).

9 In a few associations that did not present a statistically significant difference between genders, women had higher rates of participation. We believe that owing to the small number of participants in those associations included in our sample, the statistical test resulted in not being significant.

10 Women also participate more in signing petitions and in strikes, but these forms of activism did not show statistical significant difference.

11 2005 Time Use Study and Parallel Survey, conducted among a probability sample of the population of the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area, in 2005, under the coordination of Neuma Aguiar.


13 The full questionnaire is available upon request to the author.

14 In 2005 the national minimum wage, regulated by the federal government, was 300 Reais (US$119.52). One way of evaluating the purchasing power of the MW is to compare it to the “cesta básica” (a minimum food supply for an adult worker). In 2005 the MW was worth 1.6 “cestas básicas”.

References


Imported survey questions


Proof

Taylor & Francis
Not for distribution
Part III

Empirical analyses
Proof

Taylor & Francis
Not for distribution
6 Political capital and the unequal career origins of the political elite in Chile

Alfredo Joignant, Lucas Perello and Javier Torres

Social scientists have long been interested in the institutional logic of the selection and recruitment of candidates for election and political appointment. It is thanks to this work that governing bodies implement reforms to make access to government or parliament more democratic. However, this literature underemphasizes agents’ sources of power before they achieve important positions in the political field, i.e. the agents’ social origins. The political field is characterized by many forms of closure.2 The social composition of the political elite reveals the social nature of the closure of the political field.

Agents enter the political field unequally endowed with certain resources. While different from ordinary citizens, particularly those whose relationship with politics is only intermittent, the political elite also differ among themselves in that those who have entered and stayed in the political field do not draw on the same resources. They differ from each other in status attainment, wealth, demographics and other markers of stratification.

They also differ in the social origins of their political career. Some started as student leaders in the university, as members of a family’s political dynasty, as party lifers toiling in the local and regional party organization, and as economists and technocrats, among others. These social origins we refer to as “capital” that is invested in the start of a career in the political elite. This capital investment determines both the shape of their early career paths and their possible trajectories.

In this chapter, we empirically examine the forms of political capital that aspirants to the Chilean political elite have used in their access to and ascendance in the political field.

Forms of political capital

Talent, skill, intelligence and, in some cases, genius are attributes that tend to be used to explain success in politics, ignoring the fact that these attributes are merely superficial descriptions that conceal the key aspects of the start of their political career. According to Besley (2005), “political competence is probably a complex mix of skills” (which may be “innate or acquired”), ranging from “intangible leadership skills, like persuading others in debate or inspiring trust,” to “more
standard analytical” talents such as “spotting flaws in policy proposals” (48). The key aspects are what we refer to as political capital.

Political capital is resources with their origin exclusively in the political field, such as party membership, campaigning on behalf of an election candidate, and regular participation in collective activities in support of a cause (Norris 2007). The agent develops skills, ties, and know-how that may be valued by a party, leader or candidate. The common denominator of capital with value in the political field is the trust and worth with which its holders are credited. A person’s political capital may encourage them to make investments in a bid to enter the political field. We underline the great variety of resources that can be invested in the political field.

Once access to the political field has been gained by holding a position, the cards of the production and reproduction of the political capital so acquired are played strategically. The value of capital lies in the political and social conditions in which it is used.

Studies of political careers in countries such as the United States, Mexico, Brazil, France, and Chile suggest a few major types of political capital. One of these is bequeathed as family capital. It takes into account the transfer between parents and their children of networks, reputation, clienteles, and connections with donors of campaign financing, as well as political ideology. This is the only type that does not need to be actively acquired by an aspirant to the political elite.

A second type is university capital. It is within the perimeter of student political organizations (generally at university but also during secondary education) that early forms of political leadership are acquired or developed, with all that this implies in terms of organizational skills, approach to public speaking and so on. Depending on the country, this is a resource that can be accumulated early in life (for example, in the context of federations of secondary school students in Chile) and, more generally, while at university (by leading faculty student unions or student federations). Recognition of this resource cannot be too long delayed since its value lies precisely in its early investment and use.

There are two types of capital that depend on position in political parties. Militant political capital (Matonti and Poupeau 2004) is immersion in party life over long periods but without this necessarily being in positions of leadership within the organization. Oligarchic political capital consists of the acquisition of knowledge and skills in periods of party membership that are not necessarily prolonged but do lead to front-line positions in the organization.

A further type of capital, very much in fashion in Latin America after the wave of economic liberalization reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, is of a technocratic nature and also falls into two types. One of these is pragmatic technocratic, associated with very prestigious academic credentials and a political independence (see Centeno 1993). The other is the political technocratic subspecies referred to by Grindle (1977) and Ai Camp (1995) that also implies high-level qualifications from leading universities but, in this case, can be accompanied by more or less active forms of party membership.

These two technocratic subspecies of capital should not be confused with technopolitical capital (Joignant 2011b and 2011c) since this latter resource simulta-
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neously brings together both an important endowment of cultural capital in the form of prestigious degrees and an important stock of party capital. This combination of resources is reflected in agents who tend to exert dominance within certain disciplines in the social sciences (particularly economics and, to a lesser extent, political science and sociology) and to have considerable power within the parties to which they belong (through front-line positions in the party) (see also Williamson 1994; Dominguez 1997; Wallis 1997 and 1999; Wallis and Dollery 2001; Dézalay and Garth 2002).

Data and methods

From various public sources we created a list of all the individuals who held the key electoral or appointed positions in Chile between 1990 and 2010. During the 20 years that the same center-left coalition (the Concertación) governed Chile, a total of 1,461 people held these positions. From this group, we selected 590 individuals that form the nucleus of the elite.13 The nucleus are those who held the most important positions in Chile during this time, including former Presidents, Ministers, Cabinet members and governors, parliamentarians and chiefs of staff who survived multiple elections and administrations, and heads of state-owned or state-controlled banks and companies (see below). We conducted the survey from 2010 to 2011 and received answers by face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, a web-based survey, and a pen and paper survey (in some cases, after the first contact, the survey was delivered by private mail and recovered by one member of the research team).15

We attempted to contact and survey the entire nucleus16 and ended with 386 respondents that represent 68.31 percent of the living members of the elite nucleus.17 In our dataset,18 the majority are government officials: 32 percent members of the lower house of parliament, 27 percent ministers, 15 percent chiefs of staff and the ministerial division, 10 percent undersecretaries, and 7 percent senators, as well as six members of governing bodies of the political parties, four regional governors, and three former Presidents of the Republic. The rest (6 percent) were presidents of the Central Bank, superintendents, and directors of state-owned companies.

The survey instrument contained 41 questions that addressed diverse issues including that which is of relevance to this chapter: types and place of education, family political relations, and professional career before entering the political field through an appointment or election. We identified the types of capital through their answers to the survey items.

Family (defined as parents, grandparents and in-laws) capital is measured by parents’ political ideology on left-right scale, and that a family member held key public or private posts.19 University capital is measured by whether they held positions of leadership in a student organization. Militant political capital is measured by whether they held positions of party leadership at the local or regional levels only, and oligarchic political capital is measured by whether they held positions of party leadership at the national level. Technocratic pragmatists hold a master’s degree or PhD and answered that appointment and/or election was result of
previous professional trajectory. Technocratic Politicos also must hold a master’s degree or PhD, and in addition they belonged to a think tank before first appointment or election. This last group differs from the Technopoliticos, who hold master’s degree or PhD in economics, political science or sociology, but in lieu of such degrees could have numerous publications in one or several of these disciplines; they must also have held unipersonal posts (president, vice-president or secretary general) at national level in the party or in the organization’s most important collective body.

Party membership of the respondent is important for all types of capital with some key variations, such as the case of family capital, in which party membership of respondent’s parents is important, and the pragmatic technocrats, who are partly defined as not being members of a party.

The volume and structure of political capital

To enter and remain in the political field, agents deploy their capital. There are two interrelated characteristics of this deployment that are of interest. First is the raw number of types of capital they can deploy, which we call the volume of capital. Second are the types of capital they deploy, which we call –after Bourdieu– the structure of capital. Volume by itself carries little information, but when coupled with structure, we can observe the efficiency with which the member of the elite deployed their capital to obtain their position.

First, we look at the volume of capital only. If we exclude notoriety (Maticheskou and Protsyk 2011) and charismatic (Bernadou 2007) capital (two species of capital that deserve case studies), less than a quarter have only one type (24 percent), and almost half (48 percent) of this nucleus of the elite has more than one type of capital. Of these, the majority has only two types (31 percent). Less than 3 percent have more than four types (the maximum is five).

Next, we couple volume with structure. Of the 93 interviewees who possessed only one type, most held oligarchic political capital (N = 63); of the 123 interviewees with two species of capital, most of this group also held oligarchic political capital (N = 98). These numbers suggest occupying positions at the national level is a more efficient means of accessing the nucleus of the elite than in any other way.

Family and university capital is more prevalent among those with two or more forms of capital. This suggests that family and university capital are not in themselves an efficient means of entering the nucleus of the political elite. Technocratic capital and technopolitical capital are not prevalent in any case.

Over a quarter (28 percent) has no capital, which begs the question: how were these individuals able to access positions of public authority? It is possible that these forms of capital can be replaced by personal relations or friendships, notably with the President. Of this group, 60 percent indicated that personal relations were decisive in their first appointment, and over half had served as chief of staff and/or division (52.8 percent) and, to a lesser extent, as ministers (11.1 percent), undersecretaries (4.6 percent) and regional governors (3.7 percent).
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owe their access to the post to a relation of loyalty with an agent further up the hierarchy.

Conclusion

The empirical evidence obtained by surveying select members of the Chilean political elite shows the deep inequalities that exist at the origin of political careers. The capital at the disposal of the members of the political elite differs widely as regards both its volume and structure; they do not start their political careers on the same footing. The literature which puts emphasis on agents’ skills should pay greater attention to the resources they possess at the moment of deciding to stand as candidates or of being appointed to some position of political trust. It is against this background of extremely unequal resources that institutional mechanisms for selecting candidates and the more or less informal networks that lead a president to appoint a given individual to a position of trust operate.

Notes

1 We would like to thank Fernando Rosenblatt and Patricio Navia for their insightful comments on a longer version of this article. This research was supported by FONDECYT grant 1130054 and is included in the FONDAP project 15 13 0009 (“Center for Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies”, CSOCC).
2 Indeed, “renewal of political elites is inevitably followed by a closure of the political class” (Best 2003: 20). See the interesting work of Bermeo 2003 on the phenomena of the circulation of elites at times of change from authoritarian to democratic types of regime in South European countries.
3 Swenson 1982; Diermeier, Keane and Merlo 2005; Feinstein, 2010.
7 Joignant 2011a and 2011b; Delamaza 2011; Dávila 2011; Cordero and Funk 2011; Silva 2008 and 2011.
8 In some cases between grandparents and grandchildren or a combination of situations typical of families and a fortiori of political dynasties.
9 Unless politicians’ strategies as regards their children’s marriages are considered the result of calculation.
10 Although it is possible to imagine a situation in which particularly outstanding student leaders access the political field without passing through the parties, access to the field tends to depend on generally pre-existing parties that take in and promote the bearer of this capital. It is possible that student leaders invest their leadership resources in founding a new party.
12 This subspecies of capital draws on Michels 1971.
13 Given that it refers only to cases of persons who form part of the political elite in that they held hierarchical positions in government and/or congress, it does not examine the capital and resources required for access to this elite. It could, in fact, well be that individuals who do not form part of the political elite also possess the species of capital that we know members of the political elite to possess. We do not know of any data that we could use to compare elites to non-elites.
14 Of the members of the lower house and senate, the criteria were that they were re-elected at least once or with a term as lower house representative and a term as senator.
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Of the chiefs of staff or other key positions in the ministry, we included only those who “survived” more than one presidential term or went on to another equivalent or higher position.

15 To increase the response rate, we employed two professional political journalists.

16 Not all members of this group belong to the center-left. We include individuals who describe themselves as independent and a significant number of center-right senators and lower house representatives agreed to answer the survey.

17 24 people in this nucleus have died (two after being surveyed) while the remainder declined to be surveyed or could not be contacted.

18 Interviewees were classified by the highest position as defined under Chilean protocol.

19 The question about posts and political positions held by parents, grandparents, and parents-in-law envisaged 42 alternatives but, for the purposes of this study, we focused on five positions: president, minister, undersecretary, senator, and lower house representative. In this sense, the importance of family capital inherited by the interviewee could be much greater than indicated here had we considered relatives who were regional governors or ambassadors or who were members of their party’s leadership (which could lead to political families linked to just one party). For all these reasons, the study contains only limited discussion of family capital, a resource that should be studied in its own right.

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The political elite in Chile


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7 Elite perception of inequality as a threat to democracy in Six Latin American countries

Matias Lopez

Democracy is a political system that presumes a fairly egalitarian access to the political sphere and many consider economic inequality as its antithesis (Diamond 2008). Some scholars argue that inequality jeopardizes transitions toward democracy (Boix 2003; Lipset 1960). Some disagree. Ansell and Samuels (2010) suggest that the specific combination of land equality and income inequality actually makes democracy more likely to emerge. Other scholars argue that we should consider the level of democracy that these countries transition into, i.e. although an electoral democracy can take place in highly unequal societies (as it has), inequality inhibits its transition toward a full democracy (O’Donnell et al. 2004).

More importantly for this chapter, some argue that economic inequality destabilizes existing democracies (Diamond 2008; O’Donnell et al. 2004; Sorj and Mertuccelli 2008). This is precisely what makes Latin America a puzzle: it contains deep economic inequality, yet democratic rule is fairly stable. Several of the more consolidated Latin American democracies, such as Chile and Brazil, have very high levels of economic inequality. On the other hand, Venezuela currently holds the lowest recorded level of economic inequality in the region and is also among those with the lowest levels of democracy (see Côrtes and Dubrow 2011: 5).

I empirically examine the role of Latin American elites in this puzzle. By elites I mean the small group of actors occupying the main power positions in very influential institutions among the state, the market and civil society (see López 2013a). Classical and contemporary elite theorists argue that elite interaction – cleavages within the elite, but also with the masses – shapes the level of democracy in political systems (Michels 2009 [1915]; Dogan and Higley 1998; Higley and Burton 2006). Yet by focusing too much on inter-elite struggles, we run the risk of not giving enough attention to the relationship between elites and masses.

Objectively speaking, elites have good reasons to fear mass inequality. Studies have demonstrated the effects of inequality in political and social conflict (e.g. Muller and Seligson 1987; Schock 1996; Sigelman and Simpson 1977). In other words, inequality is likely to generate externalities that threaten those in the top. Elites in other parts of the world (i.e. the West) have reacted to inequality by instituting a social welfare system – they did this to shield themselves from undesirable outcomes of inequality such as street violence and health epidemics (de
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Swaan 1988; de Swaan et al. 2000; Reis and Moore 2005). Elite sponsorship of a more egalitarian resource distribution pays off, as elites benefit from living in a secure society, from having an educated labor force and from counting on voters who are loyal to democratic institutions. The social landscape in Latin America during and after transitions was the opposite: elites experienced democratization in a context extreme urban violence (Briceño-León and Zubillaga 2002) and relied on voters who distrust democratic institutions (Cruz-Coke 2008).

The effects of threat perceptions

In Latin America, economic inequality can be a political problem for the elite, yet we know little of the extent to which elites actually fear inequality and consider it a threat to the democracy on which they depend.

Two main theories on this subject are divided on the topic of elite reactions to perceived threats. Political culture theory suggests that, when Latin American elites feel threatened, they rely on their recent pre-democracy cultural understanding and tend toward authoritarian measures (Stevens et al. 2006). Rational choice theory suggests the opposite: when the elite perceive threats, they calculate that less inequality will suppress undesirable outcomes and thus become more supportive of social-democratic measures (de Swaan 1988; Acemoglu and Robinson 2000, 2006).

In order to explore elites’ reactions to inequality and their effect in the political realm I used survey data (n = 833) with elites from six Latin American countries: Argentina (n = 133); Bolivia (n = 89); Brazil (n = 187); Chile (n = 166); Mexico (n = 145) and Venezuela (n = 113). Together, these six countries contain about 80 percent of the Latin American population. The survey was conducted by the University of São Paulo between 2007 and 2008 covering governmental elites, party leaders, corporate elites, union leaders and civil society leaders (see the methodological appendix at the end of the chapter).

I merged the survey data with macro-level data on social inequality, democratic status and welfare performance. The data on inequality comes from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt 2008). I used an adaptation of Freedom House scores2 as a measure of democratic status and data from Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI)3 as a measure on welfare regime.

Elites in the survey were asked the following question: “I will now read a series of factors that many consider being obstacles to democracy in South American countries. I would like you to mention, within a scale from 1 to 10, how much each factor negatively influences democracy in your country. The greater the value, the greater the negative influence.” The elites were asked about the extent of the negative influence of “high rates of poverty and inequality.” The measurement of threat perception is on a scale where 1 means “inequality does not represent a threat to democracy” and 10 means “inequality represents a major threat to democracy.”

Table 7.1 summarizes the mean scores of threat perceptions among the elite in six Latin American countries, contrasting the data with their actual levels of inequality.
The range of threat perception starts quite high up and the means, medians and standard deviations suggest little variation across countries – there are no ‘un-worried’ countries in the sample. There are reasons to believe that confirmation bias took place here. In essence, elites were asked whether inequality means something bad or not. Yet the proportion of elites that chose the highest score of 10 on this scale presents a different scenario, ranging from slightly over half the Mexican elite sample (52 percent) perceiving inequality as a major threat to democracy to slightly over a third of the Bolivian elite sample (35 percent) seeing things this way. Even if social desirability was a factor, the variation in high end scores shows that elites feel more constrained to consider inequality as a political problem in some countries than in others. It is noteworthy that the cases with greater proportion of high scores are also among the most economically unequal in Latin America.

Previous empirical studies suggest that, in the long run, high threat perception among elites is likely to relate to decreasing levels of economic inequality (de Swaan 1988; Acemoglu and Robinson 2000, 2006). Logically, diminishing economic inequality is expected to be associated with the presence of elites who care about economic inequality. A potential causal mechanism is that, as a defense strategy, elites who perceive inequality as a threat will promote policy that reduces inequality.

Yet there is no apparent relationship between high scores of threat perceptions, i.e. the proportion of extremely worried elites, and decrease in economic inequality in the following years (see Figure 7.1a). This is much due to Bolivia, an extreme case in both measures. Within a wider temporal range, including previous years, reduction of inequality actually relates to less threatened elites (Figure 7.1b).

The negative correlation shows that concern over inequality does not predict success in reducing inequality in the cases analyzed.

It is also logical to hypothesize that higher levels of democracy are positively associated with higher levels of threat perception. Strong democracies are staffed with elites who feel that democracy is something worth preserving. There may be selfish reasons for this, such that the elite see that they have benefited from

Table 7.1 Scores of threat perception and Gini Coefficients in six Latin American countries, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>percent Highest Score (10)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Gini in 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>43%</strong></td>
<td><strong>821</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.44</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Author calculations from USP elite survey 2008 and Standardized World Income Inequality Database V4 2013.
democracy and thus owe their privileged positions to its existence. No matter the reason, the logic holds that strong democracies have elites who care about threats to democracy. But why would they care about inequality as a threat? The logic is as follows: strong democracies have free and fair elections; the masses use these elections to sanction poorly performing elites; if masses are unsatisfied with the level of inequality, they could threaten the elite by voting them out of office and demanding policies that more equitably redistribute economic resources, an outcome that is of concern even beyond the political elite. Strong democracies would...
Figure 7.2 shows the correlation between perceptions of threat posed by inequality and the countries’ actual democratic performance, according to Freedom House scores in the same year (2008). I inverted the values of the Freedom House index so that the higher the score the better the democratic performance.

Figure 7.2 reveals a strong and significant correlation between threat perceptions and democracy, meaning that weaker democracies tend toward weaker threat perceptions, and strong democracies tend toward greater levels of threat. When I substituted the proportion of threatened elites with mean scores, the result was weaker ($R^2 = 0.64$) yet in the same direction and still considerably strong.

Yet, these data suggest that threat perception is not strongly associated with changes to the level of democracy, as Freedom House scores generally did not vary in the following years. There were two exceptions: Mexico became 1.5 points more democratic and Venezuela who became 1.5 points less democratic. The fact that the country with greater proportion of exceedingly worried elites showed an improvement in its democracy, while the one with the least worried elite showed a democratic drawback, is suggestive.

According to rational choice theory, threat perception is related to welfare state policies; where elites feel that inequality threatens democracy, they may react by strengthening the welfare state. Causality could run the other way: as welfare regimes get stronger, elites get more concerned about the political implications of

**Figure 7.2** Threat perception and level of democracy

$r = 0.938**; \text{sig} < 0.01$

inequality. In either case, there should be a positive association between higher levels of threat perception and greater welfare states.

Figure 7.3 shows the correlation between threat perceptions and the current status of the welfare regime in each case, according to Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI) in 2012, four years after the survey. BTI is an expert survey and measures efficiency in welfare regime in each country with two core questions: (a) to what extent do social safety nets provide compensation for social risks? And (b) to what extent does equality of opportunity exist? It would be expected for welfare status to improve given the high rates of elite concern, yet BTI scores for welfare remained stable during this period.

No significant relationship was found between threat perception and BTI scores for welfare regime four years after the survey. Yet one should note that Mexican scores are flattening the correlation. Without Mexico, the relationship strengthens considerably ($R^2 = 0.47$). Thus, having worried elites may in fact help to achieve better welfare performance, while not being sufficient to conduct such improvement on its own.

Threat perceptions, democracy and historical legacies

Latin American elites that are the most worried about the political outcomes of inequality are, typically, those from stronger yet more unequal democracies, with recent success in diminishing inequality and improved welfare regimes. Argentina, Brazil and Chile are typical cases of countries with threatened elites. These three countries had clear cases of recent authoritarian rule via military dictatorships

![Figure 7.3 Threat perception and welfare regime transformation](image)

$r = .312; \text{ not significant}$

Source: USP elite survey 2008 and BTI 2012
before the 1990s. Yet elites in those cases took significantly different paths ever since democratization and they may have different reasons to fear inequality.

After joining the third wave of democratization in the 1980s, Argentina was marked by populist rule and wild opening to the market economy. In the turn of the century a severe economic recession triggered massive riots and governments fell one after the other. Political stability was recovered with Kirchnerismo (a political faction named after the president Nestor Kirchner), who presented a pro-poor discourse. Now under the rule of widower Cristina de Kirchner, Kirchnerismo managed to cool down the poor, yet it has eroded the Argentinian democratic status due to the centralization of power, manipulation of official numbers and promotion of constrains over the press. The welfare performance is average according to BTI, yet political use of cash transfer programs is much denounced. Overall Argentinian elites have good reasons to fear inequality since the poor have proven to be capable of overthrowing governments, trashing businesses and supporting antidemocratic rulers.

Chile was one of the last countries to democratize in South America, leaving General Pinochet’s authoritarian regime behind in 1991. Chilean society quickly adapted to democratic rule. Contrary to neighboring Argentina, economic stability set the tone of the 1990s and 2000s. Electoral routine was also stable and welfare performance and poor relief in Chile are hold as an example in current Latin America. Despite success in poor relief, inequality remains high and some conflicts with student movements and indigenous groups have increased in the past years.

Bolivia and Venezuela are typical cases of weak democracies in the region, so it makes sense that their elites are less worried about a system they do not fully endorse. Nevertheless, they are not exactly parallel cases. Bolivia is a multicultural nation, where indigenous people have long been kept aside from mainstream politics. Bolivia is also poor; it stands at the bottom of income per capita in the region. In 2005, cocalero leader Evo Morales was elected the first president with indigenous descent. Since then, a division within the national elite took place and elites in wealthy regions of the country tried to impose a more effective separation between administrative regions. As that maneuver failed, inter-elite struggle increased. As political elites in office strike back, the democratic status of the country erodes. Inequality in Bolivia is severally elevated, yet threat perception is not that high. Welfare performance is also very poor, despite the fact that there is a left-wing government in office.

Venezuela experiences a similar political situation, with the exception that it is an oil rich country with a moderated level of inequality and a previous history of democratic stability. Venezuelan elites did not seem to worry about the political action of non-elites until Chavez and his political movement managed to capitalize popular dissatisfaction. Elected in 1998, Chavez faced strong opposition and even a failed coup d'état in 2002. From then on, Chavismo became increasingly authoritarian. Opposition leaders were persecuted, the free press was harassed and even forced out of business, and governmental agencies were used as party ramifications. Venezuela is now at best an electoral democracy, and some studies
have questioned even that (see Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2012). Welfare, however, seem to be of reasonable performance within the region. Lacking both extreme inequality and democracy, Venezuelan elites’ lack of concern in that regard is at least logical.

Mexico stands out as a deviant case in the sample; its elite express the greatest level of concern with inequality yet it comes with neither a strong democratic status nor good welfare performance. Despite not having a military regime in its recent history, Mexico’s one-party system^ during seven decades can hardly be taken as a good example of democratic rule. Ever since real electoral competition was introduced in 2000, Mexico has experienced democratization. Nevertheless, the scale of violence seems to be deteriorating recent democratic achievements. Elites may be connecting the problem of extreme inequality with the current social crisis, thus worrying about democracy’s future in Mexico under such conditions. The Mexican welfare regime performs badly in comparison with other major economies in the region, denouncing failure to promote public goods despite of high elite concern.

Elite reaction to inequality: The case of Brazil

Although modern-day elites in Latin America believe that poverty and inequality is a threat to democracy, it is likely that there are differences in magnitude of that belief within the elite, and that these differences influence what they are willing to do about it. I present an in-depth case study of Brazil to show this complexity.

Brazil, as most Latin American countries, presents a multi-racial society with a strong record of income, educational, racial and political inequality (Hasenbalg and Silva 1999) and was considered a typical case of authoritarian modernization (Reis 1979; Schwartzman 1988). Before democratization in the late 1980s, Brazil had experienced only two brief, and often contested, democratic experiences. The first democratic experience happened between 1889 and 1930 and consisted of a restricted regime, ruled by landlords through a bi-party system. The next started in 1945 and ended in 1964, when a military coup established a military regime. Meanwhile, modernization is often attributed to the periods of authoritarian rule, rather than to these two periods. Contrary to other countries in the region such as Argentina and Uruguay that experienced quick regime changes, Brazilian democratization between the late 1970s and 1990s was at a slow pace. Regime change in Brazil also took place under great pressures of increasing poverty, inequality, criminality and a severe fiscal crisis. By the early 1990s, Brazil was considered the most unequal country in the world.

The welfare regime improved significantly in Brazil since democratization and poverty decreased consistently in the following decades. In 2002, former union leader Lula da Silva of the Worker’s Party was elected president and his government stimulated an ambitious anti-poverty agenda. During the Workers Party’s three terms in office to date, economic inequality decreased. For this reason, the politics of inequality is often associated with a shift toward the left. Currently, Brazil is among the countries that is undergoing great political transformations (see
Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2012). Overall, there has been a shift toward democratic stability, institutional consolidation and welfare expansion.

Yet Brazilian elites should have good reasons to perceive inequality as a political threat. Objectively, business elites could be concerned about important limitations of economic life and political elites could fear electoral accountability. Beyond politics, elites also acknowledge that inequality is a source of urban violence (López 2013b; Reis 2011). Therefore, they have strong reasons to fear inequality in their private life as well. Many elites tried to overcome threats by moving into safer neighborhoods and by investing in private security. Yet elites continued to feel victimized by kidnaps, robbery and gunfire in the slums adjacent to the wealthy areas (Caldeira 2000). Inequality could also directly affect elites’ wealth. Land invasions became routine during the 1990s. In urban areas, proprieties could easily lose value due to the expansion of slums. Traditional families where virtually expelled by the poor and former noble areas show a marked decline.

The Brazilian sample in the 2008 survey shows that threat perception is consistent among elite sectors (see Table 7.2). Taking the highest score, we see some variation, with union leaders (33 percent) as the least likely to see inequality as a major threat to democracy.

How have Brazilian elites reacted to this threat? Scholars have different interpretations over what is driving elites’ apparent change of attitudes about distribution. Using the same survey data analyzed in this chapter, Balbachevsky and Holzhacker (2011) argue that Brazilian elites converged toward a democratic and egalitarian drive, merging themselves with the masses in their aspiration for equality and social redistribution. Filgueira (2011) argues that, generally in Latin America, the economic policy of the 1990s (often associated with what some refer to as the Washington Consensus) led to an incorporation crisis that ultimately led new elites to incorporate the underclass in the political and economic agenda. This argument implies a reaction to a political threat posed by inequality. Concordantly, Blofield (2011) claims that Latin American elites reacted to demands from the bottom to avoid political damage. Both authors relate this phenomenon with the current shift toward the left.

This idea of a “shift” resembles classical elite theory’s notion of elite circulation (see López 2013a). Yet, in Brazil the idea of strong elite circulation could

| Table 7.2 Threat perception among the Brazilian elite in 2008 by sector |
|----------------------|------|-------|--------|------------------|
|                      | Mean | Median| SD     | percent of highest score (10) | n    |
| Government           | 8.6  | 8.9   | 1.6    | 40%                           | 38   |
| Party leaders        | 8.5  | 9.2   | 2      | 44%                           | 48   |
| Businessmen          | 8.6  | 9     | 1.8    | 43%                           | 46   |
| Civil society leaders| 8.5  | 9     | 1.8    | 42%                           | 40   |
| Union leaders        | 8.7  | 9     | 1.5    | 33%                           | 14   |
| **Total**            | **8.6** | **9** | **1.8** | **42%**                      | **186** |

easily be contested. Several of the people and policies held by the current leftist government where actually in place or developed during the former centrist government. Overall, there is much more continuity in the Brazilian politics than there is great rupture. As elites seem to agree on what to do, political debates often focus on corruption scandals and reputation disputes.

Brazilian elites from different sectors are almost unanimous in supporting all kinds of social policy, yet many favor social policy as long as they do not have to sponsor it by paying more taxes.

Figure 7.4 shows two indexes of support for more social spending and support for more taxation on income, property, capital, plus participation of workers in

![Figure 7.4](image)

**Figure 7.4** Brazilian elite agreement with further social investment and with further taxation

*(Note: The agreement index for spending was built out of five variables on a Likert scale measuring support for more spending on social policies. The agreement index for taxation was built out of five variables measuring support for more taxation, also on a Likert scale. Each agreement index is 0 = no agreement and 4.5 = full agreement. Standard deviations for Spending: Gov = 0.51; Par = 0.86; Bus = 0.81; UL = 0.23; CSL = 0.81; Standard deviations for Taxation: Gov = 0.1; Par = 0.14; Bus = 1.99; UL = 0.38; CSL = 0.14; Average mean for Spending of all elite combined = 3.6 and for Taxation = 2.7; Average standard deviation for Spending of all elite combined = 0.81 and for Taxation = 0.13; n for Spending = 183 and for Taxation = 180. Source of the data is the USP elite survey in 2008.)*
profits. Except for Union leaders, all elite sectors scored higher for spending than for taxation, meaning that they desire more state action but are not willing to sponsor it. Looking at standard deviations, all elite sectors analyzed showed greater consistency on the need for more spending than on the need of further taxation. This is specially the case of the business elites, which may see themselves as the primary target of further taxation.

Union leaders may believe that they will not be the ones paying extra taxes, as they picture themselves as part of the working class, not the elite (Filgueira 1990). The result for civil society leaders is quite different. Despite growing ties between the state and the third sector in Brazil, civil society leaders highly distrust the state (Lopez et al. 2011). Furthermore, leaders in top civil society organizations (as the ones surveyed) are likely to come from well-off backgrounds, thus been resilient to give up economic privilege.

There is some evidence in the survey supporting this hypothesis. Amongst civil society leaders in the sample, 97.5 percent held a university degree, and almost 70 percent of those with higher education held also a doctoral or MA degree. Among union leaders in the sample, the proportion of university degrees drops to 40 percent, with not a single case of graduate education. This indicates that union leaders are outliers not only in their opinion, but probably in elite networks as well. Generally among elite sectors in Brazil, education reasonably predicts rejection to taxation, as it significantly correlates negatively with the index ($r = -0.217$).

Overall, the contrast between support to social spending and support to more taxation reveals an important feature of the Brazilian elite. As Reis (2005, 2011) argues, Brazilian elites conceive inequality as a threat yet do not acknowledge themselves as responsible for it. According to Reis, this occurs because Brazilian elites do not identify directly with the state, creating severe constrains on political change. Overall, Brazilian elites in several sectors share great concern over their country’s social problems, yet seem little inclined to act individually or collectively to solve them.

Conclusion

Behind the concept of political inequality of voice and response is the idea that inequality and politics are related. In this chapter I presented an empirical contribution to the study of this relationship, using the case of Latin America, a region characterized by recent democratization and extreme inequality. Those in the top have ample reason to worry about the political consequences of inequality. In elites’ perspective, political equality and social inequality may be a terrible combination.

During the third wave of democratization, Latin American elites found themselves promoting democratic institutions while facing extreme inequality and important threats related to it. In current times the institutionalization of democracy seems to have been somewhat successful in most cases analyzed, with the clear exception of Venezuela. Yet, the problems of extreme inequality persist and several other political problems come along with it.
This chapter presented evidence about the relationship between elite threat perceptions regarding inequality and political outcomes in Latin America. The first important finding from the cross-national analysis in the region is that inequality unequivocally matters to elites, or at least that they feel constrained to express that this is the case. All countries in the sample scored high in their threat perception rate by strongly associating inequality and threats to democracy. Yet, the cross-case comparison showed that, within high threat perceptions, there are important correlations to social and political features. Elites from stronger democracies seem to worry much more about inequalities’ political effect than their counterparts in weak or eroding democracies. Despite not seeming to be more successful in dismissing inequality, they seem to do better in improving public goods.

The in-depth analysis of the Brazilian case suggests some of the mechanisms by which elites manage to spot inequality as a threat without getting much involved in solving it. Overall, the literature argues that Latin American elites express more concern over inequality than they show the will toward actually solving it. In part the results in this chapter sustain the core of that argument, although they also show that in the long run worried elites may be indirectly supporting stronger democracies and better welfare regimes.

Notes
1 The analysis on this chapter uses data from the project ‘Latin American elite views on democracy and inequality’ of the University of São Paulo. I thank Professor Rafael Villa for generously allowing the access of the micro-data. I also thank André Salata who was kind enough to reproduce parts of the analysis in order to test its consistency.
2 Freedom House classifies the level of freedom in the world with two categories: (a) political rights and (b) civil liberties. Final scores vary between 1 (free) and 7 (not free). A score of 1 or 2 is usually interpreted as fulfilling the status of full-democracy and scores higher than 4 or 5 are usually interpreted as fulfilling the status of non-democracies.
3 Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI) measures the level of improvement in the quality of democracy, public management and market economy worldwide through a series of indexes.
4 Cocalero is the term used to designate peasants devoted to the cultivation of coca, an important plant in local culture, from which derive cocaine and other drugs.
5 The one-party period in Mexico is known as PRIism, PRI standing for Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party). PRI governed Mexico from 1929 to 2000.
6 This index unites support for (a) state financing of growth as a solution to inequality, (b) more social spending as a solution to inequality, (c) support for spending on public education, (d) support for spending in public health, (e) support for spending on social insurance.
7 Pearson Correlation significant at the 0.01 level.

References


Methodological appendix

The elite survey used in this chapter was conducted by the University of São Paulo between 2007 and 2008 as part of the research project ‘As visões das elites latino-americanas sobre a democracia e desigualdade’ [Latin American elite views on democracy and inequality], coordinated by Prof Rafael Villa (for more information see Holzhacker and Rossi 2009). Coordinators of the survey opted to use purposive sampling, a non-random sampling strategy that targets preselected positions within influential institutions. In elite research literature, this institutional criterion is known as the position method (see Hoffmann-Lange 2007). Non-randomness (which is not a necessary feature of the position method) holds important limitations, yet it is reasonably accepted among elite researchers. The sample covers elites from five different sectors: government officials, party leaders, businessmen, union leaders and civil society leaders. The government officials were sampled among members of the executive branch. Party leaders were sampled among the main political parties and among congressmen. Businessmen were sampled among members of the board of top enterprises and of business representation associations. Union leaders were sampled among the main labor unions. Civil society leaders were sampled among NGOs, advocacy institutions, academic organizations and religious organizations.
## Appendix Table 7.3  Elite distribution per country and elite sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Party leaders</th>
<th>Businessmen leaders</th>
<th>Union leaders</th>
<th>Civil society leaders</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>184</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>176</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
<td><strong>233</strong></td>
<td><strong>833</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>22%</strong></td>
<td><strong>18%</strong></td>
<td><strong>21%</strong></td>
<td><strong>11%</strong></td>
<td><strong>28%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 Social class and contentious politics in contemporary Europe

Henryk Domański

Contentious politics has assumed a central role in the debate on democratic practices in contemporary societies. Citizen participation in contentious episodes may be regarded as an essential contributor to the well-functioning of democracy (McAdam et al. 2006; Tilly and Tarrow 2006; see also Welzel 2007). The theory of contentious politics provides a flexible framework for understanding the institutionalization of social and political conflicts and how people vie for control over the state.

This chapter looks at contentious politics from the perspective of social class (see also Slomczynski and Dubrow 2010). Various contentious episodes – be it demonstrations or signing petitions – bring together actors who know little or nothing of one another at the outset, yet emerge from their participation as a unified actor, with boundaries separating them from others, and with a set of unified claims that they put forward against significant targets. In doing so, they become collective political actors. A remarkable feature of contentious politics is its compatibility with the class formation and solidification process; in this case, the transition from “class in itself” to “class for itself” (Kingston 2000). These class political identities are usually situational and short-lived, yet they form the basis for future class identity.

In this chapter I have two aims, one theoretical and one substantive. Theoretically, I offer an explanation of how the expression of political voice helps to form and solidify social classes in contemporary Europe. Substantively, I empirically examine how classes differ in likelihood of participation in contentious politics. For the empirical analysis, I draw on the European Social Survey data from 2002 to 2010. These aims are linked and thus discussed in tandem.

Class and contention

Different, and sometimes subtle, sorts of contention, once approached in a quantitative way, have to be boiled down to relatively simple elements. I measure contention in terms of participation in lawful demonstrations, signing petitions, boycotting certain products, and wearing or otherwise displaying campaign badges; these forms of political voice are overt manifestations of contention (see also Dubrow et al. 2008). I theorize on how contentious participation helps to form and maintain
class boundaries – particularly, how social structuration based on contentious politics strengthens social distances between these basic segments of the occupational structure, such as professionals, owners, manual workers, and farmers.

Membership in class categories is connected to contentious performances because class categories share a location in the sphere of economic distribution – how well you materially live and your labor-market capacity. The long literature on political mobilization suggests that higher self-evaluation, a sense of political efficacy, and competences in dealing with protests, as well as the material resources at their disposal, all influences the contentious participation of social classes (for a review, see Gallego 2008 and Slomczynski and Dubrow 2010).

Class-rooted activism is more likely if one has a sense of collective fate with those located in similar positions and is ready to use political means to the collective end of realizing their interests. Contentious politics may strengthen class identity within groups by sharply defining their own interests in opposition to other classes. Based on common location, class members would gain a feeling of “we-ness” with other, similarly located categories, along with a corresponding sense of “they-ness” about dissimilar others. In the more advanced stage of this structuration, increase in the salience of the “us-them” distinction reinforces class identities in the course of their participation, such as in demonstrations or marches (Tilly and Tarrow 2006: 215). Classes have political potential; this potential is realized when they seek to advance their material and cultural position in competition with other classes.

Of course, most people rarely engage in contentious actions. Even Marxian theorists concede that the working class may not recognize or even deny its objective interests. Some argue that class consciousness is a latent idea in the minds of class members that arises only in “strategic encounters” where class is at the forefront, such as strikes and other class-based interactions (Fantasia 2005: 278). Class consciousness is at times grounded in local grievance with little link to larger social divisions (Fantasia 1988).

Class-rooted political action is more clearly seen in social movements, defined as a sustained campaign of claim making, using repeated performances that advertise the claim, and based on organizations, networks, traditions and solidarities (Tilly and Tarrow 2006: 8). The volatile character of participation in loosely linked, episodic contentious actions makes them a less solid base for class bonds, although not so weak as to deny their role. In contrast to the episodic nature of contention, the continuity of action provided by social movements is fundamental to the reproduction of social classes.

To examine linkages between class and contention I distinguished six categories that demarcate groups with distinct common experience. These are: (i) higher managers and professionals (managers and higher state officials, and in case of professionals – medical doctors, lawyers, academicians, secondary school teachers, artists, and the like); (ii) lower non-manual workers (technicians, clerical workers, and rank-and-file personnel in sales and service); (iii) medium-size and small owners; (iv) skilled workers; (v) unskilled workers; and (vi) farmers together with farm laborers. Because of their differential control of assets that are
valuable on the labor market, I presume that members share interests, even though they may not act together or even recognize their common incentives.

According to some theorists, class members create and solidify the class structure by their actions. Let us consider the role of class “struggles” in creating social boundaries and, thus, class-based political inequality of voice.

At the top are higher managers and professionals, usually referred to as the upper-middle class, or the service class, depending on theoretical perspective. According to earlier findings, service class men and women exhibit more propensity than other categories to be actively engaged in civic organizations (Domański 2011). There is no other category whose members would be so eager to rely on themselves in their life pursuits.

Professionals and managers realize that they have the loudest, clearest voice and enjoy a degree of veto power over government policy. To them, participation is a form of civic obligation; with high political efficacy, they feel competent in playing the role of the collective actor designed to influence political decisions. Due to their strategic location in the workplace, and because their work is hard to monitor, they command a “loyalty rent” as controllers of knowledge (Goldthorpe 2000). As commanders of this rent, they use contentious politics as a bargaining tool to maintain their privileged socio-economic position. They remain a class, in part, through their own volition.

Higher managers and professionals do not need to resort to illegal collective strategies because they command the functional positions of legal institutions regulating economy and politics. Conceivably, if they protest, it appears to be mostly “soft” contestation, displayed, for instance, in signing petitions, pamphleteering, or vigils (see also Dubrow et al. 2008). Radical protests are inimical for them as everything that could violate social order and undermine their privileged position.

Members of the service class are often critical of the status quo and state policy and they use their organizational and institutional bases to launch contention campaigns. Yet, they stay away from illegal, confrontational contestation which could be harmful for stability of the political order. Objectively, one can find more convincing reasons for contestation among lower-level white collars. White collar workers – particularly clerks, salespeople and technicians – in many cases earn no more than skilled manuals. Yet, they are economically weak and politically fragmented; in the face of strong economic stress, their defense of material position trumps their defense of higher status.

Next stands small and medium-sized owners, sometimes referred to as the “old middle class.” Owners protest over business and economic issues, mostly. Their claim on government is for protection against monopolistic position of big corporations, and they ask for programs to help small businesses start and grow their operations (such as low-interest loans), demand elimination of overbearing bureaucracy, and challenge tax raises. Due to “competitive spirit,” owners would seem to be unlikely group from whom to expect mobilization into radical contentious politics. Like many claim-makers from the middle class, they choose institutional channels over illegal performances.
The category most heavily involved in radical contestation should be skilled workers. They are the traditional core of the working class, if one defines it in terms of Marxian theory. Skilled workers locate themselves below middle classes in terms of job security, pay rates, material conditions, medical care, sick leave, risk of injury and illness. Since their most valuable asset is labor, the most effective way for them to get a larger share of the economic pie is through collective bargaining.

The lower-manual working class is not likely to politically participate, especially in post-Communist societies. Of all social classes in Eastern and central Europe, the working class was hit hardest by the transition to the market society in terms of unemployment rate and standard of living (Domanski 2008). Under the Communist centralized economy their potential to exert political impact on government was unparalleled – being advanced to the role of the “ruling class,” even when most realized it was just a slogan created by the Communist Party for ideological purposes. But as manual workers their share of the work force vividly declined, and with it went their political voice.

In comparison with manual workers, farmers have fewer reasons to participate in contentious action. In post-Communist societies that joined the European Union, farmers generously benefit from financial support via the Common Agricultural Policy. They launch protests targeted on too low prices of agricultural products, and on import of cheap food undermining their competition. Both farmers and farm laborers are closely linked in terms of social origin, despite that the farmers own property and laborers own only their physical skills (Domanski and Przybysz 2011). In short, farm owners are less likely to protest because of European Union support, and farm laborers are less likely to protest for the same reasons the working class does not protest.

All classes have objective reasons to engage in contentious action, though they do not all act on it equally. As in case of civic activity and voting, political participation depends on social position (Hall 1999; Domański 2009). I hypothesize that the highest incidence of protest occurs among the upper-middle class since persons belonging to it have most suitable resources and means to protest (Verba et al. 1978). Participation in contentious actions should be relatively lower among lower non-manual categories and owners, and respectively – it seems to be least likely in the agricultural categories.

Data and variables

Do classes significantly differ in their contestation practices? To address this question I draw on the European Social Survey data from 2002, 2006 and 2010. In each country the surveys were based on probability samples of men and women (with N varying between 1800 and 2500), representing the adult population. In this study I used data for the 28 available countries – including Israel and Turkey – that provide information on participation in protests.

Participation in protests is identified by means of the following question: “There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things
from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the follow-
ing?” The ESS questionnaire presents eight items, of which four indicate participation in non-institutionalized contentious politics. These are: (i) “participation in lawful demonstrations,” (ii) “signing petition,” (iii) “wearing or displaying a campaign badge/sticker,” and (iv) “boycotting certain products, or goods?” (all are Yes/No categories). I regard these four items as a summary characteristic of contestation reflecting a relatively coherent experience.

Class – the main independent variable in this analysis – is indicated by the Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero (EGP) class schema. I collapsed the detailed version of the EGP (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992) to six basic categories: (i) higher professionals and managers (referred by Goldthorpe as the “service class”); (ii) other non-manual employees (clerical, sales and service); (iii) owners; (iv) skilled manual workers; (v) unskilled manual workers; and (vi) agricultural categories (farmers and agricultural laborers). Theoretically, these categories are developed for market societies and take into account ownership, work character, qualifications and a position in the organizational hierarchy.

In order to capture net effect of social class on contentious action the following control variables are used: Social origin defined in terms of the father’s education (classified into university, some university, completed secondary, some secondary, and elementary – that in regression models were collapsed to a set of dummy variables), sex (men = 0, women = 1), age (recoded into four categories: 15–25, 26–45, 46–65, 66 and older, analyzed in terms of a set of dummies), and exclusion from the labor market (unemployed = 1, otherwise = 0). To examine effect of living in post-Communist and Western democracies, I included macro-level variable, using a modified version of Esping-Andersen’s (1990) typology of welfare state regimes where the latter are divided into the Nordic, Mediterranean, post-Communist, and all others, represented here mainly by the “old” democratic societies (see also Kaariainen and Lehtonen 2006).

The hypotheses are tested using cross-national survey data. Clearly, subtlety is not a virtue of these instruments. A limitation that users of the ESS data acknowledge is that it does not allow the assessment of how class membership affects political participation depending on specific political demands. Another pertinent question refers to the relative weight of the class-rooted contention as compared with structuration based on various kinds of non-contentious activity, such as participation in specific, class-based civic organizations. Missing in these data is also participation in radical contestation, such as illegal strikes, occupying a building, and engagement in political violence. Finally, since ESS data are cross-sectional, there is no possibility to pursue individual trajectories of contentious action.

**Contentious action in Europe**

Let us begin by looking at the proportion, by country, of respondents taking part in various kinds of contentious action. Table 8.1 present percentages of participation in lawful demonstrations, signing petitions, boycotting certain products, and displaying campaign badges, for European societies in 2002, 2006 and 2010.
Class and contentious politics in Europe

Table 8.1 Percent participation in contentious actions in Europe, 2002, 2006 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contentious action</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating in demos</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signing petitions</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycotting products</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing badges</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are considerable differences among types of action. It appears that in all countries people are mostly involved in signing petitions. In 2010, around 17.7 percent of the respondents report participation in them across 26 societies. Boycotting products (12.9 percent) comes second, followed by displaying badges (6.3 percent), and street demonstrations (5.7 percent). Although the latter are most effective (or, may be, rather persuasive) instrument of realizing one’s interests, participation in them is also most risky, and requires highest investments of energy and time.

There is a small, but systematic, decline of contentious activity in 2002–2010. An open question remains to what extent this decline reflects general decrease of political activity that analysts detected since the 1970s. There are several factors worth considering. One is globalization, or the shifting decisions and responsibility of political elites from the national to the international level which citizens can hardly control. Another is depoliticization, in which ordinary people are discouraged to be involved in political activity on the whole, and political questions are taken over by experts. Yet another is the privatization of politics that turns citizens into passive consumer of “products”.

Social class differentiation in contentious actions

To assess how much classes differ in participation in contentious politics I regressed participation in protests on the EGP categories. Because these data are hierarchically organized, with respondents (level 1) living in certain countries (level 2), I used a multilevel approach in a structural model for merged national samples – separately for datasets of 2002, 2006 and 2010. Participation in protests is a summary scale based on items concerning participation in demonstrations, signing petitions, boycotting products and displaying campaign badges.4

Table 8.2 presents the main results of this analysis (estimations are made within a random intercept model). Since the reference category for EGP is agricultural category, parameter estimates for social classes provide information of relatively higher (above 1) or lower (below 1) participation in protests by members of these classes – with respect to farmers and farm laborers.

These results are in line with hypothesis of social stratification of protests. Managers and professionals displayed the highest propensity. This category was followed by lower non-manual workers, and owners, while relatively lowest rates of this activity occurred among skilled manual workers and agricultural categories.
Positive values of parameters for all other classes (except skilled manual workers in 2010) show that farmers and farm laborers are located at the bottom of this scale.\(^5\)

Professionals and managers surpass the lower non-manual workers. In the hierarchical ordering the lower non-manuals (mostly white collars, and sales and services) are more closely located to the category of owners than to the upper-middle class. For example, in 2010 the difference in participation in protests between owners and the lower non-manuals stood at 0.110 (0.302–0.192), while that between the lower non-manuals and the higher managers and professionals was 0.156 (0.458–0.302). These findings confirm that the lower middle class does not engage in much political action – as compared with the service class – but has still more incentives in comparison to the “old middle class.”

Despite economic crises that bookended the first decade of the twenty-first century, patterns of differentiation of social classes in contentious politics remained relatively stable. In 2002 lower non-manual workers exceeded owners in participation in protests by 0.264, in the next four years this distance declined to 0.098, and in 2006–2010 it increased to 0.110. Indeed, neither enlargement of the European Union nor economic recession affected net association between class and participation.

\[ \text{Table 8.2 Estimates of determinants of participation in contentious action in 2002–2010. Odds in structural model for all countries} \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.595**</td>
<td>0.620**</td>
<td>0.633**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (1 = men)</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>–0.018</td>
<td>–0.161**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (contrasted against group of 25–25):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–45</td>
<td>0.311**</td>
<td>0.215**</td>
<td>0.368**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46–65</td>
<td>0.317**</td>
<td>0.215**</td>
<td>0.254**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 and above</td>
<td>0.327**</td>
<td>0.227**</td>
<td>0.277**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class (contrasted against farmers and farm laborers):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and professionals</td>
<td>0.472**</td>
<td>0.520**</td>
<td>0.458**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower non-manual workers</td>
<td>0.377**</td>
<td>0.378**</td>
<td>0.302**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners</td>
<td>0.113**</td>
<td>0.280**</td>
<td>0.192**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled workers</td>
<td>0.094*</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>–0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers</td>
<td>0.167*</td>
<td>0.116**</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s education (contrasted against elementary education):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>0.665**</td>
<td>0.464**</td>
<td>0.303**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some university</td>
<td>0.545**</td>
<td>0.242*</td>
<td>0.215**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>0.355**</td>
<td>0.162**</td>
<td>0.120**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncompleted secondary</td>
<td>0.187**</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>–0.063</td>
<td>–0.076*</td>
<td>–0.083**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square/df</td>
<td>318.5/19</td>
<td>251.7/19</td>
<td>279.3/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>0.933</td>
<td>0.944</td>
<td>0.954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSA</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(*p<.05 \quad **p<.01\)
Perhaps economic crises have moved the working class to action. The results here show that the skilled and unskilled workers have the same propensity to political action, with the unskilled having even slightly more likelihood to contest. There are convincing arguments that manual workers face significantly higher threat of unemployment in comparison to the middle classes, and express also more discontent from inequality of incomes (Gallie et al. 1998; Goldthorpe and McKnight 2006).

Differences in participation in protests according to sex, age, unemployment, and social origin indicated by education of father follow the results found in other studies (e.g. Domański 2011). Social origin shaped protest activity according to the expected pattern where – as in case of social class – the most inclined toward political action were persons originating from the most educated categories (Table 8.2). Respectively, the least likely to politically engage were those whose fathers had but elementary education or lower. The net effect of parents’ education is quite strong. With other social attributes held constant, it suggests that dispositions to politically participate may be directly transmitted to younger generations. Theoretically we can suppose that parents with higher education are more engaged in watching and challenging the state, and to discuss about these questions in the family circle, and to educate their children about personal rights and duties.

It is not clear whether this intergenerational transmission of values goes for all young people. The youngest generation (15–25) has clearly lower odds of protests as compared to all older cohorts. This pattern repeats across all points of time. Unemployment significantly increases odds of contention. Results for gender, though, indicate that the differences between women and men are not clearly structured. Generally, men did not substantially differ from women in political participation. The only discernible tendency – in 2010 – suggests that the men are slightly more likely to politically engage.

Country-level effects

The association between social class and contentious action has cross-national variants, and thus I ask does the association between class position and political activity vary by country type? I assume that the majority of people living in the “old” democratic societies – France, Sweden, and the UK – rely on historical narratives that have shown that everyday people have the ability to exert pressure on and actually influence the decisions of the decision-makers; those in the privileged social classes may feel an even stronger sense of political efficacy. Inhabitants of the former authoritarian regimes do not have this narrative, or a positive experience with contentious politics. Both Mediterranean and post-Communist peoples may not regard themselves as politically efficacious, leading to less social stratification of political contention and lower levels of contentious political action overall (but see Welzel and Deutsch 2012). Previous research suggests that the privileged social classes in East Europe (particularly the intelligentsia in Poland) have preserved a more prominent position in a public life that is comparable to that of managers and professionals in Western societies (Domański 2011).
Class-based political voice is likely related to welfare regime, meaning that there are macro-level conditions in which class members are politically engaged. Class and contentious action should be strongly related in Mediterranean welfare regimes than in post-Communist countries. It should be less severe in the “old” democratic societies, and the Nordic states. In the East European and the south European societies, the enduring split between lower classes and cultural elites extends into public activity. Stratification of political voice is embedded in more traditional systems that are marked by a relatively big share of agriculture and strong familial, and clannish allegiances. The lesser effect of class on participation in the post-Communist countries reflects weaknesses of civil society and the infancy of its new class structure. Given historic significance of egalitarianism derived from the ideology and practice of the Communist state, at this historical juncture, class cannot become a main source of differentiation. Contrasting with this, the rule of authoritarian regimes of Greece, Portugal, and Spain were designed to maintain privileged position of elites. Cultural elites themselves could defend their interests there by means of legal instruments of pressure which were generally forbidden for intelligentsia in the Communist system.

To empirically address these assertions, I regressed participation in protests on “welfare state regime,” categorized into four types: Nordic, Mediterranean, post-Communist, and all others, represented here mainly by the “old” democratic societies. This is a modified version of Esping-Andersen’s (1990) schema that refer to the ways in which the welfare state production is allocated between state, market, and households. The Nordic regime includes Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden; the Mediterranean – Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain; and the post-Communist regime is identified by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Croatia, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. These types were entered into regression model as a set of zero-one coded variables with omitted category consisting of all other countries (e.g. Belgium, France, Germany, and the UK).

In doing so I estimated the structural model presented in Table 8.3, fitting the interaction terms between Nordic, Mediterranean, and post-Communist systems, and EGP classes. Since the picture emerging from this analysis is quite complex, Table 8.3 shows estimates only for selected, six interaction variables (out of all 15 possible obtained under this model) and main effects for systemic variables, but without EGP, and controls (available on request). The interaction terms provide information about mean difference in political participation between category of higher managers and professionals, and agricultural categories, and – respectively – between agricultural categories and owners, depending of the welfare regime.

The parameter estimates for main effects of the systemic variables show a hierarchical pattern. The highest participation in protests resides in the Nordic states. The net effect of location in this category in 2002 was 0.152, in 2006 was –0.263, and in 2010 was –0.329. It shows that living in Scandinavian countries increases odds of being involved in protests – relative to the countries classified among the “old” democracies. With individual characteristics held constant it suggests that the Nordic system (or, rather, various factors behind it) may be considered
vehicle of contentious politics, regardless of the socio-economic position. The Scandinavian countries were followed by the “old” democratic societies. The post-Communist and Mediterranean societies are below them. Taken together, results presented in Table 8.3 support an overall impression that political participation vary with type of welfare regime.

The core issue is which of these locations provide most fertile ground for stratification of political voice? Was it the Nordic regime, given benign and disruptive repertoire of protests in Scandinavian societies – or were they rather located in the Mediterranean, and post-Communist ones, where intelligentsia maintains its leadership in public activity? This evidence suggests that stratification of political voice appears more in traditional systems. The highest gap in contentious political activity between unskilled workers and the upper class representatives is in Mediterranean countries. In Nordic and post-Communist societies this contrast was non-significant. Parameters obtained for category of managers and professionals are even negative which tells of relatively less participation of these categories in political action as compared to unskilled workers. Much the same picture emerges in the case of the “old” middle class. Results for the owners indicate that they had lower odds to participate in protests in Scandinavian countries. In 2010 it was −0.391 (relative to unskilled workers) in contrast to Mediterranean (0.210), and the post-Communist societies (0.203).

### Conclusion

In a long-standing debate on the significance of classes, a number of writers insist that new “post-industrial” cleavages are emerging and replacing class-based conflict (Pakulski and Waters 1996; Kingston 2000; for a review, see Slomczynski
This chapter sheds light on the question of the extent to which social class divisions still matter. As expected, the findings outlined above substantiate the thesis that class matters. In the majority of countries, the highest propensity to engage in contentious politics took place in category of higher managers and professionals, exceeding lower non-manual workers, and owners, while relatively lowest rates turned out among skilled manual workers and agricultural categories.

This study theorizes that participatory democracy does not destroy social classes, but could in fact help them become political collectivities. In most of industrialized democracies traditional social structures give way to modernization that is likely to undermine stratification in protests. The next hurdle is then to theorize and empirically identify the political and institutional foundation that underlies this trend.

Notes

1 Obviously, everywhere at the top of the stratification ladder are located political and business elites; however, they can hardly be covered by national samples in survey research.

2 In ESS, information concerning father’s job are not coded (in most countries) in terms of the International Standard Classification of Occupations, making it impossible to create the EGP social classes for the father.

3 In the regression models, the omitted category for social class were farmers and agricultural laborers, for social origin – father’s elementary education, and for age (25 years and younger).

4 These estimates were obtained in a structural equation model (SEM) for 2002, and separately for 2006 and 2010. Dependent variable is scale of participation in protests constructed from the four participation variables; the greater the value, the more actions in which the respondent participated. According to conventional criteria, this model fits satisfactorily for each of these datasets. In case of 2002, chi-square = 313.5 (19 degrees of freedom), in 2006 – 251.7, and in 2010 – 279.3 (p = 0.00). As regards other indices considered most important for model fit, root mean square error of approximation index (RMSEA) for consecutive years was respectively: 0.023, 0.019, and 0.018 (acceptable are models with RMSA below 0.10), and comparative fit index (CFI) was 0.933, 0.944, and 0.954 (the more CFI approximates 1, the better). All models were estimated using structural equation modeling software MPLUS (Muthen and Muthen 2007).

5 The most important problem in comparative research is to establish cross-national validity of indicators. Summary indexes of this kind are by their very nature context-dependent, thus there is an imminent danger of producing methodological artifacts instead of comparing and explaining substantive findings. Several techniques have been developed to assess the comparability of concepts. To test for measurement equivalence, I use multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) for binary variables that allows testing for configurational, metric, and scalar invariance. When measurement models for different countries have the same structure, the scale is said to be configural invariant. It means that the same indicators measure the same theoretical constructs across categories or points of time. However, configurational equivalence does not allow any comparison of scores. It is permitted if metric equivalence is obtained, i.e. when loading of indicators on the factors are equal across categories/time points. This means that respondents interpret intervals on a response scale in the same way and the constructs tap the same content (Davidov et. al 2011: 150). The full score comparability is obtained in case of scalar invariance that requires that the intercepts of each item be the same across categories/time point. This indicates that respondents in different contexts use the same scale origin. Since having full equivalence (i.e. invariance for all items) seems unrealistic,
researchers are advised to be satisfied with partial equivalence which is argued to suf-
fice for meaningful substantive analyses (Byrne et al. 1989; Widaman and Reise 1997).
Certainly, the more number of items are equal, the stronger cross-country equivalence
exists. Under the partial invariance model some of the intercepts and the factor loadings
in countries are set to be free (Billiet 2003). To test measurement equivalence I used a
top-down approach, starting from the least restrictive – unconstrained model – with all
intercepts and slopes to be invariant across countries. Subsequent steps assessed whether
the model fit could be improved by freeing some of the constrained parameters. To save
space, these tests are not detailed here (they are available on request from the author). To
conclude: This analysis shows that in some countries even partial equivalence constraints
were found to be untenable, with significant intercepts and factor loading deviations
that specifically appeared for participation in demonstrations and boycotting products. It
does not necessarily mean that it is impossible to make valid cross-national comparisons
of participation in protests, although it makes it somewhat problematic.

6 One might expect that the strength of this effect may depend on proportion of persons
participating in protests. In 2010 statistically significant parameters for three EGP classes
turned out in Finland, and in Hungary, for two classes in Estonia, Greece, and Spain, and
for one class in France, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine and the
UK. These estimates were obtained in the structural equation model presented in Table
8.3 separately for each of countries considered. In case of Finland, statistically signifi-
cant parameters (p < 0.05) rendered for categories of: higher managers and professionals
(0.680), lower non-manuals (0.507), and owners (0.515); in Hungary – for higher man-
gagers and professionals (2.347), owners (1.619), and skilled workers (1.497); in Estonia
– for higher managers and professionals (0.847), and owners (0.868); in Greece – for
higher managers and professionals (1.837), and lower non-manual workers (0.088); and
for the same categories; in Spain – 1.233, and 1.203 respectively. In France, Germany,
Norway, Sweden, and the UK, statistically significant effects showed for higher manag-
ers and professionals; in Ukraine – for owners; and in Ireland and Poland, significant
parameters were only obtained for agricultural categories, and skilled workers – respec-
tively 0.782 and –1.070. There is also no clear-cut configuration for 2002 or for 2006.
For example, in 2006, social class determined most strongly political participation in
Ireland, with statistically significant parameters obtained for higher managers and pro-
fessionals, lower non-manual workers, owners, and skilled workers, and also (in the case
of the two classes) in Austria, France, Poland, Portugal, and Spain.

7 Adding the interaction terms does not alter conclusions reached from the first model
about the effects of social class and the other explanatory variables.

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and inequality on soft political-protest in Europe: Exploring the European Social Survey


Every-day life rests on interactions with state structures and institutions, of which political ones represent a major type. We choose to engage politically to various degrees, depending on personal characteristics – civic skills, economic circumstances, age, interest in politics, to mention a few – and also on contextual ones, such as traits of the countries we live in. The former constitute the individual-level condition for actions. The latter shapes both the opportunity structure for our political voice, as well as many of the individual-level conditions that drive it.

Our chapter aims to explain democratic engagement for two groups at the heart of the socio-cultural cleavage common in European democracies (see Rydgren 2003; 2007; Cole 2005). In the first group are people who feel discriminated because of their ethnicity. In the second are people who espouse xenophobic attitudes, and who thereby help to create a discriminatory environment in which actual and perceived ethnic discrimination exists. So far, scholars have analyzed these groups’ political behaviors separately, that is, either for ethnic minorities, or for persons with anti-immigrant attitudes, and unequally, with far more attention given to ethnic minority participation.1 We fully agree with Koopmans and Statham (2000) that it is “almost absurd how the majority of studies on the extreme right continue to ignore migration and ethnic relations . . . and how . . . students of migration and ethnic relations have paid only marginal attention to the extreme right . . . (32).” Given their inherent relation to each other – indeed, their interlocked fates – we see compelling reasons to look at the ethno-discriminated and at the persons with xenophobic views jointly. One group feels disliked, the other dislikes. Both seek protection – from each other. In doing so, both groups can turn to government and civil society, seeking (a radically different) resolve.

Ethno-discriminated and xenophobes can be seen as extremes, and form, in principle, minorities in opposition to each other. Yet both groups operate in relation to the rest of society. Hence, to understand the patterns of their political engagement means taking the rest of society as the reference point.

We follow Crowley’s (2001) view that “an ethnic group refers sociologically to an overlap between patterns of (positive or negative) recognition and of resource allocation (102)” and that culture is a main differentiator between groups (including minority-majority). Consider the situation of individuals who, representing a different race, ethnicity or nationality, may look differently, may speak a dif-
different language, practice a different religion, than the rest of the population in their country of residence. Because these are cultural identifiers and lead to group ascription, in-group members sometimes feel that the cultural “cues” also form the basis for unfair, discriminatory treatment by out-group members (see also Feagin 1991). Such feelings are expressed through self-assessed ethno-discrimination. We use this term recognizing its subjective meaning. From a social constructivist perspective, ethno-discriminated are those who consider themselves as such, independently of the extent to which discriminatory practices were actually ever applied to them. Feeling ethno-discriminated is a powerful state of mind that will likely affect how one thinks and acts politically.

Attitudes toward national minorities and immigrants vary across nations, ranging from multiculturalism, which embraces diversity, to “cultural racism” (Wieviorka 1998), according to which merging different ethnic groups leads to the obliteration of the unique ethnic qualities, hence implying the need for ethnic separation. Rydgren (2003) links this form of racism to xenophobia, which, he says, “also considers it ‘natural’ for people to live amongst others of ‘their own kind’ (48).” Xenophobia is characterized by hostility towards persons perceived to be foreigners to the community or society (ILO-IOM-OHCHR 2001). Given measurement considerations, we define xenophobes as individuals who express the views that immigrants damage the economic, cultural and social fabric of the receiving country. In reality, xenophobia can also target national minorities derived from processes of state formation (for the difference between ethnic groups derived from immigration and national minorities, see Kymlicka 1995).

This chapter deals with two complimentary expressions of political participation, broadly understood: attitudes toward key democratic institutions on one hand, and behavior that is explicitly political, on the other. Our general expectation is that the effects of belonging to the groups of self-assessed ethno-discriminated and of xenophobes are above and beyond the effects considered by either structural explanations that emphasize the role of socio-economic resources (e.g. Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Stolle and Hooghe 2011) or social psychological models that focus on peoples’ orientations, including one’s interest in politics and their sense of political efficacy (Solt 2008). We analyze three forms of political engagement. The first is attitudinal, and refers to trust in democratic institutions. The other two – participation in conventional political protest, and working for political parties and other organizations – are non-electoral political actions. The individual and country-level data come from the 2012 edition of the European Social Survey.

**Theoretical background and hypotheses**

Marginalization theory and group conflict theory are complimentary when used to explain political attitudes and behaviors of the self-assessed ethno-discriminated and of individuals with xenophobic views. Marginalization theory, also called social exclusion theory, draws attention to the disadvantages of being excluded from shared opportunities that are enjoyed by others (Sen 2000; Crowley 2001).
We agree with the notion that “social exclusion involves discrimination against individuals and groups based on one or many different social attributes or elements of social identity” (Landman 2006: 19). We extend this argument to perceived discrimination, and argue that if these attributes refer to race, nationality, ethnicity, language or religion we deal with ethno-discrimination as a basis for social exclusion. Even if the exclusion is a constructed reality, it will nonetheless affect how actors express themselves politically because it defines actors’ (perceived) needs and interests. Given that only a small percentage of individuals feel ethno-discriminated, “to the extent that numerical strength is, ceteris paribus, a political resource, small groups in formally democratic systems are exposed to specific risks of marginalization, especially if they have distinctive interests embedded in patterns of prejudice emanating from the majority” (Crowley 2001: 103).

The marginalization approach also applies to xenophobes, who, according to public opinion polls and survey data, are themselves a minority group. The loss of prestige or status following structural modernization processes and ensuing perceptions of relative deprivation make people who experience these conditions feel left out, and adopt right-wing values and behaviors (see Koopmans and Statham 2000: 14 for a summary of this line of research). Radical right populist discourse that frequently chides the political establishment for its exclusion of “true” citizens can encourage feelings of marginalization among xenophobes.

From marginalization theory we infer that people who feel subjected to social exclusion do not trust the institutions of the countries they live in, since these institutions contribute, explicitly or implicitly, to the status quo. This should hold for the groups of self-assessed ethno-discriminated and xenophobes alike.

Marginalization can lead to political action. Estivill (2003) argues that “marginalized people, in the face of powerful exclusionary processes, can fight against the circumstances of their exclusion and criticize society for its lack of recognition (14).” However, the theory also stipulates that prevailing negative attitudes increase the sense of powerlessness felt by people who feel marginalized and undermine their capacity for collective action (Gough and Eisenschitz 2006: 131). Burchardt, Grand and Piachaud (1999) emphasize that socially excluded persons may occasionally protest but do not participate in key activities of the society in which they live. This may be the case for xenophobes, as well, but for a very different reason. Xenophobia is a distinctively unpopular stance in societies where multiculturalism is embraced. Thus, xenophobes may be reluctant to express themselves publicly since the country’s multicultural rhetoric and the “live and let live” attitudes of the wider society do not publicly promote xenophobia.

We have different expectations about the political behavior of the two groups. Compared to the rest, people who feel discriminated on ethnic grounds are more likely to partake in conventional protest, and to work for political parties or other organizations, ceteris paribus. Since multiculturalism and minority rights protection are integral to official discourse in contemporary Europe, the group of ethno-discriminated will use conventional protest to make claims against government, and will engage with civic society to follow their political aspirations. Drawing on research on right-wing political mobilization, we expect that people with xeno-
phobic attitudes will shun conventional means of protest and will be less likely than the majority (and hence, than the ethno-discriminated) to work for political parties or organizations, that is, to participate in civil society.

Group conflict theory is in many respects complimentary to the marginalization framework. It provides explanations of how categorization processes in social perception and interaction shape individual and group identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner and Oaks 1986; Tajfel and Turner 1986), and of intergroup tensions. People, and the groups they identify with, have real historical and current relations to each other. These relations turn into conflict when there is (real or perceived) competition for resources, including political power (Blalock 1967). Group conflict also occurs when there are perceived threats to group position and fundamental cultural values (Sherif 1953; Bobo 1983; Jackson 1993; Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong 1998; Baumeister and Vohs 2007).

These theoretical insights apply directly to the relation between the ethno-discriminated and the xenophobes. Koopmans and Statham (2000), in discussing migration, ethnic minorities, and xenophobia, speak of the “the increasingly acute and conflicting political aspirations – often diametrically opposed of actors entering the field” (14). Scholars employ the ethnic conflict approach primarily when explaining why people with extreme right-wing values vote for right-wing parties in Europe (e.g. Lubbers et al. 2002; Fennema 2005; Koopmans et al. 2005; Rydgren 2006b in Rydgren 2007). For the US, Lieghley and Vedlitz (1999) are among the very few who apply this model to political behavior other than voting.

From this perspective, too, both the ethno-discriminated and the xenophobic should be less likely than mainstream society to trust democratic institutions. Members of either camp will perceive the institutions to underperform in protecting their group (against the other). Koopmans and Statham (2000) point out that “the national variants for ethnic relations and migration policies seem increasingly incapable of fulfilling political demands that different actors make on the nation-state” (14). Consistent with realistic group conflict predictions, xenophobes would not engage in conventional protests but may seek to work for specific parties and other organizations that would make policies toward immigration more restrictive than the current practices. It could also be that, as with conventional protest, xenophobes would be reluctant to express their unpopular views in forums as visible as parties and other political organizations. We are open to the possibility that the relationship between xenophobic attitudes and working for political parties and organizations is very weak, other things equal.

These predictions should be considered in the context of other determinants of political attitudes and behavior. We take into account the following individual-level variables, whose relationships with political engagement are well-established in the literature:

Dissatisfaction with economy
Dissatisfaction with government
Generalized trust in people
Interest in politics
In addition we control for country-level variables: gross domestic product per capita, democracy index, and population size.

With these individual-level and country-level variables in mind, we formulate three hypotheses:

**Hypothesis I.** Controlling for other variables, the effect of belonging to two extreme groups – ethno-discriminated and xenophobes – on trust in democratic institutions is relatively strong and negative.

**Hypothesis II.** In comparison with the core of society, persons that feel ethno-discriminated tend to protest more while xenophobes tend to protest less, other things being equal.

**Hypothesis III.** Feelings of ethno-discrimination have positive influence on working with civil society, that is, political parties or other organizations. For the group of persons holding xenophobic attitudes, the prediction is that they significantly differ from subjectively ethno-discriminated but not from the society’s majority.

**Data and methods**

Data for our analyses come from the 2012 round of the European Social Survey (ESS; www.europeansocialsurvey.org). The ESS is an academically driven multi-country survey of Europe, administered every two years since 2002. According to its website, ESS6 “involves strict random probability sampling, a minimum target response rate of 70% and rigorous translation protocols.” The universe comprises persons aged 15 and over, resident within private households, regardless of their nationality, citizenship, language or legal status, in the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Kosovo, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Because the international recognition of Kosovo is still problematic, and because Israel is not in Europe, we exclude these two countries from our analyses.

In ESS6, interviews were administered face-to-face and included questions on a variety of core topics repeated from previous ESS rounds, as well as two new modules, covering Europeans’ Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy and Personal and Social Wellbeing. The national samples vary from 752 respondents (Island) to 2958 (Germany), with the average c. 1900 per country.

To answer research questions pertaining to the influence of both country-level and person-level factors simultaneously, we also use data on countries, specifi-
cally their gross domestic product (GDP), index of democracy, and population size. We use GDP per capita at current prices, US Dollars 2010 (in logarithm form). To measure a country’s level of democracy we use two Freedom House Index for 2011, of Political Rights and of Civil Liberties, which give countries values from 1 to 7, where 1 is most free and 7 is least free. After reverse-coding them (so that 7 indicates most freedom), we compute the Index of Democracy for each country as the mean of the Political Rights and Civil Liberties indexes. Generally, the macro variables are available from the ESS website; if needed, we also used CIA World Factbook data.2

Since adding country-level factors to explaining individual characteristics implies a hierarchical structure of the data (individuals are “nested” in countries), we use the two-level regression procedure in STATA, in the linear and logistic form (see Hox 2010 for detailed discussion of multilevel analysis). We also estimate country-specific models, to see how the relations of interest operate nationally.

**Extreme social groups**

**Who belongs to the category of ethno-discriminated?**

In ESS6 respondents are asked: “Would you describe yourself as being a member of a group that is discriminated against in this country?” For those answering yes, the interviewer follows up with a set of 10 additional questions, which detail the possible grounds for group discrimination: color or race; nationality; religion; language; ethnic group; age; gender; sexuality; disability; other. Since we define ethnicity on cultural grounds (see Crowley 2001), we construct the measure for self-assessed ethno-discrimination as the combination of feelings of discrimination based on color/race, nationality, religion, language and ethnicity. We code the variable one if respondent answers yes on at least one of these five items, zero otherwise.

For the pooled data, 1,360 of the 42,454 ESS6 respondents feel discriminated on ethnic grounds. The frequencies of self-reported ethno-discrimination differ among European countries. A higher percentage is shared by Estonia (9 percent), Great Britain (7 percent), and Bulgaria (6 percent). In contrast, in Ireland, Island, Poland and Slovenia persons reporting ethnic discrimination do not exceed 1 percent. The rest of countries in our analyses – Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Hungary, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Russia, and Slovakia – are in-between.3

**Who are xenophobes?**

The European Social Survey contains straightforward questions pertaining to attitudes towards immigrants: Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]’s economy that people come to live here from other countries? Would you say that [country]’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?
Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries? Respondents answered on 11-point scale (with 0 denoting strong negative attitudes toward immigrants, and 10 strong positive ones).

We are interested precisely in xenophobia (rather than in attitudes ranging from strong dislike of immigrants to their embracing). Hence, ours is a dummy measure of pervasive xenophobia, where one refers to respondents whose answers for all three questions are below the mid-point. In other words, these are respondents who consider that immigrants damage the economic and the cultural and the social fabric of the receiving country.4

Frequencies of anti-immigrant attitudes show that xenophobes represent a minority at the aggregate level, where they make up 17 percent (7,197 out of 42,454) of ESS6 respondents, and also within 21 of the 22 countries we analyze. We can identify three groups of countries. Within the first, xenophobes do not exceed 12 percent. Ten countries belong here: Island (3 percent), Finland (4 percent), Poland (6 percent), Switzerland, Sweden and Norway (7 percent), Germany and the Netherlands (8 percent), Spain and Denmark (11 percent). Within the second group, xenophobes make up to 25 percent of the sample. Seven countries fall in this category: Belgium (14 percent), Bulgar (15 percent), Estonia and Hungary (16 percent), Slovenia (17 percent), Ireland (20 percent) and Great Britain (25 percent). Four countries belong to the last group, where xenophobes make up to 37 percent of the sampled respondents: Portugal (27 percent), Slovakia (29 percent), Czech Republic (30 percent) and Russia (37 percent).5 The one case that stands out is Cyprus, where 50 percent of the sample reports xenophobic attitudes.6

Relationship between frequencies of the two extreme groups

Figure 9.1 depicts all 22 countries in our analyses with respect to the percent of persons feeling ethno-discrimination and the percent of xenophobes. Descriptively, there are two clusters with respect to both variables: one is composed of Slovenia, Ireland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Portugal, Russia and Cyprus, and the second one by the rest of countries. For this reason, in the figure we draw two lines, corresponding to the results of the regression analysis with the interaction term for cluster one and percentage of xenophobes. The regression equation is as follows:

\[ Y = 0.002 + 0.323 X + (-0.004) Z + (-0.245) W \]

where \( Y \) = percent of ethno-discriminated, \( X \) = percent of xenophobes, \( Z \) = cluster \( (1 = 1, 2 = 0) \) and \( W = X * Z \).7

Taking into account the two groups of countries, the percent of xenophobes is closely related to the percent of ethno-discriminated, explaining almost two-third of the total variance. Of course, the relevant question is about the internal homogeneity of the group, which is relatively high on the xenophobia scale sand relatively low on the ethno-discrimination scale: What do Slovenia, Ireland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Russia and Cyprus have in common? With exception of Portugal, all experienced some territorial changes and or serious ethnic disputes.
However, some of the other countries – such as Estonia or Hungary – were in a similar situation. Thus, the regression lines presented in Figure 9.1 are mainly suggestive, without deeper theoretical justification. Two points are in order:

1. If Portugal is removed from cluster one, the strong relationship between the percentage of xenophobes and the percentage of ethno-discriminated still holds. The R² statistics indicates around 40 percent of common variance.

2. Estonia is a special case in the sense that is much higher on the ethno-discrimination dimension than expected on the basis of the moderate proportion of xenophobes. If this outlier is removed, then the relationship in the cluster two is tighter, with R² = 0.785.

Generally, in European countries the relationship between the percent of ethno-discriminated and percent of xenophobes is complex. If we consider all countries in the European Social Survey together, the relationship is relatively weak. However, there are at least two groups of countries in which this relationship is strong; they have quite different values on both variables and treating them in common analyses could be misleading.

Speaking of the complexity of the relationship between ethno-discrimination and xenophobia, there is another question to consider: is there overlap between the two groups? In theory, it is possible that people who feel discriminated on ethnic
grounds also hold anti-immigrant attitudes, and that xenophobes also feel ethno-
discriminated (especially under the multi-dimensional cultural definition of eth-
nicity, which we apply). In practice, we see it happening. For the whole ESS6 data
set, 225 of the 1,354 self-reported ethno-discriminated – that is, 16.6 percent – also
express anti-immigrant attitudes. Among xenophobes, 3 percent (225 of 7,197)
feel ethno-discriminated. This structure – i.e. a much higher percentage of xen-
ophobic ethno-discriminated than of ethno-discriminated xenophobes – also holds
within most of the countries. Exceptions are Island, Poland, Slovenia and Switzer-
land, where there is practically no overlap between the two extreme groups.

Trust in democratic institutions

The European Social Survey asks respondents to specify the extent to which they
trust specific institutions. The full list includes the national parliament, the judiciary,
From it, we chose the national parliament, political parties, and the judiciary,
because these institutions constitute the foundation of democracy – in the politi-

cal process they establish and secure citizens’ basic rights. In discussions on democracy
consolidation, these institutions are considered the most important (see Gunther,

Answers to each question on trust in institutions are measured on an 11-point
scale, where 0 denotes no trust at all and 10 – complete trust. For the institutions
we focus on – political parties, parliament, and the judiciary – trust is positively,
and rather strongly, correlated. For the whole data set, correlations of the three
items are between 0.59 and 0.72. This suggests that the variables are influenced by
an overarching latent variable: generalized trust in political institutions. We used
principal factor analysis on the three trust variables and the obtained index (factor)
is a construct with a transparent structure.8

Extreme groups and generalized trust in institutions

As a standardized index, the mean of generalized trust for all countries equals
zero, while the standard deviation equals one. Hence, positive values indicate that
the individual is above the “European mean,” and negative values – that the indi-

cidual is below this mean. On the average, both ethno-discriminated and xen-
ophobes trust public institutions less than the rest of society. The mean value for the
first group is –0.358, and –0.448 for the second, while for the rest of the society it
is very close to zero (0.1).

We have outlined earlier in the chapter why we expect that the self-reported
ethno-discriminated as well as the xenophobic will trust institutions less than other
people. Of course, we need to examine this hypothesis in the presence of other
theoretically relevant individual- and country-level variables. Regarding the first
type, a large body of literature points to the importance of perceived institutional
performance, since people tend to trust institutions that they evaluate as effective
(e.g. Aberbach and Walker 1970; Miller 1974; Mishler and Rose 2001; Luhiste
Xenophobes and ethno-discriminated in Europe

In the performance model, satisfaction with the economy and satisfaction with government are main determinants of trust in institutions (see Luhiste 2006).

In Table 9.1, we look at the impact of belonging to each of the extreme groups while accounting for peoples’ dissatisfaction with the economy and the interaction of membership in an extreme group and dissatisfaction, and other controls. As expected, dissatisfaction influences negatively trust in institutions, independently of whether the individual feels ethno-discriminated or is xenophobic. However, the most important fact is that both ethno-discriminated and xenophobes who are economically dissatisfied tend to be much more distrustful that their co-members.

Table 9.1: Regression of trust in public institutions on extreme groups, dissatisfaction with economy, interaction terms, controlling for other individual-level and country-level variables, mixed effect model for the European Social Survey Data, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Betaa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual-level variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling ethno-discriminated, X (yes =1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>–0.137**</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>–0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobes, Z (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>–0.307**</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>–0.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with economy, W (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>–0.582**</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>–0.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction: X*W</td>
<td>–0.078</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>–0.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction: Z*W</td>
<td>0.045*</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of schooling</td>
<td>0.014**</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective evaluation of own social position (scale 0–10)</td>
<td>0.068**</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship in residence country (yes = 1, otherwise = 1)</td>
<td>–0.099**</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>–0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male = 1, female = 0)</td>
<td>–0.008</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger cohort, 18–35 years old (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.021*</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older cohort, 67 and older (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.080**</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country-level variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross domestic product per capita</td>
<td>0.485**</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of democracy</td>
<td>–0.169*</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>–0.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population size</td>
<td>–0.003+</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>–0.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>–3.851</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var (constant)</td>
<td>Estimate = 0.036</td>
<td>Std err = 0.011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var (residual)</td>
<td>Estimate = 0.603</td>
<td>Std err = 0.004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics:
- Number of observations = 40,468, number of groups = 22
- Wald $\chi^2$ (df 14) = 7454.29
- Log likelihood = –47250.21, AIC = 94534.42, BIC = 94680.76

a. The standardized coefficients have been obtained using the formula standardized coefficient = (unstandardized coefficient * standard deviation of explanatory variable) / standard deviation of dependent variable (see Hox 2010: 22).
who are ambivalent about the economy or are satisfied with it. As shown in Table 9.1, the effect of dissatisfaction for ethno-discriminated is \(-0.582 + (-0.078) = -0.660\) and \(-0.582 + 0.045 = -0.537\) for xenophobes. These effects are substantially and statistically significant.

All control individual-level variables included in Table 9.1 exercise statistically significant impact on trust in democratic institutions, with exception of gender. The effects of education and subjective evaluation of own social position have positive effect on trust in democratic institutions, as one would predict from previous research. Younger and older cohorts are more trustful than the middle one. The effect of citizenship in country of residence is negative and significant. This can be interpreted in the sense that citizens are more critical of the institutions of their respective countries because they have different reference points than non-citizens, who most likely compare institutions in the country of destination to those in their countries of origin, and trust the former more than the latter.\(^{10}\)

As far as country-level variables are concerned, we confirm that in countries with higher gross domestic product per capita people are more trustful. The effect of population size is also negative – weak but significant.\(^{11}\) However, the net effect of democracy is negative – a result that is different than in other studies (e.g. Klingemann 1999; Slomczynski and Janicka 2009). The explanation is of methodological nature: the measure of democracy that we use has only very limited variation for European countries. In particular, the score of seven, which indicates, in our coding schema, countries that are most free, is shared by 19 of the 22 countries included in our analysis. Exception are Russia (democracy index = 2.5), Bulgaria (6) and Hungary (6.5).

The model presented in Table 9.1 accounts for the statistical situation in which there are expected differences between countries in the average trust in democratic institutions. The empty model (not reported) allowed us to compute the intraclass correlation coefficient, which equals 0.282.\(^{12}\) This means that 28 percent of the variance in trust in institutions is at the country-level, which is quite high. Once we account for this country-specific variance, we obtain a more accurate representation of the effects of all independent variables included in the model, on individual and country levels.

In Table 9.2 we modify the analyses in two important ways. First, after learning about the joint effects of economic dissatisfaction and extreme groups, we drop the interaction terms. Second, we add two new individual-level variables: dissatisfaction with government (as suggested by the institutional performance model) and trust in people.\(^{13}\) The latter we include given cultural and social capital arguments that people have a general disposition to trust or distrust others. Those who trust others and who cooperate engage politically and have greater confidence in institutions (Putnam 1992 as cited in Luhiste 2006: 479).

Dissatisfaction with government and generalized trust in people appear to be the most powerful explanatory individual-level factors. People dissatisfied with government tend to be distrustful toward democratic institutions, net of other factors. Generalized trust in people is positively associated with trust in institutions, \textit{ceteris paribus}.
Xenophobes and ethno-discriminated in Europe

The main conclusion from the analyses presented in Tables 9.1 and 9.2 is that the effect of extreme groups on trust in democratic institutions confirms Hypothesis I. Controlling for other individual- and country-level variables, mixed effect model for the European Social Survey Data, 2012

Table 9.2 Regression of trust in public institutions on extreme groups, dissatisfaction with economy and government, and generalized trust in people, controlling for other individual- and country-level variables, mixed effect model for the European Social Survey Data, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual-level variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling ethno-discriminated (yes =1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>-0.098**</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>-0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobes (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>-0.153**</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>-0.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with economy (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>-0.253**</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>-0.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with government (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>-0.565**</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>-0.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized trust in people</td>
<td>0.208**</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of schooling</td>
<td>0.010**</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective evaluation of own social position (scale 0–10)</td>
<td>0.042**</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship in residence country (yes = 1, otherwise = 1)</td>
<td>-0.071**</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male = 1, female = 0)</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger cohort, 18–35 years old (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.033**</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older cohort, 67 and older (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.036**</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country-level variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross domestic product per capita</td>
<td>0.347**</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of democracy</td>
<td>-0.105*</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>-0.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population size</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Random effects</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var (constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate = 0.036 Std err = 0.011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var (residual)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate =0.603 Std err = 0.004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics

- Number of observations = 40346, number of groups = 22
- Wald $\chi^2$ (df 14) = 16069.79
- Log likelihood = -43769.27, AIC = 87572.55, BIC = 87718.83

a. The standardized coefficients have been obtained using the formula standardized coefficient = (unstandardized coefficient * standard deviation of explanatory variable) / standard deviation of dependent variable (see Hox 2010: 22).

The main conclusion from the analyses presented in Tables 9.1 and 9.2 is that the effect of extreme groups on trust in democratic institutions confirms Hypothesis I. Controlling for main individual- and country-level determinants, the effect of belonging to ethno-discriminated and xenophobes on trust in democratic institutions is negative and relatively strong.

This pattern holds for the majority of countries included in the analyses of this chapter, although in some cases the impact of ethno-discriminated or xenophobes is not significant. Of course there are also exceptions. For example, in two
countries, Belgium and Slovenia, ethno-discriminated are more trustful in democratic institutions than the society’s majority. We should note here that Belgium functions very much like a confederation, with the divide between French, Dutch, and German language-based territories; it is extreme in the degree of autonomy that it has given to the language groups, including political representation. In Slovenia, the three constitutionally recognized autochthonous national minorities – Hungarians, Italians and Roma – enjoy, normatively, a privileged status. Even though the official language of the country is Slovene, the constitution foresees other official languages in those areas where ethnic communities reside. Hence, for Belgium and Slovenia we can interpret the result in light of the performance explanation: self-reported ethno-discriminated trust the democratic institutions because they perceive these institutions to effectively protect their rights.

Conventional protest behavior and working for political parties and other organizations

Measurement

The European Social Survey contains the following question on non-electoral political participation: There are different ways of trying to improve things in [name of a country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Have you: (a) contacted a politician, government or local government official? (b) worked in a political party or action group? (c) worked in another organization or association? (d) worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker? (e) signed a petition? (f) taken part in a lawful public demonstration? (g) boycotted certain products? All these items are political sensu largo, since they refer to ways of showing disapproval with the state of affairs controlled by those in power, or to ways for influencing political decisions. The context of the question – it follows questions on voting in national elections – and the phrasing of the first item, “politician” and “official,” most likely influence the respondent’s interpretation of all enumerated actions in political rather than economic or cultural terms. However, only three items are political sensu stricto, as claim-making toward government (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). These items are contacting a politician, signing a petition and participating in demonstration (items a, e, and f). Following Dubrow, Slomczynski and Tomescu-Dubrow (2006) we take these as indicators of conventional political protest. In addition, we selected the items worked in a political party or action group (item b) and worked in another organization or association (item c) to measure respondents participation in civil society; the resulting measure is dichotomous, coded one if respondents participate in any of the two activities, zero else.

In conceptual terms, our measure of conventional political protest has two dimensions: collectivistic and individualistic. Collectivistic means that the act is designed as physical display of opinion to build solidarity, and the person has the sense of being part of a gathering. Public demonstrations are a good example of collectivistic behavior. In contrast, individualistic behavior does not necessarily stimulate a group’s collective consciousness. The participant is less likely to feel
part of a collective when contacting a politician, government or local government official. Signing a petition contains both collectivistic aspects (preparing a petition requires cooperation) and individualistic aspects (petition signing is a personal act) (Dubrow et al. 2006). This conceptualization of conventional political protest builds on that of Jenkins and Form (2005) by adding contacting a politician, government or local government official. The full explanation for this decision is in Dubrow et al. (2006: 39). In short, we want to account for the possibility that protest is exercised in alternative forms in various countries.

We classify a case as representing conventional political protest if the respondent answered “yes” to at least one of the items: calling a politician, signing a petition, participating in demonstration. Different cross-national patterns of correlations among these three indicators suggest a week universal underlying construct for which indicators have the same meaning across Europe. Indeed, we noticed that in a few countries people demonstrate but not contact politicians or officials. In some countries, contacting politicians and officials is much more popular than signing petitions; in other countries the opposite is true. Thus, the three indicators should be treated as alternative expressions of political protest rather than a cumulative measure of the intensity of the underlying common phenomenon. Accordingly, for each country we created a dichotomy, dividing all respondents into those who protested in any of three forms – “contacts,” “petitions,” “demonstrations” – and the rest. On the country-level, the proportion of protesters varies greatly, from 0.06 (for Hungary) to 0.50 (Sweden). In the entire data set, the proportion of political protest is 0.29 and standard deviation of 0.45.

The effects of feeling ethno-discrimination and of xenophobia on conventional political protest

In Table 9.3 we present a two-level logistic regression model explaining conventional protest behavior, with emphasis on the self-reported ethno-discriminated and on the xenophobes. We use some of the same control individual-level variables as in the models explaining trust in democratic institutions: dissatisfaction with economy and government, education, subjective evaluation of own social position, citizenship in residence country, gender and two age cohorts.

As Gallego (2007) points out, the common logic underpinning explanations of their socio-economic and socio-demographic characteristics is effect is a resource and costs based one: they affect the acquisition of resources which lower the costs of taking part in politics.

In addition, we also consider the relevance of trust in institutions and of interest in politics for people’s odds to protest. These psychological orientations have been found to matter greatly for both electoral and non-electoral political action (e.g. Abramson and Aldrich 1982; Dawson, Brown and Allen 1990; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Leighley and Vedlitz 1999).
democratic setting, those who trust these institutions are more likely to consider protest a worthwhile pursuit than those who mistrust them. While the association of trust to odds of protesting is positive, it is not statistically significant, other things controlled for.

The effect of interest in politics, on the other hand, is strong and significant. For a one point increase on the scale of interest, the odds of participating in political protest (as opposed to not engaging) increase by 67 percent, everything else equal. So, we clearly see that people who are interested in political affairs are indeed more active politically.

Table 9.3 Logistic regression of conventional political protest on extreme groups, dissatisfaction with economy and government, and trust in institutions, controlling for other individual-level and country-level variables, mixed effect model for the European Social Survey Data, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>DV = \log (p / p–1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed effects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual-level variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling ethno-discriminated (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.337**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobes (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>–0.129**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with economy (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.155**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with government (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.198**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in institutions</td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in politics (scale 1–4)</td>
<td>0.516**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of schooling</td>
<td>0.091**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective evaluation of own social position (scale 0–10)</td>
<td>0.037**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship in residence country (yes = 1, otherwise = 1)</td>
<td>0.769**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male = 1, female = 0)</td>
<td>–0.063**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger cohort, 18–35 years old (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older cohort, 67 and older (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>–0.422**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country-level variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross domestic product per capita</td>
<td>0.793**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of democracy</td>
<td>0.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population size</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>–13.831</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Random effects

Var (constant) Estimate = 0.216  Std err = 0.067

Statistics

Number of observations = 40,349; number of groups = 22
Wald χ² (df 15) = 249.44
Log likelihood = –21118.90, AIC = 42271.8, BIC = 42418.09
Xenophobes and ethno-discriminated in Europe

From the point of view of our research focus, the most important result in Table 9.3 is that the effects of extreme groups on conventional protest behavior remain substantial and significant after controlling for both individual and country-level factors. Thus Hypothesis II is overall confirmed. In comparison with the rest, people who feel ethno-discriminated are 40 percent more likely to protest, everything else equal. In contrast, people who are systematically xenophobic are 12 percent less likely to contact politicians, sign petitions or participate in demonstrations than the rest, *ceteris paribus*. By extension, we see, for the whole data set, a big difference in how ethno-discriminated vs. xenophobes act.

However, this hypothesis finds its support to varying degree in particular countries, and in some countries the results reveal a different pattern. In Table 9.4 we

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Odds ratios with society’s majority as a reference category</th>
<th>Support for the hypothesis that $a &gt; 1$ and $b &lt; 1$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\text{Self-reported ethno-discriminated}$</td>
<td>$\text{Xenophobes}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Controlling for dissatisfaction with economy and government, trust in democratic institutions, interest in politics, education, subjective evaluation of own social position, citizenship, gender, and age cohorts. For the impact of these variables on conventional protests, in the context of the country-level variables, see Table 9.3.
present, for all countries included in our analyses, odds ratios of participating in conventional protest by persons who feel ethno-discriminated and xenophobes, with the society’s majority as a reference category. The first two columns contain odds ratios from the logistic regressions, in which participating in conventional protests is explained only by the two extreme groups. In the next two columns, odds ratios are taken from logistic regressions that include all individual level variables discussed earlier, that is dissatisfaction with economy and government, trust in democratic institutions, interest in politics, education, subjective evaluation of own social position, citizenship, gender, and age cohorts. Generally, introducing these control variables reduces odds ratios for persons feeling ethno-discriminated and enhances them for xenophobes, thus providing a conservative test of the hypothesis. However in some instances, noted in bold, odds ratios under the control of other variables are more in agreement with the hypothesis than odds ratios without any controls.

In 16 countries there is some support for the hypothesis that persons that feel ethno-discriminated tend to protest more while xenophobes tend to protest less in comparison with the society’s majority. Belgium, Bulgaria, Iceland, and Portugal are clear exceptions, and Finland is a special case, where the hypothesis holds only without introducing control variables. All these countries differ from each other and only historical circumstances could explain their idiosyncratic patterns. It is, however, remarkable that only in these countries the difference in engagement in protests between persons feeling ethno-discriminated and xenophobes is negligible.

The effects of feeling ethno-discrimination and of xenophobia on working for political parties or other organizations

Next to protest, we are interested in working for political parties and other organizations as means by which the two extreme groups in our analyses engage with civil society. As presented in Table 9.5, persons who feel ethno-discriminated work for political parties and other organizations more, by around 45 percent, than the rest of people. In contrast, xenophobes are 20 percent less likely to do so, compared to the rest. Dissatisfaction with economy and government are not significant variables for engaging with civil society. Interest in politics, education, subjective evaluation of own position, and citizenship exercise positive effects on the dependent variable, as they did on political protest. Regarding age, we find that the young are significantly less likely than the middle aged to work for parties or organization, while the older are more likely than the middle aged to do so. This result is in line with the costs and benefits arguments of political engagement: the young are more focused on launching their careers and on family formation and have less time for this type of political participation, which is time consuming and intensive, much more so than conventional political protest (which also explains the lack of cohort differences between the young and the middle aged in protesting). The older group, on the other hand, has more time for such intensive activities, and may also have different socialization experiences with regards to
Xenophobes and ethno-discriminated in Europe

Hypothesis III stipulated that subjective ethno-discrimination has a positive influence on working for political parties and other organizations, is confirmed. Regarding the effect of pervasive xenophobia, we expected xenophobes to be less engaged than the ethno-discriminated, but, given different possible interpretations of the mobilization and groups conflict theory, we were less clear of this group’s behavior in relation to the rest. Generally – that is, for all countries together, we

Table 9.5 Logistic regression of working for political parties, associations or organizations on extreme groups, dissatisfaction with economy and government, and trust in institutions, controlling for other individual-level and country-level variables, mixed effect model for the European Social Survey Data, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual-level variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling ethno-discriminated (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.364**</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>1.439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobes (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>–0.235**</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>0.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with economy (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>1.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with government (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>–0.039</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in institutions</td>
<td>0.070**</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>1.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in politics (scale 1–4)</td>
<td>0.490**</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>1.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of schooling</td>
<td>0.077**</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>1.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective evaluation of own social position (scale 0–10)</td>
<td>0.091**</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>1.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship in residence country (yes = 1, otherwise = 1)</td>
<td>0.658**</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>1.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male = 1, female = 0)</td>
<td>0.160**</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>1.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger cohort, 18–35 years old (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>–0.250**</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>0.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older cohort, 67 and older (yes = 1, otherwise = 0)</td>
<td>0.085*</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>1.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country-level variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross domestic product per capita</td>
<td>0.969**</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>2.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of democracy</td>
<td>–0.029</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>0.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population size</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>1.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>–15.084</td>
<td>1.879</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Var (constant)</td>
<td>Estimate 0.264</td>
<td>Std err 0.082</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations = 40,364; number of groups = 22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald $\chi^2$ (df 15) = 1971.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood = –15062.14, AIC = 30158.27, BIC = 30304.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
find that persons who feel ethno-discriminated engage with civil society more than the rest, while xenophobes are significantly less likely than others to do so. This pattern is clear in the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, Finland, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Slovenia, and Slovakia. However, in some countries – notably in Hungary, Ireland, Island, and Portugal the effect is reversed: negative for persons who feel ethno-discriminated and positive for xenophobes.

Conclusions

This chapter asked an important question about factors that determine, in a statistical sense, patterns of political engagement. The question is whether belonging to groups that form extremes in society – persons who feel ethno-discriminated or hold pervasive xenophobic attitudes – influences civic activity above and beyond traditionally considered factors of structural explanations (emphasizing the role of socio-economic resources) and social psychological models (focusing on peoples’ orientations, such as one’s interest in politics and their sense of political efficacy). We have chosen these two groups as the opposite poles of the ethnicity and immigration issues. They are not only mutually dependent but also good “test cases,” minorities that could be easily contrasted with the society’s majority.

We have argued that both marginalization theory and group conflict theory, taken together, allow researchers to derive predictions that persons who feel ethno-discriminated or represent xenophobic attitudes differ from the society’s majority with respect to trust in democratic institutions, participating in conventional protest, and working for political parties or other organizations. These complex predictions show that persons who feel ethno-discriminated and those who are xenophobic are similar in some civic domains while quite different in others. In particular, we developed three main hypotheses. First, we postulated that controlling for other variables, the effect of belonging to the two extreme groups – ethno-discriminated and xenophobes – on trust in democratic institutions is negative and relatively strong. Second, we expected that persons who feel ethno-discriminated tend to protest more while xenophobes tend to protest less – in comparison with the wider society. The third hypothesis was complex since it assumed that feelings of ethno-discrimination have positive influence on working with political parties or other organizations; but with respect to xenophobic attitudes, our third hypothesis only suggested that xenophobes would differ significantly from the ethno-discriminated, but not from the wider society.

Results presented in this chapter provide clear support for the first two hypotheses. Indeed, controlling for other variables, the effect of belonging to the analyzed extreme groups on trust in democratic institutions is relatively strong and negative. In comparison with the core of society, persons that feel ethno-discriminated tend to protest more while xenophobes tend to protest less, other things being equal. However, the results for the third hypothesis are mixed. As predicted, ethno-discrimination has a significant and positive influence on working for political parties and other organizations. Yet, xenophobes are engaged in this kind of activ-
Xenophobes and ethno-discriminated in Europe

ity significantly less than the society’s majority while our hypothesis predicted “no difference.” We return to this “anomaly” soon.

In this chapter we presented overall results for all European countries (except Kosovo) of the European Social Survey – 2012, including individual level- and country-level-variables. We also looked at the relationships within countries. For most of them, the effects of belonging to the extreme groups on trust in democratic institutions, participation in conventional protests, and working with political parties and other organizations were consistent with the overall pattern. However, we would like to stress two issues: (1) there are some notable exceptions – divergences from the overall pattern, and (2) countries differ significantly within the common pattern.

The overall pattern for all countries together, contained in the reported two-level models, is a benchmark for cross-national comparisons. The “empty” models (see Hox 2010) show that inter-country differences account for more than a quarter of the total variation at the respondent level. Introducing individual and country-level variables diminishes the inter-country variation significantly. Most countries fit to the overall pattern well. However, the benchmark allows researchers to detect significant exceptions. In Belgium and Slovenia, persons who feel ethno-discriminated trust democratic institutions more than the society’s majority. In some countries – such as Belgium, Bulgaria, Island, and Portugal – there are no significant differences between persons who feel ethno-discriminated and xenophobes with respect to the frequency of participating in protests. In Hungary, Ireland, Island, and Portugal the effect of xenophobic attitudes on working with political parties or other organizations is positive, while the effect of feeling ethno-discriminated is negative. Although our general models work well for most countries included in the analyses, exceptions are important for generating new hypotheses.

Such inter-country differences require new research within the framework of the political opportunity structures. We controlled for gross domestic product per capita, democracy index and the population size but not for contextual variables drawn from the social movement literature. Authors working within this framework usually refer to political opportunities as “consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure” (Tarrow 1998: 76–77). A great discussion accompanies this concept, providing clarifications and extensions (Kriesi 2004; Meyer 2004; Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Rydgren 2007). A few studies are concerned with cross-country comparison of social movements and contentious politics (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak and Giugni 1995; Koopmans and Statham 2000), comparing overall opportunity structures across national systems. What would be need for future analyses of the effects of belonging to extreme groups on political engagement and participation are variables that describe “opportunities for action” for these groups.

We can envision that the political opportunity structure may both encourage and discourage democratic engagement. We suspect that substantial presence of
right-wing parties and the strength of the multicultural environment are key factors that would determine the direction of its influence. In political campaign seasons, right-wing parties hold political rallies that attract the xenophobic and drive back the ethno-discriminated. Once in government, right-wing parties use legitimate democratic platforms – parliamentary debates, for example – to publicly express their worldviews. Both situations attract media attention and thus right-wing partiers use newspapers, television, radio and Internet to broadcast xenophobia (see Koopmans 2004). This environment would likely encourage even the mildly xenophobic to express their relatively unpopular, anti-immigrant policy preferences in either forums of public discourse – such as lawful demonstrations – or to work directly with the right-wing political organizations. The extent to which this environment discourages the democratic engagement of the ethno-discriminated depends on the countervailing multiculturalist forces that already exist in the political environment, e.g. the strength of pro-immigrant left-wing parties and the country’s recent history in promoting multiculturalism and fighting xenophobia.

Analyses presented in this chapter involve European countries included in the European Social Survey in the 2012 round. Two types of data expansion would enrich our knowledge on political engagement of persons who feel ethno-discriminated and xenophobes: larger geographical coverage and longer time span. Data from the Word Values Survey, and several regional barometer surveys – such as, for example, Afrobarometer, Asiabarometer, or Latinobarometer – contain similar questionnaire items as used in this chapter. These and other relevant surveys potentially could be analyzed jointly for the period of at least one decade. This would require ex-post harmonization of data, a difficult and time consuming task. We believe that analyses presented in this chapter provide empirical evidence that such a task would be worthwhile to undertake.

Notes

1 Regarding xenophobes, research focuses overwhelmingly on voting (e.g. Arzheimer and Carter 2003; Rydgren 2007; 2008). The notable exception are studies of extreme right-wing mobilization (see Koopmans 1996; Koopmans and Kriesi 1997; Braun and Koopmans 2013).

2 Available at: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/

3 The proportions for countries omitted from our analysis are as follows: Israel 12 percent and Kosovo 2 percent.

4 We have also experimented with operationalizing xenophobia as a 4-point scale variable and also as an 8-point scale. Since dummy variable performs as well as the scale variables, for ease of interpretation we report our analyses with the dummy for xenophobia.

5 Readers may be interested to know the corresponding percentages for Israel (22 percent) and for Kosovo (24 percent).

6 We have experimented with removing Cyprus from the analyses; since there are no significant changes in any of the models (results available upon request) if we run them without it and the number of countries is already rather small, we retained Cyprus.

7 Coefficients for X and W are at least two times larger than their standard errors while coefficients for the constant and Z are smaller than their standard errors. F = 12, 67 (df 3, 18), R^2adj = 0.625.
In all countries the factor loadings (i.e. the correlations of indicators with the construct) are very high, in the range of 0.85 to 0.91. The eigenvalue, interpreted as the loading total variance, amounts to 2.32, therefore satisfying the assumed criterion. The trust factor explains 77 percent of the total variability of indicators. Trust in parliament has the highest factor loading, and trust in the judiciary – the lowest. To test inter-country measurement equivalency we applied factor analysis to all countries together as well as to each separately. For each respondent we saved the values of the construct for the universal measure and for the country-specific measure. Next, we computed the correlation coefficient between the universal measure and the country measure. In no country was the value of this coefficient lower than 0.999. This proves that country idiosyncratic tendencies toward trust in democratic institutions are negligible. Thus, we use the common construct, measured in the same metric, for all countries.

Dissatisfaction with economy is measured based on responses to the question On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [your country]? on an 11-point scale, with 0 extremely dissatisfied and 10 extremely satisfied. Respondents who have chosen a value below the mid-point (5) are coded 1, otherwise 0.

In ESS6, 98 percent of non-citizens are from immigrant families.

In all models, Population size is actual population size/1000000

In this set up (people nested in countries), the intraclass correlation coefficient (rho) = variance of the errors at the country-level / (variance of the errors at the country-level + variance of the errors at the individual-level).

Dissatisfaction with government was assessed on the basis of responses to the question Thinking about the [your country’s] government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job? on an 11-point scale, with 0 extremely dissatisfied and 10 extremely satisfied. Those who have chosen a value below the mid-point (5) were coded 1, otherwise 0. Generalized trust in people is a factor created on the basis of three items: Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people? Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair? Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?

In practice, the situation of Roma is worse than that of the other two groups. Roma are underrepresented in public affairs at the national level, and have no seats in the National Assembly (minorityrights.org/5177/slovenia/roma). We expect that Roma would express lower trust than the other minorities and than non-minority Slovenians, but we would need different data for examining it.

Some items could be good indicators of social participation but lack face validity as indicators of political behavior. In particular, note that people could wear a campaign badge or boycott certain products to show sympathy to certain groups without any intentional or unintentional political implications.

ESS6 asks respondents how interested in politics they are. Answers are originally recorded on 4-point scale, with 1 denoting very interested, 4 = not at all interested. For our measure, we have reversed the coding (i.e. a score of four corresponds to very interested, while 1 =not interested at all).

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Xenophobes and ethno-discriminated in Europe


Irina Tomescu-Dubrow et al.


Conclusion
Lessons learned

Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow

This concluding chapter, “Lessons Learned,” synthesizes some of the main ideas presented in the book and imagines new directions for research. I discuss four main themes: the importance of organizational skills and capacity, the relevance of the elite, methodological innovations via feminist approaches and intersectionality, and how the study of political inequality can exist as both a scientific and moral issue.

Loud and clear: The importance of organizational skills and capacity

Several chapters in this book argue that, beyond economic resources, organizational skills and capacity is a vital element for the expression of political voice and the solicitation of government response. Studying a Brazilian city, Simões finds that women are more likely than men to join voluntary associations, a key political activity that fosters organizational skills. In another part of the world, Tomescu-Dubrow and Slomczynski find that two European minorities, xenophobes and the ethnically discriminated, are separated by very different life experiences and attitudes yet both have similar organizational skills and capacity. A key difference between these groups is that the ethnically discriminated are more likely to work in political organizations than xenophobes. Domański examines the political voice expression of social classes in Europe. The organizational capacity of management and professional classes, Domański argues, is key to the creation and maintenance of the boundaries between them and the rest of the class structure. The focus on organizational capacity of social classes and other societal groups is akin to Waisman’s argument of a dualized, “partial” democracy. Other authors find that organizational skills are vital for not only making voice heard, but for joining the ranks of the decision-makers. As Joignant et al. point out, much of political life is working in organizations. The organizational skills that aspirants to the elite learn at the lower levels translate into the ability to climb to the top of the political ladder.

In the language of political inequality, we learn from these chapters that organizational skills and capacity are necessary to make a group’s voice heard and responded to. Formally, government is charged with responding to everyone.
Practically, governments listen mostly to the loudest and clearest voices. What is loud and clear? First, those who are better organized are louder and clearer than those who are less well organized. Second, governments and their representatives hear best the voice spoken in a language that they understand. Successful groups, elites included, manage to speak in such a way that government seriously considers their ideas. Thus the loudness and clarity of political voice depends on the capacity for groups to organize and speak the government’s language.

Consider the elite

All elite studies assume that privileged position within society’s major sectors – political, economic, military, religious, cultural and civic – endows some men and women with a louder and clearer political voice and, in some cases, the power to hand down to the citizenry all the important decisions that there are to hand down. Mills and other elite theorists argue that either that state has been captured by a cabal of elites or, at minimum, the policy preferences are theirs. Elites play an outsized role in the political process as both the prime movers and beneficiaries of democracy’s unequal political system.

Within the social sciences there is a palpable disciplinary bias in elite studies: political scientists tend to argue that elite theory is simplistic while sociologists continue to support it. Two academic review articles well articulate this disciplinary divide. In the *Annual Review of Political Science*, Bailey and Braybrooke (2003) wrote about Dahl as a philosopher of democracy. Of Dahl’s views on elites, the authors wrote, “Inequalities do exist – and they often translate into political inequalities – but it does not follow that an elite or a set of elites call all the shots, nor that citizen participation is futile” (104). In the article’s abstract, the authors write that “[Dahl] clears the way for continuing hope for democracy by demolishing (by arguments supported by observations) the ruling-elite model . . .” (99) [emphasis mine]. Contrast this with Kahn (2012), who concludes in an *Annual Review of Sociology* article on the sociology of elites that, “Elites are often the engines of inequality, whether we look at economic distribution, political power, the definition of what is culturally desirable, or access to and control over institutions that help create social knowledge” (373). These are clearly divergent views of elite: political science sees them as but one set of actors in a pluralistic society and sociologists sees them as society’s game-changers. The disciplinary battle over community power studies that began in the 1950s has apparently not reached its armistice.

In my view, the field of political inequality is wide enough to accommodate the political science and sociological perspectives on the role of elites in political voice and response. It is not for social science, *qua* science, to say whether everyday folks should become disheartened and, consequently, democratically demobilized, at the possible existence of elites. The importance of the elite remains an open *empirical* question that deserves continuing scholarly address.

The question of the elite was not adequately taken-up by the APSA Task Force on inequality in American democracy (possibly, again, because of disciplinary
boundaries, or simply the preferences of the authors of the report). However, there are many scholars working in the field of political inequality across the world that do consider the elite as a viable subject of study. As such, some of the chapters in this book consider the elite.

Considering the elite is a theme that runs through three of the four chapters on Latin America. They contend with the idea that this region is highly unequal yet has functioning, relatively stable democratic regimes characterized by high levels of inequality. These three chapters seem to ask the same question: how can this situation survive? The authors argue that the elite run the show and are motivated to maintain both political inequality – of which they benefit economically – and democracy – which institutionalizes the inequality. Democracy serves as a stabilizing force for political inequality. Lopez argues that elites do feel that inequality is a threat to democracy. Yet, we see that the elite are not so moved by this fear as to make grand economic changes designed for greater political equality. Perhaps this ideology is created during the long climb up to the top of the political ladder. Waisman suggests that the Latin American system is run on privilege, where the elite and well-organized use their position to better themselves at the expense of the marginalized. The political elite in Latin America, according to Waisman, is determined to make their political careers as long and as fruitful as possible. This desire to gain power and remain at the top may be formed and strengthened during their climb up. Joignant et al. find that the rise to the top of the political elite is more likely if they first gain experience in political organizations at its lower levels. This suggests a closed elite system run on pre-existing privilege and that leads to a selectively permeable political boundary in which only the resource-rich and organizationally skilled few can enter. Lopez, surveying the Brazilian scene, argues that in the Brazilian elite there is more continuity than discontinuity, meaning that the left-ward shift was in ideology, not personnel. Perhaps it is the process of attaining power that the Latin American elite solidify their ideologies and desires and, consequently, their country’s political inequality.

Methodological innovations through feminism and intersectionality

A criticism of the foundational 2004 APSA Task Force report on inequality and American democracy is that it under-emphasized gendered political inequality. As such, I invited methodological chapters that focus on women and politics. Independently written, the chapters by Hughes and Simões feature feminist scholars’ critiques of social science methodology. The authors sought data and methods that are more complicated, yet better fitting to social reality. Both chapters make sound arguments for re-considering our measurement of political inequality of voice and representation.

Hughes advocates for a shift in thinking about demographics and political representation from the idea that gender is distinct from ethnicity to an explicit measurement of its intersection. This shift creates a worthwhile complication because intersectionality better reflects empirical reality. “By focusing on women as an
undifferentiated collective,” writes Hughes in this book, “we ignore intersectionality: the ways that race, ethnicity, class, religion, language, and sexuality intersect with gender to impact women’s identities, interests, and outcomes.” Accounting for intersectionality in a quantitative way has many methodological pitfalls, and Hughes’ previous work (Hughes 2011, forthcoming) and her chapter in this book contributes to the growing literature on how to overcome its challenges (see also Dubrow 2008, 2013).

Simões draws on feminist methodological literature to critically examine how social science measures political voice in cross-national surveys. While the idea of functional equivalence has long been part of sound cross-national survey methods, Simões finds that the pursuit of functional equivalence across a very wide number of countries has led to some of the inadequacies of measurements of political voice that are often and unfortunately replicated across surveys and over time. Simões presents empirical support for the idea that a local and historically specific measurement of voluntarism and participation leads to a better measurement of political voice. Simões wonders whether the replication of cross-national measures of political voice across surveys and time has led to a consistent “undermeasurement” of women’s political activity in the global south and the global north. We need more of this kind of work.

Political inequality as moral and ethical issue

This last section may well begin with an epigraph from Afouxenidis, written for this book:

Hidden behind statistics and other empirical evidence that indicate increasing poverty, inequality and destitution at local and global levels are people telling often sad, hopeless stories. These people, their families and their communities are deemed insignificant for they are up against the larger—and by default supposedly more important—forces shaping global affairs, namely the market, neoliberal capitalism, deregulation and the sprawling of “democracy.”

As with other inequalities, political inequality invites passionate debates. Some studies in political inequality tend toward the manifesto. I argue that this is all well and good, and mixes properly with the coldly scientific study of inequality. While the empirical claims of manifestos are open for debate, they point quite clearly to the need to see the individual in the statistics and the suffering in the inequality. As academics reconsider and refine their understanding of political inequality, it does the international scholarly community well to remember that people have fought and died for the ideals of good governance, of democracy and of political equality. Not all will agree with the goals of these fights. Some fought and died for a democracy that includes slavery and others for a democracy that protects more the rights of the privileged than the disadvantaged. Not all agree on its causes. Some blame neoliberalism, while others argue that it has been a liberationist force. We should identify and differentially place the manifesto from the dispassionate
scientific study. But, we should read both, if nothing else than to remind ourselves that we are all human beings, and that political inequality is a phenomenon worth debating inside and outside academic walls.

Note
1 As editor, I was looking for Latin American studies but I was not looking specifically for elite studies; independently, these authors delivered chapters in which the elite feature prominently.

References


