

Political Action: Theory, Method, and Paradigm

Abstract

A brief analysis of 20th century presidential elections in the USA illustrates how social change affects theories of social change through a dialectic of theory and praxis in which it is always the material conditions rather than the theories that are the determining forces. Simply stated, revolutions produce new theories of revolutions. Beyond this, the dominant perspective on social movements and social change can be applied not simply to revolutions or to extra-institutional challenges but to things as mundane as the future of the Democratic party in the USA in the wake of Donald Trump's election.

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Politicians and academics share a common problem—nobody understands us. We can blame it on the media, or the editors and reviewers, but we academics need to recognize that we are the editors if not the publishers and that we are the reviewers. If nobody understands us, the source of the problem should be clear. How then, might we proceed? The academic path seems to exacerbate the problem. The more proficient we become as academics, the less comprehensible our analysis. How this happens is clear.

We go to graduate school—to learn a discipline, which includes a constellation of theories and methods and paradigms that we recognize as a reasonable or at least comprehensible way to organize academic discourse. This yields a product that is only comprehensible to those who have been similarly trained, in a specific discipline, at a specific time and, to a lesser extent, place (Mullins 1973; Ritzer 1980). Academic training is a double-edged sword, offering both a disciplined focus on subjects deemed interesting and accepted ways of attempting to understand or interpret these. This allows us to see more clearly within a narrowly circumscribed field of vision—something like what we can see under a microscope. As I tell my students, we learn more and more about less and less, and when you know everything about nothing we give you a PhD and send you off to teach others.¹

There are inter-disciplinary studies programs, which are sometimes the base of anti-disciplinary efforts and popularizing campaigns, and there are applied programs, which attempt

¹ The fact that it takes a committee and a department to produce a PhD serves to both broaden and narrow the field of acceptable research. Required courses and qualifying or preliminary exams should guarantee some degree of proficiency beyond the committee and the major professor.

to bridge the gap between academic and public policy discourse. More important are the public and private funding agents, who attempt to define research agendas, orienting research toward problems to be solved or questions to be answered. These attempts to undermine the independence and insularity of academic training are potential threats to academic discourse, although they are enabling as well as constraining. The path from dissertation grant to principal investigator is relatively easily traversed, but the steady progress toward senior scholar is a life's work that can become tedious, unless one is inspired by a research agenda that can be insinuated into the range of fundable or, at least, publishable research or, alternatively, if one simply lacks the imagination to think outside the box.²

Clearly, both academic and funding institutions tend to restrict research to what might be considered "main stream" theory (liberal or conservative) and method (concerns with reliability tend to overshadow concerns with validity). Some might argue that objectivity is sacrificed, but the real problem is the threat to disinterested academic inquiry. As I tell my students, they might begin with a topic that interests them, which they can explore in search of a question or problem, but academic discourse begins with a thesis. This might be considered an answer to the question or a solution to the problem, but they must be prepared to discover that they were wrong. In fact, if we were never wrong we would never learn anything.

When I was working as a post-doctoral fellow, one of the senior faculty admitted that he was going to suppress a finding that was politically untenable. The fact that he did not believe the finding was not really the problem. He was convinced that the relationship he found was spurious, or that it represented a self-fulfilling prophesy. From a purely academic perspective,

² One of my senior colleagues advises students to conduct surveys using questions that have been used before in funded research, including, of course, her own questions. Many years ago, I had the invaluable experience of working with Howard Schumann on the problem of question wording effects and response bias, which suggested to me at least that reproducing Likert scales might not be the best way to proceed.

this would have justified not only the publication of the results but continuing efforts to specify the relationship between public opinion and the state of academic knowledge. The finding was suppressed because it might have served to support public opinion and to challenge academic knowledge, while also challenging public policy.

In the private sector, when consultants are hired, the funding agent is much less discrete, at least in private. On one occasion, a city planner working for a private development firm explained to his consultants that he did not want any material trace of their findings to survive the oral report. As he explained, “I don’t pay people to find gnatcatchers [a now endangered bird species] on my property.” At the same time, the planners were curious about the nesting behavior of the gnatcatchers. They shared an academic interest, as planners, in the question of how development and habitat conservation might be effected most expeditiously. They were all committed, in varying degrees, to the value of “big picture planning,” but the employer/client had financial stakes in what might be uncovered in an extended research project, so they ceased their research and destroyed all evidence of their preliminary findings.

My years of studying community oppositions to group homes, or the process of permitting suburban sprawl, were not so encumbered, even when the National Institute of Mental Health was convinced to fund the former project.³ Although my funding agents had a dog in that fight, I really did not. I was convinced that some combination of interests and organization would predict opposition and that a survey of group home providers, combined with census data

³ Both these projects were constrained and enabled by the fact that the persons interviewed were still living and their activities were ongoing. This made it easier to manipulate the data-gathering process but more difficult to publish the results. Studying dead people requires less concern for human subjects and confidentiality. My nineteenth century research projects, even when funded, never raised any questions about the protection of human subject, but archivists and local government officials were not always obliging, as were most of my group home providers, once they learned that I was funded by the same pot of federal money that sustained their efforts.

on block groups where homes were located (or effectively blocked by opposition) would provide me with adequate information to figure out how neighborhood and agency characteristics and relations affected attempts to locate group homes. For me, it was an interesting political problem. It really did not matter whether the locally unwanted facilities were group homes or toxic dump sites. I was convinced that what I had learned in graduate school about grassroots political movements could be applied to any such case, and that ultimately the theory and methods would provide enlightenment, in some modest degree.

This proved to be true, to the extent that I published enough papers to get tenured and promoted. Plus, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) was courting me, promising the prospects of more generous grants to replicate and expand the study that I had completed. It soon became apparent, however, that my academic interest in expanding my knowledge of the various factors that shape the politics of place were making it more difficult for me to continue to serve the narrow range of concerns that were fundable. My NIMH agent told me that they were not interested in land-use politics—just in community based residential treatment facilities. So, we parted company, and I went on to study San Diego suburban sprawl rather than replicating my New Jersey study of community opposition to group homes in Indiana. Throughout my academic career, I have found that the incremental growth of knowledge, through the accumulation of the published findings of sponsored research does not tend to expand the theoretical or even the methodological base of academic discourse.⁴

Major advances in academic research and public policy do not result from the routine accumulation of research findings, because the institutional constraints of public policy research

⁴ Craig Calhoun and I once discussed the lack of innovative theory in mainstream journals, but we agreed that the same people who published in major journals also published in other journals, which tended to publish their more innovative work. See, for example, Tilly (1977b).

do not encourage either researchers or funding agents to innovate. Political actors and those who study them are guided by a set of habitual or traditional theories and methods that constitute a repertoire or paradigm—a routine or *modus operandi*, which tends to be sustained within limits until the institutional order is effectively challenged to the point where authorities or challengers fundamentally change their *modus operandi* in what we might consider a political or scientific revolution (Goldstone 1991; Kuhn 1962; Ritzer 1980; Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1978; Trotsky 1931).

Of course, we do not teach our students to be revolutionaries. Instead, we tell our students to locate their research within the accumulated scholarly literature, reviewing the relevant literature in such a way that it seems to be calling out for this thesis, as the ultimate resolution of a problem that has plagued the discipline since the earliest days of our academic enterprise. That is the problem—nobody knows the answer to our question, and the discipline has been hamstrung for that reason.

Then, we tell our students, we explain the procedures that we will follow to indicate that the predominance of the evidence supports a series of assumptions, assertions and propositions organized in the form of an explanation or interpretation. Thus, we unite theory and method in a paradigm or procedure for establishing the credibility and importance of our theory, data, analysis, and findings. This then is our prelude to the analysis, which we introduce with a set of hypotheses or sensitizing concepts that will be tested by structural equation models or developed as grounded theory in an interpretive enterprise that defies structural determinism and proposes path-dependent conditional probabilities.

One way or the other, we set ourselves up to succeed, because, unlike the authorities and the challengers, we already know the results of our analysis before we develop our plan. This is not entirely true, of course, since we might write a proposal, in which we predict likely findings

and their significance, while begging for money to gather data, but that sort of prediction is not likely to be published before the data have been gathered and thoroughly analyzed. Those of us who are particularly good or, at least, experienced in research still find that the first papers are harder to place than the last ones. When we are still analyzing the data, we will present and perhaps even publish some preliminary results, but most reviewers will want the editors to hold out for the conclusion—after all the analysis and interpretation is finished and there are no more mysteries that this project might reasonably be expected to lay to rest.

Were we ever to find all the answers, our research in that area would cease. What happens instead, in my experience, is that each project ends with some answers to what became the most important research questions, but rather than providing some sort of ultimate resolution, the project generates a new set of questions that lead to another project.⁵ To the extent that the researcher is free to pursue these questions, the realm of academic inquiry expands. Public and private funding sources, on the one hand, and established disciplinary paradigms constitute the major constraints on the expansion of academic inquiry. As public policy and academic discourse expand, these constraints become fetters that are ultimately destroyed in political or scientific revolution, in which the institutions of government and academic enterprise are reconstituted (or, perhaps, simply destroyed).

We can see how this has occurred in the birth of classical sociological theory and the institutionalization of sociology as an academic problem. Sociological theory was born in efforts to understand the revolutionary changes experienced in the West that seemed irreversible by 1900. The practical and academic problem was how to explain social change, given the inadequacy of extant theories of social change. Marx, Durkheim, and Weber all offered

⁵ My group home research, for example, raised the question of what or who (other than neighbors and State or federal agencies) affected the interests of local governments in land-use.

explanations of how and why the world changed fundamentally, somewhere between 1500 and 1900, in Western Europe and North America. The question now, one hundred years later, is, “How and why do repertoires of political action and social science paradigms change, and how does the change in one affect the change in the other?” This is the problem we consider here.

We will suggest both some testable hypotheses and some sensitizing concepts, arguing that the best methods are multiple, qualitative and quantitative, idiographic narrative subjected to triangulation of sources, preferably primary sources, and scientific procedures of deductive theorizing and inductive estimation of effects attributed to null hypotheses. At this point, this is less than a finished product, but I assure you that it is all but complete in theory. In fact, there are only four more classical theory and social movements seminars left, over the course of the next four years, in which my students and I will finish our analyses of political action and the theories that we use to explain political action, focusing on how politics and political analysis have changed, particularly between 1500 and 1900 in Western Europe and North America. At the same time, I will try to consider changes between 1975 and 2017—my years of academic life, as student and teacher, consumer and producer of academic discourse.

Before we are finished here, we will offer not only a theoretical but a methodological guide to explaining and interpreting social change, in politics and in the analysis of same. We shall follow the example of Tilly (1978) and the path from Tilly (1978) toward Tilly and Tarrow (2007), beginning with the classical theories of Marx (1978), Durkheim (1984) and Weber (1993), adding Mill (2002) and utilitarianism (Heckathorn 1993; Olson 1965), Simmel (1964) and Mead (1967), and Freud (1969), and challenging suggestions that we avoid the Weberian “temptation” (Wright 1997) or dismiss Durkheim as “useless” (Tilly 1977a). Our inclusionary thrust will defy simple forced-choice alternatives, between interests and identities, rationality and

affect, macro and micro, behavioral and cognitive. There is no reason to choose a single paradigm, method or theory, when it is possible to cobble together alternatives, within the range of what is possible. The same is true of disciplinary boundaries. This is a voyage of discovery, following the path of an extraordinary social historian and a gang of social scientists and historians who encompass everything from structural and historical Marxism to symbolic interactionism, networks and game theory.

Lest we suffer intellectual nosebleed at the heights of theoretical abstraction, we shall largely ignore debates between critical, postmodern, and radical feminist theory, including intersectionality and post colonialism. We will similarly ignore analytical Marxism and rational choice theory, although we will now acknowledge their importance in undergraduate theory textbooks and interdisciplinary studies—which will not be a focal concern here. Also, while drawing upon the decidedly Western European orientation of the classical and contemporary theorists, particularly in the Tilly and Tarrow (2007) sphere of influence, my empirical focus will be on the USA from 1760 to 1930, which we might consider the “long nineteenth century,” a time of political revolutions and scientific revolutions, particularly within the academic disciplines of sociology and history. We will also consider the (nineteen) Sixties as a context for paradigm change in sociology and history, largely since 1970.

The guiding light here is my assertion that sociological theory is revolutionary—not because it inspires revolution, but because it thrives in revolutionary situations, as we shall see in a brief review of classical theory. How we came to confuse the effect of revolution on theory with the effect of theory on revolution will be a critical point of departure as we move into the analysis of social theory and social change in the postbellum USA, particularly in the 20th century. Since I will deny that there have been scientific revolutions that were not preceded by

political revolutions, I will have occasion to debate the problems of political and economic cycles with Tarrow (2011) and McAdam (1982), but I am inclined to consider the defeat of Jim Crow in the Southern USA (circa 1964) and the collapse of the Soviet Union (circa 1989) as revolutions that shaped the academic world as well as the global political economy.

Where we are now headed (since 1989) might be suggested but could not be established with any degree of certainty or even confidence, so we can effectively stop there, thinking about Occupy movements and #Black Lives Matter, along with the future of bipartisanship and the significance of popular voting, but that will be a topic for future generations. We can begin with Marx and the bourgeois revolutions of Western Europe and North America, which created the conditions that made social history as we know it a viable academic enterprise. Then we can turn to what was the predominant social science paradigm at the time of the Civil Rights Movement—what I call the integrated political theory of 1970, which was effectively challenged by Sixties radicals and their teachers—notably, Cloward, Feagin, Gamson, McAdam, McCarthy, Perrucci, Tilly, and Zald (in sociology) Piven, Targ, and Tarrow (in Political Science), Thompson and Foner (in history) and Wolf (in Anthropology), to mention only some of the examples that come most readily to mind.

Why Marx?

When I teach classical theory, we begin with John Stuart Mill (2002), *On Liberty*, to establish a foundation in classical liberal bourgeois theories of political economy. It is hard to appreciate Marx without considering the importance of Hegel (1996), but we can probably begin with Marx, because that is where philosophy becomes social science and history becomes materialist, thus leading us toward the emergence of social history as a paradigm—some 100

years later. Marx (1978) is most important because he insists that “men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please” (p. 595). Although he does not use the term “habitual” or “traditional,” he recognizes that men and women are only able to do that which they have learned, that which they have inherited, although their creative genius includes innovation at the edge of the familiar, which allows humans to transform their material world (p. 150). This they do socially, working together and sharing the fruits of their labor, in families and extended kin networks.

It is out of these kin relations that the “slavery latent in the family” becomes manifest in the construction of public goods (p. 151). Of course, Anthropology was decidedly underdeveloped in Marx’s lifetime, which is why much of his and Engels’ work on gender and the family is less than compelling or, as some might say, less than useful. Here we can borrow from Marxist scholars of the modern (or post-modern) era, notably, Eric Wolf (1982), who offers a much better typology of modes of production than anything we find in the nineteenth century. Wolf had the advantage of considerable field research not just in Europe but among the “People without History.” Thus, we can supplement Marx (1978) with Wolf (1982) to explain how the transition from kinship to capitalist enterprise was effected in a global mercantilist and then capitalist economy.

Wolf (1982) provides an explanation for how and why slavery becomes manifest through military extraction of tribute, which is characteristic of what Marx called feudalism but is also quite common in the ancient and the modern world. By offering tributary as an alternative to concepts such as mercantilism and feudalism, Wolf (1982) offers a less deterministic structuralism than orthodox Marxism might suggest. This also frees us from terms such as the “Asiatic” mode of production or “Neo-Feudal” or “Neo-Colonial” (or even post-colonial). If we

look at kinship modes of production and reproduction in North America, we can see how the imposition of tributary systems was less deterministic or inevitable than some Marxists might suggest.

Table 1.

Modes of Production Distinguished by Base for Surplus Extraction and Extent of Surplus Extraction and Redistribution (Based on Wolf 1982, Chapter 3)

<u>Mode of Production</u>	<u>Base of Surplus Extraction</u>	<u>Extent of Surplus Extraction</u>	<u>Extent of Surplus Redistribution</u>
Kinship	Family	Limited	Moderate
Tribute	Military	Moderate	Limited
Capitalist	Economic	Tremendous	Substantial

We should recognize the qualitatively different experiences of Native Americans, across time and place, even within North American. The Cherokee and Creek were caught between the British Empire and the colonial revolt (Karnes 2000, p. 21; Meacham 2008, especially, pp. 34-36 and pp. 91-97; White 1854, pp. 121-153). The western Apache and Comanche were caught between the Spanish horse and British gun frontiers, but the Comanche had better access to guns, at least initially (Hall 1986, especially pp. 394-395). As was the case in California, however, Native Americans weathered the storm of both missionary and military efforts, but neither Spain nor Mexico was successful in imposing a tributary system (Walton 2001, especially, pp. 11-106). Still, in all cases, a tributary, military political economy attempted to conquer a kinship family

system of production and reproduction, as an intermediate stage toward the development of capitalism.

Perhaps if Karl would have spent more time with Jenny and the kids he would have been able to explain how it was the weakest links of a kinship system that were most vulnerable to the intrusion of tributary or capitalist invaders. Much like Eastern Europeans after the fall of the Soviet Union, Native Americans were impressed with the European naval and military goods, but this was not how kinship systems were seduced into trade with the invaders. It was not, as Spencer (1984) implies, through military means that the primitives were conquered. Neither was it the spirit of Christianity, no less the Protestant Ethic (Weber 1958) that claimed the loyalty of the Native Americans. As Father Juniper Serra explained, “[W]hat they wanted was clothing. And it was only for articles of this type that they would do business with soldiers and mule drivers in exchange for fish” (Walton 2001, p. 29). Thus, as Marx observes in the rise of capitalism, “Manufacturing seizes hold initially not of the so-called *urban trades* but of the *rural secondary occupations*, spinning and weaving” (Marx 1978, p. 274—italics in original).

So why do we need Wolf (1982) and Walton (2001) to confirm how the same thing happened in the rise of European tributary systems? This is critical, because it allows us to solve the most pressing theoretical issue faced by Marx and Marxists who study social change. This is really a philosophical problem. If, as the radicals insist, people are basically social and productive, then how did these good people come to create and to sustain bad institutions—tributary and capitalist systems, which exploit and alienate labor from productive enterprise, product, and each other? (Marx 1978, pp. 70-78). It is not, as vulgar Marxists might suggest, private property that is the basis for exploitation and alienation. As Marx (1978, p. 79)

explained, “Private property is ... the product, the necessary consequence of *alienated labor* ... not the cause.”

We can now explain how the women and children who suffered the latent slavery of the patriarchal kinship system and who have virtually always been the base of the “rural secondary occupations” that constitute reproductive labor, together with the old and infirm, or, as Walton (2001, p. 30), reports, “the weakest of the Monterey nations” were the “first converts,” who relied on the kindness of strangers. These women, children and elderly or infirm members of the extended kinship networks became the consumers of the new religion and the new agricultural and commercial life, as women and children settled first in the mission and the mission schools and then, later, in resistance, fled the mission to marry soldiers and then, with their families, abandoned the presidio for the artisanal and commercial village life (Walton 2001, pp. 30-33).

How and why the Spanish and later Mexican tributary systems attempted to institutionalize their political and economic hegemony is clear. These were declining and expanding empires, which were ultimately overwhelmed by the Anglo-American empire that provided Californios of all ethnicities with the rights of citizens, including belated recognition of the land and water ownership and usage rights that were routinely contested in the West (Hogan 1990, pp. 174-178; Walton 1992).

For now, the ultimate bourgeois hegemony of the modern world need not concern us. Having established how kinship systems on the edge of subsistence are overwhelmed by systems that are more effective in exploiting labor in surplus extraction but less generous in redistributing that surplus, we can see the essential problem of overproduction and its crises, which ultimately destroy both tributary and capitalist systems, which, as we see in Monterey, devolve into some version of the original kinship system, which is most common—perhaps universal, as a mode of

consumption and probably most common in world history as a mode of production as well.

From this base then, new tributary systems and ultimately capitalist systems are established, until we have a global hegemonic capitalist system, with tributary and kinship systems that survive in interstitial spaces—e.g., Syria and Iraq in 2017, where bourgeois hegemony and the blessings of democracy are lacking (Hogan 2011; Tilly 2007).

But how are democratic politics or the new repertoire of political protest and governance determined? Well, we can begin with Marx, who tells us, “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class that is the ruling *material* force, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. ... The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations” (Marx 1978, p. 172). Thus we have the Spanish Catholic Military mission, including schools and forts and farms, all supposed to generate surplus for the crown, and the Anglo-American republican capitalist—free land, free labor and free men (Foner 1974 [1970]), blessed with bipartisanship, the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, all of which will eventually bring us back to Spencer (1984) and sociology, culminating in the Great Depression of the 1930s and what we will eventually recognize as modern sociology.

First, however, we need to get back to our Western European roots for two reasons. First, Marx was not particularly interested in sociology, social history, or academics, more generally, so we will need to go back to France to get back to Germany, so that we can get back to the USA. Let’s start with Durkheim and the French School of sociology, which offered a theory of social stability that included or implied a theory of social change, but seemed particularly limited in the analysis of politics, particularly political struggle.

Durkheim

Unlike Marx, Durkheim was personally and professionally committed to institutionalizing the academic discipline of sociology. He was awarded a chair in this new discipline, established a journal, a school, a functional theory and a comparative method, all of which have been roundly criticized by Marxists but heartily embraced by functional and even conflict theorists in the USA. Talcott Parsons was particularly enamored with Durkheim, although, as I tell my students, he was also a big fan of Max Weber.

Not everyone at Harvard was so impressed with Durkheim. When he was still in Ann Arbor, Chuck Tilly was circulating a working paper, written in 1976, in a fit of bicentennial fervor, titled, "The Uselessness of Durkheim in the Historical Study of Social Change," which concludes:

It happens that in the last analysis, the Durkheimian corpus concerning the impact of largescale social change on collective action yields few fruitful, or even interesting, historical hypotheses. The challenge of refuting Durkheim becomes more difficult and less engaging. Isn't that outcome in itself a serious condemnation of a major sociological tradition? (Tilly 1977a, pp. 19-20).

Thus, it seems that my professional career, as a teacher of sociological theory, has been an ongoing act of defiance toward my major professor, as I have been telling my students that if Durkheim did not exist, we would be required to replace him with a comparable sociologist, which might be more difficult than it would first appear.

Clearly, there were other Frenchmen, including Gustave Le Bon (1896), whom I use in *Social Movements*. Le Bon (1896) was not a sociologist, however. Tilly (1977a) suggests that

we could use Neil Smelser (1963) and collective behavior theories, which he contrasts with what were once called theories of collective choice (Coleman 1973), now called rational choice theory. The problem, however, is that neither collective behavior nor rational choice theory adequately theorizes enduring (or changing) patterns of social action—what most of all call structure; what Durkheim (1982) called social facts. Thus, it is much more difficult to confront Marx with either Coleman (1973) or Smelser (1963)—or, for that matter, Blumer (Blumer and Shibutani 1970), because they are not talking about the same phenomenon.

Marx and Durkheim remain pillars of classical theory because they offer compelling explanations of how and why the world fundamentally changed, in Western Europe and the USA, between 1500 and 1900. More important, they offer opposing theories, which are opposite in virtually every respect, except for the subject. Marx is radical, Durkheim conservative, Marx dialectical, Durkheim functional, Marx materialist, Durkheim idealist (or moralist). They fundamentally disagree and offer equally compelling but logically incompatible explanations. If Marx is the thesis then Durkheim is the antithesis, and sociologists, since Weber, have attempted without success to develop an equally compelling synthesis. I tell my students that, for all intents and purposes, that synthesis is impossible. Weber went crazy, in part, attempting to develop a synthetic theory, and he was a lot smarter than most (if not all) of us, so we should take heed and learn from his example.⁶

The fact that some sociologists are conservative functionalists who use comparative as opposed to historical methods and view morality (or beliefs and values) as the essential base for social organization should not bother us as much as it bothered Tilly in 1976. Why? Because

⁶ I also suggest that we consider his vision of the moral constraints on teaching as a similarly impossible and potentially dangerous path. Value free research, on the other hand, is a worthwhile ideal for a less than perfect academic community.

now we have Marxist sociologists—maybe only a few hundred in the USA who are card carrying members of the ASA Marxist Sociology section, but many of us (including some who are not members of ASA) are radical dialecticians who use historical rather than comparative methods and view material life as the base of social life. What we all share with the Durkheimians (but not with Smelser 1963 or Blumer and Shibutani 1970) is a focus on social structure (or patterns of relationships) if not social facts. In that sense (except for some Radical feminists and critical or post-Marxist theorists) we tend to eschew reductionism in all its forms.

Durkheim (1982) was much more emphatic about this in his ongoing critique of evolutionary theory. He was somewhat more respectful of Comte, who shared his concern with morality and ideology as the base of society, but he generally rejected the idea of progress through stages of social evolution. His perspective on the modern world, particularly in France (circa 1900), was not that it was in an intermediate chaotic state of metaphysics on the path to the industrial society that England was modeling so well. While it was impossible to re-establish the Old Regime, it was not at all clear that family and religion could be sacrificed in efforts to promote republican capitalism on the British parliamentary or constitutional-monarchy path to modern industrialism. In fact, Durkheim did not see rapid industrialization or urbanization, secularization, or whatever, as the right way to proceed. He was convinced that society needed to sustain a dynamic equilibrium between the patterns of relations (notably the division of labor, but also kinship, legal, and political relations) and the feelings (solidarity or anomie) and beliefs and values (collective conscience) that these relations sustained. Consequently, change was only possible in an already functioning moral community, and the process of change was more important than the direction. The change had to be gradual, and the ability of changing relations to sustain changing feelings, beliefs and values, had to be maintained in its delicate balance.

Otherwise, chaos and even the end of civilization as we know it might be the unintended consequence of fundamental, rapid change, of the type that Marxist revolutionaries promoted.

Today, we have liberal functionalist and conflict theorists, thanks largely to Robert Merton (1968), who recommended that we purge functionalism of the “pernicious postulates” that reduce the theory to a conservative defense of the status quo. We recognize that not everything that exists is functional (universalism), or functional for all of society and everyone in it (unity), or irreplaceable (indispensability). Thus, we can consider unintended consequences and work with the general assumption that structures tend to be sustained to the extent that they are “net-balance” functional for society or for some interest powerful enough to resist efforts to change the status quo. Thus, we have liberal functionalism and conflict theory—the twin pillars of Political Sociology in the USA. With due deference to Durkheim, we still should recognize that liberal functionalism and particularly conflict theory were not constructed of whole cloth but depended not just on Durkheim but on the work of Max Weber (1984) and George Simmel (1964), both of whom were much influenced by the work of Marx.

Weber

Whether we find Weber’s theory of charisma and its routinization to be a compelling explanation or interpretation of social change or not, we still need Weber, his definitions, specifications, methodological and moral judgement, to help us do social history in a world where Marxists and Durkheimians routinely speak past each other instead of settling their differences in print. Weber had a dream of sociology as a place where radicals and conservatives could harness the passions that inspired them while subjecting their research to the paradigm of comparative and historical interpretation, in which passions inspired the questions but did not

determine the answers. Ideally, this sort of academic community is worthy of emulation. There are virtually no sociology departments that I know that model this ideal consistently, but some come closer than others, and ASA probably comes closer than ASR, because the association is not shrouded in secrecy, which the journals are, at least in reviewing articles, as opposed to books. Book reviews and review essays might be the last refuge of value free sociology, although some authors and some reviewers are more enlightened than others.

Aside of the moral principles that Weber espoused for the profession, he models three important rules of the sociological method. First, define your terms, and be willing to be discursive and to elaborate and specify and even change your definitions when they do not seem to serve current purposes. The idea that “dialectical,” for example, is objectively defined and can be specified to once and forever delimit “real” dialectical thinking (including only Hegel (1996) and Marx (1978), as opposed to Simmel (1964), and Mead (1967), might be illusionary. Perhaps, in teaching classical theory, we can elucidate those features that distinguish Hegel and Marx, but it is not clear that these are the objective essence of the dialectic.⁷

Second, consider social relations and actions from the perspective of the participants. This is where the local should meet the global in analyses of changing modes of production, for example. E.P. Thompson (1966) and John Walton (2001) are among the best social historians in this regard, representing history and sociology, respectively. Many people who do community studies or participant observation/urban ethnography are more familiar examples. Whyte (1981) brings his characters to life, but it is easy to get carried away with the local to the point where one loses perspective—consider, for example, Herbert Gans (1962), where the insights on “peer group society” become an excuse for denying structural constraints, or the political economy of

⁷ This point usually requires over an hour in a graduate seminar, with appropriate charts and a series of questions regarding what is required for a “true” dialectic.

urban development. Here, perhaps, we need to recall the more structural orientation of our other classical theorists and attempt to appreciate how we might negotiate or finesse social roles and social structures without denying structural constraints. Here, perhaps, it is the loss of Weberian and Simmelian focus on conflict and power that has hamstrung followers of George Herbert Mead (1967), including Herbert Blumer (and Shibutani 1970), and even Erving Goffman (1974), but not Bill Gamson (1992).

The third major contribution is the recognition that we don't necessarily know exactly why people do what they do, even when we attempt to generalize about categories of individuals and organizations, about which we can be much less circumspect. Clearly, people are inspired by love and hate, fear and insecurity, as well as beliefs and values that they will defend, at least sometimes, and interests they will defend, perhaps at least as often. What I tell my students, is when we ask Weber, "Why?" He always replies that there are lots of reasons. Some people find this disturbing, but we should recognize that this is probably more true than false.

The essential indeterminacy of Weber plagues studies of social movements that focus on leadership and organization, notably Gamson (1976) and Tilly (1978), both of which offered at best, models of conditional probability—contingency as opposed to causal models. In fact, even studies of ghetto riots (Feagin and Hahn 1973) or other events, were hard-pressed to offer more than interpretations, except for the more Freudian, frustration-aggression models of relative deprivation or the intolerable want-get gap (Davies 1971). There were, however, early attempts by students and junior faculty to use the General Linear Model that was being taught in top graduate programs to explain or, at least, to test hypotheses. For example, Jeffery Paige (1971) offered compelling evidence to bolster his account of riot participants by comparing them not

just to nonparticipants but to voters and to civil rights participants on political trust and political knowledge.

Later, much more sophisticated models of political crisis (Goldstone 1991) and political opportunities (McAdam 1982) were developed, but these followed the general path that Tilly (1978) blazed in introducing the paradigm for the study of social movements that combined social science theory and methods with historical data and topics in a comprehensive plan for specifying the relationship between social movements and social change, rooted in classical theory, most notably, Marx and Weber, with a stubborn refusal to embrace Durkheim and a relentless pursuit of the Millian model of rational decision-making at the organizational level.

Soon, however, Tilly (1986) reversed his position on the relation between social movements and social change—arguing that revolutions produced new repertoires, which is the position that I shall defend here, for the most part. Ultimately, however, the McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow position seems to be more clear on the direction of the effects than either Tilly (1978) or Tilly (1986). To appreciate why this is so and how it might help us in our effort to develop a new paradigm, we should return to the question of revolution and revolutionary change in both institutional and extra-institutional politics. Then we can revisit change in theories of politics and ultimately consider how theory and practice are inter-related. First, however, we should spend a few minutes with the integrated political theory of 1970, which was most clearly rooted in Durkheim but included a reductionist orientation that might be traced Le Bon.

Mass Society, Mass Publics, Collective Behavior and Pluralism

After the economic crash of 1929, debates within social evolutionary theories were all but abandoned. The importance of the debate between Sumner and Ward, focused on the need or

even the possibility of government interference with capitalist development, became obsolete, as the election of FDR, in 1932, led to a new governing coalition—big labor, big capital and big government, and an activist federal government.⁸ This was not revolution, as Marx might have predicted, but it was regime change. Corresponding changes in social science were the institutionalization of the Chicago School, with its Progressive agenda and its ecological (rather than evolutionary) paradigm. After World War II, with the conservative agenda that became McCarthyism and Cold War, the center of sociological enterprise shifted back to the Ivy League—the functional and behavioral theories of Parson and Homans, the next generation of Merton and Blau, and a host of others who represented conservative and liberal functionalist and social exchange theories, which were part of the meta-theoretical and methodological base of the integrated political theory of 1970 (Ritzer 2010, pp. 189-235).

Functional and conflict theory—a liberal functionalism that was sometimes combined with symbolic interactionism, constituted the theoretical base of sociology, paralleled by pluralism and theories of mass belief systems and mass society in political science, great men and consensus history, including the strain of American exceptionalism and the Turner thesis, combined with Elkins and McKittrick, the remnants of evolutionary anthropology combined with structural anthropology and structural functionalism to yield what were called theories of economic and political development and, later, convergence theory.⁹

These various strains of social and political theory sustained a general celebration of the USA as the First New Nation (Lipset 1963) and the leading economic and political power,

⁸ This is part of my lecture from the days when I was teaching undergraduate theory, using Ritzer (2010, pp. 192-195), as an accessible text for undergraduates.

⁹ This is part of my American Society (SOC 312) lecture, in which I do not provide a textbook that would include citations. Most of this literature is covered in the footnotes of Hogan (1985). On economic development, see Frank (1966 and 1975).

representing democracy in the struggle against totalitarianism, including both communism and fascism, which were viewed as similar nondemocratic nations that were bent on global conquest. In the USA, citizen had the right to vote and to petition government in defense of collective (selfish) interests. Pluralism rested on a theory of interest groups and collective action, at the organizational level, and assumptions about the cross-cutting, issue specific nature of interests, more generally. The masses were not particularly well informed or capable of articulating their interests, but opinion leaders and subleaders, together with notables and elected officials, were able to cobble together a decision-making process that allowed for each interest to find some support at least occasionally, while the system generally served the interest of the many, while guaranteeing the rights of the few (Dahl 1961; Gamson 1968).

The operating assumptions were that collective action within the confines of the established political system was rational, while riots, panics, and demonstrations were irrational and potentially disruptive. They indicated structural problems associated with mass society of anomie. They tended to emerge when people suffered an intolerable “want-get” gap during economic depression or political crisis and tended to represent the most alienated and least well integrated members of society—young, poor, nonwhite, immigrant or otherwise marginal populations (Marx and McAdam 1994; McPhail 1991). These assertions were challenged by middle class Southern blacks, in the 1950s, and then upper-middle class white students, in the 1960s, then women in the 1970s, together with peaceniks and environmentalists. Both public policy and theories of politics were challenged.

Some of the challengers were academic, like Bill Gamson, who prefaced his discussion of “Power and Discontent” with a review of “flaws in the Pluralist heaven” (Gamson 1968). Others, were less pointed in their criticism and more clearly Marxist in their orientation (Feagin

and Hahn 1973). Some, particularly the graduate students, were much more conventional in their hypothesis testing, using standard analyses of well-established survey research projects (Paige 1971). In any case, conflict theories, ruling elite theories, Marxist theories, and what came to be called Resource Mobilization theory effectively displaced the integrated political theory of 1970 with what might be considered a revolutionary situation that ultimately failed to produce a revolutionary outcome, in social science, although it did represent something approximating a regime change. The hegemony of the Ivy League was effectively challenged—not just by the second coming of the Chicago School, but by the rise of the public universities, particularly in the Midwest and on the West coast, where a thousand flowers bloomed, accommodating everything from positivists to pragmatists to phenomenologists, representing what Ritzer (1980) has called the multiple paradigm science. This regime change was established in the wake of revolutionary struggles often called the Sixties, although their roots are in the Southern Civil Rights movement of the Fifties (Morris 1984).

To appreciate how waves of political challenge engender waves of academic discourse, we should focus our attention on what has been called Resource Mobilization theory, which became the dominant perspective on social movements and political challenge after Tilly published his seminal work in 1978.

Political and Economic Cycles: Revolutionary and Other Processes

Tilly (1977b) began with an observation from the French archives, looking out on the politics of the street. Simply stated, political actions and theories of political action have changed dramatically since the middle ages. Tilly (1986) and Tarrow (2011) have explained how the repertoire of contention has changed from roughly 1500 to 1900 in Western Europe and

North America, through processes of democratization, capital accumulation, and state-making that affect and are effected by changing relations between political challengers and authorities. Each of these processes can be analyzed separately to simplify the complex problem of specifying causes and effects. We can see, for example, that the “inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” are articulated in declarations by challengers, who must then fight for these rights, which might have been granted by “their creator” but have rarely been granted by governing authorities without a fight. It seems reasonable to argue that even in democratic republics like contemporary U.S.A., people only have the rights that they are willing to fight for—which is why we have people proclaiming that black lives matter.

Having conceded that point, we should also recognize the lesson that Skocpol (1979), Goldstone (1991) and others have offered. Rights can be demanded by powerful challengers, but they can never be granted by weak states. States must have the capacity to protect the rights that citizens demand. Consequently, as Tilly (2007) explains, while not all strong states are democratic, all democratic states are strong. Recently, efforts by my students and I to make sense of the Arab uprisings, or pro-democracy movements, more generally, have suggested additional problems that complicate the struggle for democracy, even in strong states. States can sustain themselves against challenges to the extent that they might claim the support of their citizens, their armed forces, and other powerful states.

All three are sometimes impossible, but states with powerful allies and loyal armed forces might sacrifice popular support and effectively repress challengers, although this might undermine the loyalty of the armed forces or diminish international support. This was apparent after the presidential election of 1860 in the USA, when Lincoln and the emergent Republican party attempted to secure their control of the army and to maintain international alliances, such

as they were, in the face of Southern/Confederate challenges, including the seizure of weapons at Fort Sumter, the equivalent of storming the Bastille in Paris in 1789.

On all fronts, challengers and authorities take calculated but contingent steps into uncertainty. Challengers attempt to exploit the uncertainty and innovate around the edges of established repertoires to mobilize constituents, win the support of powerful allies, or exploit divisions between elites. Elections can be effectively exploited by authorities to solidify their base of support and to delegitimize challengers, but they also provide opportunities for challengers to exploit, as evidenced in the USA in 1860. This is, of course, why democratic states must be strong if they are to remain democratic.

Less obvious, perhaps, is the relationship between capital accumulation and democratization—or the struggle for democracy. Clearly, capitalist systems are generally more democratic than tributary or kin systems, which rely on military or familial authority that rarely includes binding consultation with constituents or their inclusion in decision-making processes, such as the nomination or election of leaders.¹⁰ Neither military nor familial authority is democratic in that sense (Tilly 2007). We might, in fact, consider the history of Western Civilization as an onward march toward state-making, capital accumulation, and democracy, but this was, at best, a tortured path, with economic and political crises, ebbs and flows on all fronts, with some clearly defined watersheds that we can identify as markers along the various paths that nation states and smaller units have travelled.

We can delimit these markers chronologically—18th century bourgeois revolutions, 19th century civil wars, and 20th century global (World) wars, but we still need to recognize that

¹⁰ Tilly (2007) also includes either a reduction in social inequality or, at least, political access or inequality that is independent of other forms of enduring inequality—notably, race, class, and gender. Enfranchising blacks and women, and the removal of property-ownership as a requirement for voting are all considered moves toward democracy (democratization).

political institutions and political challenges came early to Great Britain, in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and much later to Germany, after the Franco-Prussian War, in 1871, at which point France faced its first proletarian revolt, after a long and bloody battle for bourgeois hegemony, 1789-1871 (Marx, Lenin and Fedorovsky 1993). We also know that Germany moved away from democratization and even capital accumulation in the mid-20th century, only to move back again after World War II.

One might posit a relationship between capital accumulation, state-making, and democratization, historically if not comparatively, but this seems to be true only in general, in the long run, with multiple qualifications and specifications of the effects of capital accumulation, which tends to rise and fall in modern, regulated capitalist economies, such as the U.S.A., after World War II. In such cases, it is not clear that democracy thrives when the economy is booming, although there is some evidence to support that hypothesis. Strikes and other demands for increasing shares of prosperity or expanding rights tend to increase when times are good (Tilly and Snyder 1972).

At the same time, especially when federal regulation does not constrain capital ebbs and flows from the extremes of speculative frenzy and crash, economic crises tend to generate political crises (Tarrow 2011). What happens is that challengers taking advantages of the opportunities to make demands when times are good continue to make demands after the crash, when authorities are unable to offer new rewards (Hogan 2005). At best, they can attempt to coopt challengers into public policy planning efforts, in hoping that everyone can be enticed to make new plans while waiting for economic recovery (Hogan 2003).

Marx (1867, vol. 1, chapter 25) predicted communist revolution during capitalist crisis, but in his more political writings (Marx, Lenin and Fedorovsky 1993) he recognized the

importance of organization and leadership, divided elites, and many of the correlates of political opportunity that Tilly and Tarrow (2007) and others have since specified as critical intervening variables, specifying the effects of interests on collective action. Within the field of political economy, Marxists from Lenin (1975) to Harvey (1989), have similarly specified stages of capitalism, from industrial capitalism (entrepreneurial to monopoly) to imperialism and colonialism to the postmodern condition.

In charting this course, both nationally and globally, the relationship between state and economy has been specified by distinguishing governing coalitions or similar concepts that distinguish the New Deal, corporate liberal, Fordist, Thatcher/Reagan, and neoliberal regimes. Most generally, regime change is effected, rather than revolution, but the processes are the same: capital accumulation, state-making and democratization. Beyond that, we can elaborate mechanisms for mobilizing (e.g., framing—Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Moss 2014) or recruiting (e.g., brokering) or reducing opposition (e.g., divide and conquer) that seem to produce similar results across time and place (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001).

All of this suggests that we can make use of the insights of Marx and Weber and their followers not simply to explain the relatively rare cases of revolution but the somewhat more common cases of regime change and even change in partisanship and bipartisan systems, historically, within republican capitalist systems that have, as of yet, not moved beyond bourgeois revolution but have, in the process, experienced several regime changes and changes in partisanship and party systems, on the path of capital accumulation, state-making, and democratization.

Here we will offer a brief analysis of the USA to illustrate how we might apply this theory to things as mundane as the future of the Democratic party in the wake of the 2016

presidential election. What follows is a slightly edited version of a presentation made on GIS Day, in early November 2016—just before the election.¹¹ Although I assumed that Clinton would win, I did not make a prediction, and I stand by everything that I did say, which offers an analysis of that election and a general (five or six variable) model for predicting elections. We can return to questions of regime change and partisan systems in conclusion.

Predicting U.S. Presidential Elections: From 1900 through 2016

There are a few things that I would like to share with you, based on my extensive experience in explaining elections after the fact. The first bit of wisdom is that it is always easier to explain the past than to predict the future. Here I will offer results from the twentieth century to suggest five basic explanatory variables that we might use to predict the outcome of future elections. Election results can be predicted by habit, unity, economic crises, home field advantage, and changes in political geography.¹²

First and foremost, there is habit.¹³ The best prediction of how people, precincts, or even states are likely to vote is how they have voted in the past. In the presidential election of 1900 we find the same candidates representing the same major parties carrying the same states as in 1896. In fact, the vote resembled 1860—the North went Republican, the South went Democratic, and the West was up for grabs.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1900>

¹¹ Geographic Information Systems (what we once called maps) are celebrated every year at Purdue University, where I presented the analysis that follows).

¹² Incumbency also predicts outcomes, but there were no incumbents in the 2016 Presidential election, although the incumbent president did endorse Hillary Clinton.

¹³ Here I should cite Max Weber (1993).

Second, there is party unity. Sometimes the major parties are so internally conflicted that we get third or even fourth parties mucking up the results.¹⁴ In 1912, for example, Teddy Roosevelt and the Progressives divided and conquered Taft and the Republicans, only to lose to Wilson and the Democrats. Divisions within major parties pose threats or create opportunities. In 1912, the Socialists stole fewer Democratic votes, compared to the Progressive theft of Republican votes. Thus, Wilson won with only 42% of the popular vote.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1912>

By 1920, the Republicans had re-established their dominance, especially in the North but even in the West.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1920>

By 1928 it seemed that only die hard Democrats in Massachusetts and Rhode Island (and in the Deep South) could muster a majority in opposition to President Hoover.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1928>

Perhaps we should pause here to note that incumbents have the advantage of a “bully pulpit” and being “the devil you know,” but sometimes that is not enough.¹⁵ As we know, the tables were turned in 1932, as Roosevelt and the Democrats trounced the incumbent Herbert Hoover, who had seemed unbeatable in 1928.

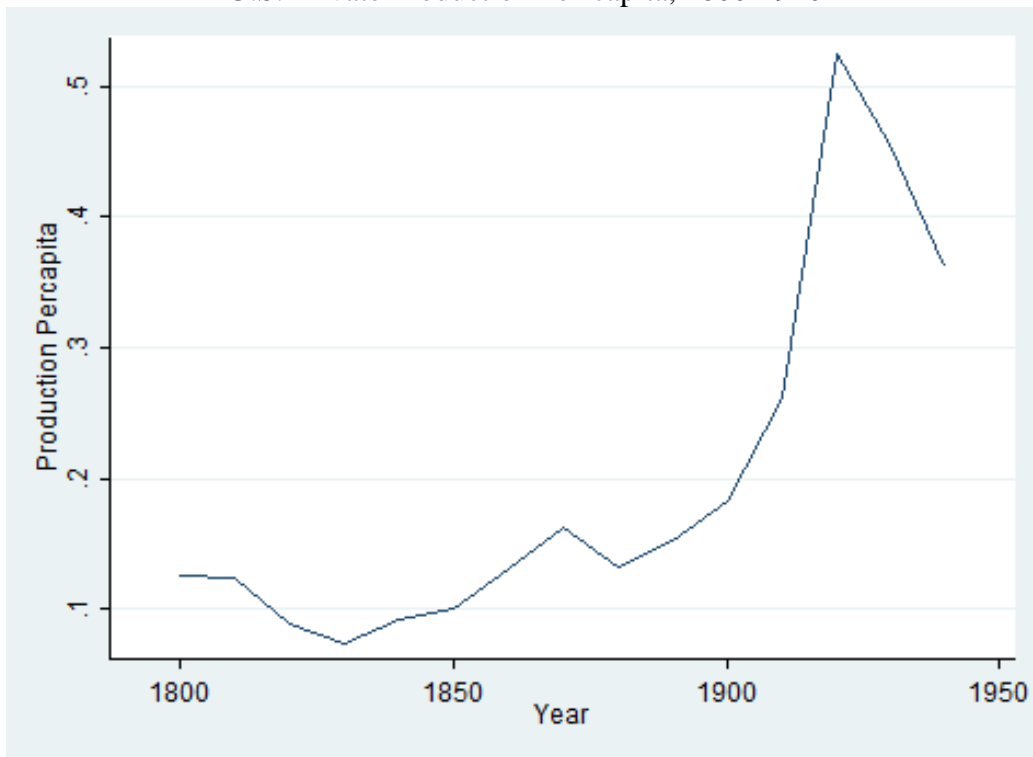
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1932>

What happened between 1928 and 1932? I can give you a little hint.

¹⁴ Here we are talking about political opportunities, brokering, and attempts to divide and conquer.

¹⁵ For present purposes, we can ignore the advantage of incumbency, since it does not apply in 2016.

U.S. Private Production Per-capita, 1800-1940



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945* (D. C., 1949).

That is right, the Great Depression of 1929 was a major opportunity for a new Democratic coalition of big labor, big capital, and big government.¹⁶ The fate of that coalition remains to be seen, but for now we can add a new predictor. Predictor number three: “It’s the economy, stupid.” Economic cycles are probably more important than habit and incumbency, particularly for Marxists and stockbrokers. Simply stated, when the economy tanks, incumbents lose—just like Hoover and the Republicans in 1932.

¹⁶ This is, of course, regime change, in response to economic and political crises that did not produce a proletarian revolution but still had a major political impact.

By 1948, however, the New Deal coalition, although sustained by economic recovery, was threatened by the growing influence of corporate liberalism and the military industrial complex, both of which were supported by growing conservatism and nationalism—what became the Fifties, the McCarthy era, etc. Equally important, however, was the renegade States' Rights party that was sweeping the heretofore solidly Democratic Deep South—except for GA, FL, and TX.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1948>

As we know, although Truman triumphed in 1948, Ike Eisenhower and the Republicans held sway in the next two elections. Then came the first televised presidential contest, where JFK and his lovely wife and family defeated Nixon (with his five o'clock shadow).

If we ignore the importance of image and tele-celebrity and recall the importance of (#1: not just habit but) traditional regional alliances and political machines—especially at the state level, we can appreciate a fourth predictor: home field advantage. The 1960 election was close because Nixon carried his home state of California, but JFK won IL (thanks to Mayor Daley) and held on to most of the solid South while extending his MA hometown advantage into a Northeastern triumph—from NY to West Virginia. Although the popular vote was close, the electoral vote was not, because JFK won all the big states, except for OH and CA. Perhaps this is a good time to recall that states—not voters, elect the president, and all states are not created equal. That is what makes home field advantage so important.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1960>

In this context, we can appreciate that habits are hard to break and new political cultures are difficult to establish. Nevertheless, our fifth and final predictor of electoral outcomes is the extent to which these difficulties are surmounted—political geography changes, not just

temporarily, as with home field advantage and economic crisis, but in fundamental and enduring ways.¹⁷

We know, of course, that the Civil Rights movement changed the political geography of the nation—perhaps as dramatically as the Civil War. In 1968, Nixon won despite losing most of the South to Wallace and Texas to LBJ’s vice president, who also carried his home state of MN.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1968>

Nixon knew that if he could capture the white Democratic Redeemer vote that Wallace claimed in 1968 he could sustain his bid for national dominance. As we can see in the election of 1972, Nixon pulled it off.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1972>

From this point forward, with appropriate disclaimers for Carter and Clinton as more Progressive Southern Democrats, the political geography of the U.S. changed.¹⁸

Nothing is carved in stone, however. Clinton was better served than his Republican opponent by the third-party challenge and the mobilization of anti-NAFTA sentiment.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1992>

Of course, once elected, Clinton endorsed NAFTA. We see a similar shift in 2008-2012, as Obama takes advantage of the economic crisis of 2008—much as Clinton benefitted from the enduring crisis of 1989. At the same time, while opposing the Republicans on bailing out Wall Street and invading the Middle East, in 2008, Obama pivoted again—occupying the middle ground and sustaining his presidency while losing both popular and congressional support.

¹⁷ This is change in bipartisanship without fundamental changes in the bipartisan system.

¹⁸ Compare elections of 1912, 1992, and 2012 to identify the Progressive vote that Clinton and Obama claimed

Perhaps the electorate are less ignorant than some academics and pollsters think. They realize that issues and interests are negotiable and not a stable base for partisanship.

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=2012>

That brings us to 2016. We should expect results like 1992 or 2012, but it might be hard to sustain the Democratic party loyalty, particularly among labor. This translates into the problem of maintaining the tradition of rustbelt support for the Democrats. The unions are supporting Hillary, but how many workers are unionized and what have the Clintons ever done for labor?¹⁹

On the plus side, it appears that the Republicans are more divided than the Democrats. This might be one case where Republicans will stay home. If so, the Democrats will need the political machines that Daley and even Obama could mobilize or the political pressure that only LBJ could apply.²⁰

It would be nice to think that something more than habit, economic growth, home town advantage, and party unity would predict the outcome, but those are the best variables that I can offer, given that there is no incumbent and no evidence of another major shift in political geography. Meanwhile, it is not clear that Bill Clinton can deliver Arkansas and Georgia—let alone Louisiana, Missouri, and Montana, unless the Republicans stay home or vote for someone other than Trump. As we saw in 2012, however, Democrats can win without the border States. Perhaps Hillary's running mate can deliver Virginia. Does anyone expect Jeb to deliver Florida?

Let me leave you with a summary table and a few observations on this election.

¹⁹ After the election, it became apparent that the unions supported Hillary but the rank and file voted for Trump.

²⁰ Obviously, this proved to be wrong. The Republicans closed ranks and voted Trump, while the Democratic machine was not effective in getting out the vote or in brokering coalitions across race, class, and gender.

Presidential Elections and Predictors: 1900-2012

Elections Years	Predictors	Comments
1900, 1920, 1928	#1 Tradition/Habit	Vote as you shot; woo the West
1912, 1948*, 1968	#2 Party Unity	Progressives and Socialists
1932, 1992, 2008	#3 Economic Crisis	It's the Economy, Stupid
1960, 1948*, 1996	#4 Home field advantage	Big state slates
1972	#5 Changing political geography	Civil rights and Nixon's plan

* Incumbent wins despite disunity but carries Border States— Truman born in Missouri

Although this may be heresy on GIS Day, it is possible that demography will be more important than geography on Tuesday. The core constituencies are white people over 40. Hillary gets the well-educated women. Donald gets the less educated men. People of color and young people—who are traditionally no-shows at the polls, are left out. The Democrats assume that they will vote Democratic if they vote at all. The Republicans hope they just stay home or are intimidated by poll watchers with Klan robes and baseball bats if not burning crosses. This could be a very important election, fundamentally changing the nature of bipartisanship, but it will require a revolution—something akin to the Civil War or the Civil Rights Movement to restore civility to presidential election campaigns.

Changing Politics and Political Theory

First, Trump's election might mark an enduring change in partisanship, but this was not a revolution or even a regime change, no less an enduring change in the two-party system. Unlike

the Reagan revolution, which was overturned in 1992 and again in 2008, Trump seems unlikely to establish a new governing coalition. The Republican party managed to broker a coalition of religious fundamentalists, unemployed or under-employed workers, and traditionally Republican business and professional men and women. It is not at all clear that this coalition will survive his presidency, and it seems unlikely to be sustained for long because it lacks a constituency of young people and people of color, who seemed to be supporting Bernie Sanders but could not be sustained by the Democratic Clinton party. Hillary did not have the appeal among white men of the border states or even the Midwest. The JFK-Daley coalition was decidedly lacking. The grassroots support and mobilization and activation power of the Obama team was similarly lacking. Clearly, what was expected to be a Clinton-Bush contest turned out differently, and the Republican party proved better able to pivot and close ranks in this election.

Republican versus Democratic bipartisanship was established in 1860, with the emergence of the Republican party, the destruction of the Whigs, and the Civil War. Between 1860 and 2016 this system was challenged by third-parties and others, representing various regions and classes and life styles—free silver, a national fiat currency, a sub-treasury system, socialism, prohibition, women’s rights and civil rights. The Abolitionist, Labor, and Civil Rights movements have been the most revolutionary forces in shaping and reshaping the bipartisan system and facilitating progress in capital accumulation, state-making, and democracy.²¹ Nevertheless, the first civil rights legislation and Radical Reconstruction failed to accomplish more than the abolition of slavery and the nominal political equality of blacks and whites—without social, economic, or civil rights.

²¹ One might argue that the Women’s movement or Temperance were similarly revolutionary in the Progressive Era, but that discussion would lead us far afield.

One hundred years later, the destruction of Jim Crow law and the constitutional guarantees of civil rights, together with Great Society and War on Poverty campaigns had a similarly revolutionary effect, particularly in the South. Perhaps it will not take another fifty years—the bicentennial of the Civil War/Reconstruction Era, which I don't expect to live to celebrate. Right now, however, I do not see even a Progressive party brokering alliances across race, class, and gender. Perhaps if black and white women could model civility they might offer a model for white and black men, but it seems that the Republican party is much more successful in this regard.

That said, to the extent that they dismantle the welfare state and the regulatory system, they will hasten the arrival of the next serious economic crisis, which will, as it did in 1992 and again in 2008, open the door for an alternative that the Democrats might then be able to offer. The long-term Republican effort, dating back to the Reagan revolution, to turn back the reforms of the Sixties and Seventies, might push even further, toward dismantling the New Deal programs of social security, unemployment and health insurance, and collective bargaining. First, of course, they face the triumph of Obamacare, which seems to be more than they can overcome. If somehow, they could return to the unregulated world of robber barons and corporate piracy, the depth of economic and political crisis thereby engendered might approach what Marx had in mind.

How might this affect political theory? In the short-run it seems that we will continue to flounder in the world of nontheories that continue, in the tradition of neo-functionalism or new social movement theory to oppose the dominant (liberal, resource mobilization/political process/dynamics of contention) perspective without offering anything like a viable alternative. The Trump revolution encouraged reactionaries to mobilize and challenge liberalism, on campus

and elsewhere. This has been most effective in mobilizing the opposition—liberals. What we can expect in the political context of nongovernment is the continuation of nontheory.

Sociology emerged in the context of debates between reactionaries and liberals in a truly revolutionary situation, which inspired radical and conservative theories that ultimately produced an orthogonal debate on the causes and consequences of social change. The more protracted the struggle between reactionaries and liberals, the more the sociological debate thrived. It is no accident that French and German theories have and continue to dominate the discourse. Somewhere in the partisan and academic debates—after the Russian Revolution, perhaps, leading lights argued that false consciousness or totalitarianism or the irrationality of mass politics were the independent rather than the dependent variable, in the analysis of social change.

The idea that revolutionary ideology or consciousness was needed to effect revolutionary change seems to imply that materialism is dead. There are, it is true, some Marxists who have argued that it is time to abandon the labor theory of value, but we can only hope that the failure of soviet state socialism and Maoism will ultimately lead the faithful back to what Marx said in the preface to the Russian translation of the Communist Manifesto. This whole peasant communalist revolution thing was doomed from the start. What we need now is not a new theory but a new challenger, whose success will inspire new theories to explain why the old theories failed to predict this result. If the Arab uprisings ultimately teach us that democracy does not require bourgeois hegemony and a strong state, secured by some combination of popular, military, and international support, then we will need to learn that lesson and begin to challenge the dominant perspective on social movements and social change. Perhaps we will all get fooled again.

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