PATHS TOWARD DEMOCRACY

The Working Class and Elites in Western Europe and South America

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INTRODUCTION: ELITE CONQUEST OR WORKING-CLASS TRIUMPH?

The role of the working class in democracy and democratization is a classic and contested question. Earlier formulations centered around the historical experiences of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth, particularly in Western Europe. With the renewed interest in democracy stimulated by the "new" democracies of the 1970s and 1980s, this question has been revived in more recent literature and has become contested once again. This book revisits the working-class role in democratization on the basis of a comparative analysis of these historical and contemporary episodes of democratization in Western Europe and South America.

The question of the working-class role in democratization is part of a long-standing debate concerning liberal democracy, understood as a particular set of institutions. Is a democratic regime a result of a victory from below, in which subordinate or excluded groups wrest power from a reluctant elite, or a conquest from above, in which those in power or rising economic groups not holding power pursue their own political agendas and seek to strengthen their political positions? That question is closely related to another concerning the nature of liberal democracy: what is the relationship between liberal democracy and authentic rule by the people, or popular sovereignty, however that may be understood. In the Marxist tradition, of course, the issue was framed in class terms, and the debate centered around democracy as either a mechanism of capitalist rule or a triumph of the working class. As other traditions have emphasized, the working class is not the only subordinate class, politically excluded group, or mass actor that has fought for democracy. Nevertheless,

the preponderance of theorizing about democratic pressures from below has focused on the working class.

The emergence of mass democracy as a type of broadly inclusionary, electoral regime based on mass participation often coincided historically with industrialization, the formation of a proletariat, and its organization into parties and unions on a national level. In this context, the historical cases quite naturally drew attention to the possibility that democracy emerged as a concession extracted by working-class pressure. Recent regime change also raises the question of the relationship between the working class and democratization. In southern Europe and South America, the outgoing authoritarian regimes had typically been founded as anti-labor forms of government that organized labor would have a particular reason to oppose. On the other hand, the current "wave" of democratization broadly coincides with another major macrosocial change occurring at the end of the twentieth century, the global reorganization of capital, which has put organized labor on the defensive. If earlier democratization corresponded to the emergence of the working class and a new labor movement organized at the national level as a political and sectoral actor, economic forces of internationalization and marketization at the time of the recent round of democratization have produced pressures for the fragmentation of the working class and the weakening and disarticulation of its organization at a national level. Should these democracies be understood not so much as a popular victory but rather as a product of the strategies of certain elite groups? Indeed, elite strategies have been at the core of the most influential analytical framework concerning late twentieth-century transitions. Is the recent process of democratization in this sense substantially different from that in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, a period of democratization often analyzed in terms of the demands of the working class?

The focus of the present inquiry is the role of the working class in the process of democratization. What is being undertaken is not an overall conceptualization of the democratization process or even an effort to determine with any precision the relative weight of labor organizations compared with the panoply of other groups and actors. Rather, the objective is a more specific and limited inquiry into the role of the working class, as well as the interaction between working-class pressure and elite choice. In this way, the present study evaluates the two perspectives that have framed the debate about democratization – one focused on class analysis and the other on elite strategies – through a comparative analysis of Western European and South American countries, which have been the main empirical base for theorizing on democratization. Specifically, it

analyzes the experiences of seventeen historical cases and ten contemporary cases and seeks to move beyond these alternative frameworks toward a more integrated framework that combines class, political inclusion, and arena of action.

These questions about democratization have a substantial intellectual pedigree and have been contested within both Marxist and non-Marxist traditions. The Marxist debate hinged around not only the empirical question but also the prescriptive one – that is, around whether the working class should fight for democracy. The position taken was related to the assessment of how a democracy functioned. The term "bourgeois democracy" expresses one side of the issue, referring to the notion that liberal democracy, which has emerged in capitalist market economies, necessarily involves the rule of capital, whether it be through an instrumentalist, structuralist, or Gramscian logic or through the atomization and embourgoisement of working-class organizations – parties and unions – as they participated in electoral politics. The idea stems perhaps most strongly from Lenin, who suggested that democracy was the "best possible political shell" for bourgeois rule.[1] Other Marxists and many post-Marxists have seen liberal democracy as "indeterminate" (Jessop 1980) with respect to its class orientation. For them, liberal democracy could be used to advance working-class interests – it could have sufficient representative potential to allow the many to use the vote against capitalism or at least to protect themselves through public policy.[2] Such an assessment has been the basis for the view that workers should be active participants in the fight for democracy.

Among non-Marxists pluralists have emphasized the demands articulated by societal groups and have been inclined toward the assumption that the extension of democracy represents a victory of the outs, of those making a new claim on power. Other scholars have interpreted the electoral inclusion of the lower classes as part of an elite strategy for other ends, such as state building or political entrepreneurship.[3] For example, as Rokkan observed for Western Europe, "The decision to extend the vote was not uniformly a response to pressures from below; it was as often the result of contests for influence at the top and of deliberate moves to broaden bases for an integrated national power structure." Rokkan (1970:31) went

1 See the discussion in Jessop 1978.

2 See the contributions in Hunt 1980 and Bobbio 1984.

3 This argument is often made with respect to the extension of the suffrage rather than democratization. The two should not be confused, since two of the important cases for some of these analysts are the manhood suffrage reforms of Bismarck and Napoleon III, hardly a democratic context.

on to note that elites often held the "belief that the entry of the working class into the electorate would strengthen the unity and stability of the nation-state." Bendix (1964:97) suggested that in Europe it was often conservatives who advocated an extension of the franchise, while liberals opposed it: "[L]iberals favored the *régime censitaire* and feared the possibilities of electoral manipulation inherent in the extension of the suffrage to the economically dependent. Conservatives, once they recognized the importance of the vote as a basis of local power, tended to favor the enfranchisement of the 'lower orders.' " Finally, E. E. Schattschneider (1942:48) made a similar argument for the United States, suggesting that important expansions in the electorate occurred when a political party sought support from the masses, rather than as a response to demands from below.

More recently, questions of democracy and who brings it about have again become a major focus of concern. Implicitly or explicitly, the question of the working-class role has reappeared as an axis of contention in the literature. While few perhaps would argue that the working class plays no part, there is substantial disagreement over its importance. Some analysts understand the working class as the most important democratic force and believe that its role is of fundamental importance to the emergence of democratic regimes. For these scholars, understanding the relative strength and organization of the working class is crucial for explaining how democratic regimes are established.[4] Others argue that processes of democratization are best analyzed in terms of political behavior at the elite level, as the outcome of strategic choices made by political elites, thereby at least implicitly relegating the role of the working class to one of minor importance.[5]

CONTRASTING IMAGES OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Two recent approaches have framed current analyses of democratization and in substantial measure have run parallel to the debate about democratization as a process from above or from below. The two perspectives come from distinct analytic traditions. The first is a strategic interaction approach, focusing on the negotiating or bargaining role of leaders or elites.

4 The strongest statement of this position is found in Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992. Similar viewpoints are presented in de Schweinitz 1964 and Therborn 1977.

5 This position is associated most commonly with O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986. The comparative-theoretical statements and chapters contained in following works also deemphasize the role of the working class and tend to stress elite choice: Malloy and Seligson 1987; Baloyra 1987; Di Palma 1990; and Higley and Gunther 1992.

The second continues a long line of class analysis that has its roots not only in Marxist analysis but also in historical sociology.

Much of the literature on recent democratization emphasizes elite strategic choice, downplaying or ignoring the role of labor in democratization. The "transitions literature," as this current work has come to be known, has as its best representative the founding essay by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), which established a framework that is implicitly or explicitly followed in most other contributions. Without denying differences and subtleties, one could say that certain emphases within O'Donnell and Schmitter's essay have been selected and elaborated by other authors so that it is possible to aggregate various contributions and in broad strokes map out a basic characterization and set of claims in this literature as a whole.

Aside from cases in which the authoritarian regime is said to suffer an internal collapse or breakdown, the transitions literature has tended to conceive of the democratization process in terms of three stages. The first stage is marked by an internal split among authoritarian incumbents, who divide into factions over questions of how to achieve legitimation and the general problem of how to consolidate or institutionalize the authoritarian regime.[6]

In a second step, a liberalization process is initiated by incumbents, occurring at the point when the relevant faction proposing such a solution to the legitimatization-consolidation problem gains the upper hand. While this liberalization process is understood as a loosening or partial lifting of repression, and not an actual project for democracy, it puts the regime on a kind of slippery slope, starting a process that opens up some space for the opposition and for a dynamic that pushes political change further than the incumbents had originally intended. Liberalization is seen as presenting some opportunities for social movements to get (re) activated. Though the labor movement has certain special advantages, it is seen as only one of many nonelite actors that may engage in protest at this time, and one that arrives fairly late on the scene. Mass protest by the working class or other popular groups in the transition process is typically seen as a relatively brief phase, quickly superseded by the next step.

This final stage is the elite strategic game in which authoritarian incumbents "negotiate" or "bargain" formally or informally with moderate

6 O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986:19–20) recognize that in some cases this "initial" split among authoritarian incumbents may be a reaction to opposition protest. Yet they treat this opposition as prior to the sequence of events they define as initiating the transition, and hence as exogenous to their model and excluded from their analysis. This is an important point of contrast with the present analysis.

opposition party leaders. In this game of interacting strategies, mass action (including labor protest) is generally considered insofar as it affects the political resources and strategies of the individual leaders who actually play the elite bargaining game. Specifically, demonstrations may strengthen the hand of opposition moderates by signaling that the cost of retreating from a broadening reform trajectory may be substantial and even unacceptable repression. Alternatively these demonstrations may signal to hard-line incumbents that the limited process of liberalization within the context of strengthening the authoritarian regime is getting out of control and they had better crack down again. The emphasis from this perspective is thus on the process by which soft-line incumbents and moderate opposition party leaders reach some implicit or explicit agreement on a transition from an authoritarian to a democratic regime. To a substantial extent, this is a model of democratization in which collective actors, mass mobilization, and protest are largely exogenous.

At the risk of caricature, three related points about the transitions literature can be made. First, born under a normative imperative of possibilism and an escape from what seemed like an overdetermined structuralism that had pessimistic implications for democracy, this literature has often emphasized the role of leadership and crafting, thus signaling the importance of individuals, rather than collective actors. Departing from arguments about social requisites or economic determinants that had earlier dominated theorizing about regime outcomes, the new perspective had a different focus. How can actors make choices to establish a democratic regime? Under what impetus will authoritarian leaders within the state move in a pro-democratic direction? And how can opposition leaders strategize to encourage them to do so?

Articulating a perspective that has been generally accepted, O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986:3–5) argue that transitions are periods of high indeterminacy, characterized by the distinctive importance of individual choice and leadership talent. In their view, "elite dispositions, calculations, and pacts . . . largely determine whether or not an opening will occur at all," and "the catalyst" for any ensuing social mobilization "comes first from gestures by exemplary individuals, who begin testing the boundaries of behavior initially imposed by the incumbent regime" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986:48–49). The essay by Giuseppe Di Palma (1990:8) likewise argues that "democratization is ultimately a matter of political crafting," and urges scholars to focus on the role of "innovative political actions." In another volume focused on elites and democracy, Burton, Gunther, and Higley (1992a:342) write that "in the final analysis . . . a central conclusion of these studies is the great responsibility of national

elites for achieving, or failing to achieve, the degree of consensus and unity necessary for the establishment and consolidation of democracy."

A second point about the transitions literature is that actors tend to be defined strategically with respect to the position they adopt in the "transition game," thus sidelining questions about class-defined actors. With this strategic understanding of actors, the categories of analysis have changed. Whereas democratization in the historical period has typically been analyzed in terms of class-based actors, in analyses of the 1970s and 1980s the categories of upper class and lower class, or bourgeoisie and working class, have tended to be replaced by the categories of incumbents and opposition, hard-liners and soft-liners, maximalists and moderates.

Third, despite an emphasis on formal or informal "negotiations" between government and opposition, the transitions literature has at the same time tended to be state-centric, subordinating societal actors. The privileged role of state actors can be seen in the conceptualization of the transition as beginning with splits among the authoritarian incumbents. This "internalist" account (Fishman 1990b) emphasizes the deficiencies and problems that arise *ex natura* within authoritarian regimes. Divisions arise among incumbents of the state over solutions to problems inherent to authoritarianism.[7] This conceptualization makes questions about the origins of these divisions exogenous.

The state-centric leaning also appears in the typologies of "modes of transitions" found in the literature. Juan Linz's (1978:35) initial typology distinguished between transition by *reforma* and transition by *ruptura*. Transitions by *reforma* are initiated by incumbents and to one degree or another controlled by them. Subsequent typological modifications have distinguished the degree to which the rules of the authoritarian incumbents are followed or, conversely, the degree to which incumbents must "negotiate" the content of the transition.[8] Transitions by *ruptura* come

7 Such an internalist approach was usefully developed in earlier work of both O'Donnell (1979: see esp. 287ff.) and Schmitter (1975: see esp. 20–21) as they, respectively, analyzed authoritarianism in Latin America and Portugal and pointed to the lack of "mediations" in many of these authoritarian regimes and the contradictions related to the forms in which state power is organized and transferred in authoritarian regimes.

8 See, respectively, Valenzuela 1992, and Share and Mainwaring 1986. Huntington (1991: 114) is one of the few who use a typology with a category that explicitly includes a role for the opposition that is nonresidual, making room for the possibility that the opposition may initiate the transition. Yet, interestingly he suggests that his typology is the same as that of Share and Mainwaring, failing to realize that his category of "transplacement" is definitionally more opposition-centered than any category of Share and Mainwaring. Karl (1990:8) more explicitly develops a typology that includes a role for mass actors. See also Karl and Schmitter 1991:275–76.

about when the authoritarian regime collapses. Although such transitions completely escape incumbent control, even this breakdown of the authoritarian regime has been seen in terms of a state-centric image of implosion (associated with coups and/or defeats in foreign wars) and rarely connected to societal mobilization or labor opposition.

The dominant framework used in theoretical and comparative accounts, then, has not only adopted an actor-based rather than a structural perspective, but it has tended to privilege certain kinds of actors: individual elites rather than *collective* actors, strategically defined actors rather than *class*-defined actors, and state actors more than *societal* actors. As a framework, it almost precludes the problematization of the role of working-class and mass action. Indeed, in most theoretical and comparative accounts, the working class and its organizations receive relatively little (if any) attention. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986:52, 55) see the working class as one layer of a broad, multiclass upsurge that, during a delimited period, can exploit political openings, but only once they are initiated by authoritarian incumbents. They do suggest that at a particular point "the greatest challenge to the transitional regime is likely to come from the new or revived identities and capacity for collective action of the working class." However, subsequent comparative analyses and theoretical accounts have not picked up on or elaborated this original suggestion, and O'Donnell and Schmitter themselves emphasize the "ephemeral" nature of the "popular upsurge" and the subsequent "decline of the people."

Like all approaches, the transitions framework evolved around a specific set of substantive concerns and questions, for which it may have been an appropriate model. But the initial concern regarding how leaders can strategize to bring about democratic regimes hardly exhausts the questions one might want to ask about democratization, and the framework does not easily accommodate other questions. With respect to the current question, it obscures as much as it illuminates. In light of the longer tradition of approaches to democratization, it is interesting the extent to which subsequent comparative and theoretical statements continued to reflect this framework. When this framework became hegemonic, it became not just a framework for posing a particular question, but implicitly, at least, a kind of substantive assertion that sees democratization in terms of the dominant role of elite strategic action. The literature has tended to converge on a view of transitions as occurring either because the authoritarian regime collapses or as a result of the strategic interaction, sometimes even a more formal negotiation or bargain, between a soft-line faction among the authoritarian incumbents and moderate party leaders in the opposition. The latter are willing to come to some understanding with the authoritarians and engineer a transition to democracy on mutually acceptable terms – an

understanding that, analysts often assert, involves compromising the interests of labor. The convergence on this account is rather perplexing in light of the fact that monographic accounts often could not tell the story of particular cases without substantial reference to the working class, or mass action or protest.

Within this transitions literature, J. Samuel Valenzuela (1989:449, 447, 450) presents one of the few broadly comparative analyses of the labor movement during recent democratization. He nicely summarizes the "special place" labor occupies "among the forces of civil society," such that it "should not be discussed simply on the same plane with other segments of society." The sources of its unique position particularly within an authoritarian context lie in its unusual capacity for mobilization, its existing organizational network, the commonality of interests and collective identity shared by members, and the relationship between labor demands and activity on the one hand and production and macroeconomic performance and policy on the other. Valenzuela's analysis, however, generally accepts the overall, largely state-centric framework of this larger literature, in which changes within the state (either a crisis or an incumbent decision to liberalize, if not actually democratize) create new opportunities for the labor movement to become activated. Further, if Valenzuela's analysis departs empirically from describing the labor role as an ephemeral upsurge, it prescriptively advocates this pattern as an "ideal mix" or sequence of well-timed mobilization followed by restraint as the path to a smoother and more successful democratic transition.

Interestingly, at early stages of the recent transitions, analysts were struck with the "resurrection of civil society," and events and developments in these countries have given rise to a substantial literature on social movements. Yet, in terms of systematic comparison or theoretical understanding of democratization, this literature has proposed little beyond the initial formulations. As Foweraker (1994:218–19) notes, though a newer literature focuses on popular movements, it

> still stops short of a systematic inquiry into the political principles of popular organization and strategic choice, and so fails to pursue the connections between popular politics and processes of institutional change within political regimes. . . . There is a "top-down" and a "bottom-up" approach, but "ne'er the twain do meet" because they do not explore and explain the linkages between popular political actors and the changing institutions. . . . Little is really known about the popular contribution to making democracy.

Furthermore, given the frequent attention to "new" social movements (and sometimes nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs), the labor movement is often excluded from these analyses. A more integrated approach to

regime change and democratization, then, is still beginning to take shape, as in the work of Foweraker (1994) and Tarrow (1995).

In sharp contrast to analyses that see democratization as an outcome of elite bargaining, a second perspective has emphasized the importance of working-class pressures. This account has been associated with the work of Therborn (1977, 1979) and Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992). Like the transitions literature, these analyses are primarily rooted in the empirical experiences of Western Europe and South America, though over a longer historical time span.[9]

Adopting a class account of democratization in the tradition of Barrington Moore, Rueschemeyer et al. reject his specific argument that associates democracy with the bourgeoisie and argue instead that the working class is the primary carrier of democracy, playing a decisive role in forging democratic regimes. Unlike the transitions approach, which presents an actor-based framework, these authors start from a more structural perspective, whose "core . . . is a 'relative class power' model of democratization" (1992:47). Nevertheless, actors inevitably become important, and at many points the argument emphasizes working-class agency in bringing about democratic change. They see the working class as the most consistent prodemocratic class, the landed classes as the most hostile to democracy, and the bourgeoisie or middle classes as inconsistent or ambiguous. Democracy is an outcome of the struggle between the dominant and subordinate classes and hence an outcome of the balance of class power. Democratization occurs when the democracy-demanding classes, above all the working class, are stronger than the democracy-resisting classes, who reject the demands and pressures of the former, though there is also room in this account for democratic initiatives by other classes as a co-optive response to a working-class threat.

This analysis has much in common with and in many ways reiterates the earlier assertion of Göran Therborn (1979:80), who stressed the "determinant influence of the working class," which "demand[s] democracy" from the bourgeoisie, which, in turn, "first resist[s] then decid[es] when and how to concede." Rueschemeyer et al. (1992:47) identify with Therborn in the way he "recovered this insight of Marx about the central role of the working class in the process of democratization." They thus argue that "the most consistently prodemocratic force" was the working class,

9 Though the regions that are the subject of analysis are roughly the same, the cases are not identical, only in part because of the different time horizons. Therborn and Rueschemeyer et al. also include the British settler colonies, Central America, and the Caribbean. On the other hand, Therborn does not include any of the recent cases, and Rueschemeyer et al. do not include the recent European cases.

which "pushed forward" and "fought for" democracy against the resistance of other class actors, often playing "a decisively prodemocratic role." "It was the subordinated classes that fought for democracy. . . . Fundamentally, democracy was achieved by those who were excluded from rule" (8, 46, 59). To the extent other classes were also excluded, they are seen as fighting only for their own inclusion and not for a more universalistic mass democracy – which ultimately depends on working-class demands.

On the one hand Rueschemeyer et al. draw quite sweeping conclusions about the nearly universal salience of the working-class role in democratization, arguing that "the organized working class appeared as a key actor in the development of full democracy almost everywhere . . . [and] in most cases organized workers played an important role in the development of restricted democracy as well" (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992:270). On the other hand, they argue that in Latin America, "compared to Europe the urban working class played less of a leading role as a prodemocratic force. . . . The driving force behind the initial establishment of democracy [in Latin America], then, was the middle class. . . . In a somewhat crude generalization we could say that in Europe the working class in most cases needed the middle classes as allies to be successful in its push for democracy, whereas in Latin America it was the other way round" (182, 185). Similarly, Therborn (1979:85) argues that "the democratic thrust of the labour movement in Latin America has in most cases been more indirect than in Western Europe."

In explaining these differences, Rueschemeyer et al. reject the tendency to read interests off of class position. Rather, they emphasize that class interests are historically constructed, with organizational and party factors playing "crucial role[s] as mediators" (1992:7, 9). Further, their explanation rests on a model of power that has three components: not only the balance of power among different classes, but also the autonomous power of the state (and hence the nature of state-society relations) and transnational power relations. In this way, they move analytically in an extraordinarily broad multivariate space. Nevertheless, the thrust of the argument is to advance the working-class account and to use these other factors in more ad hoc fashion in order to accommodate exceptions to or "modify" (63) their primary model of class balance and their assertion about the centrality of the working class.

These two analytic frameworks, a class approach and an elite-choice approach, present two quite different images. The first sees democratization primarily as a product of the pressure and demands of excluded groups and of subordinate classes; the second, as the outcome of the strategic interactions of those in power and elites in the democratic opposition. The one

sees democratization as a popular, especially working-class, triumph, often extracted through mass mobilization and protest; the other, as an outcome of negotiating leaders, whose relative resources may be affected by labor mobilization. We have, on the one hand, the proposition that the working class was the primary carrier of democracy, playing a decisive role in its achievement; and, on the other hand, the proposition that it was at most a marginal or secondary actor in the process of democratization, which is better seen in terms of elite strategies and intraelite negotiations.

The contrasting accounts of democratization derive from analyses of both Western Europe and Latin America. Yet, the two distinct images of democratization partly correspond to different historical epochs and to different antecedent regimes. Thus, these competing understandings of the role of the working class in democratization are to some degree grounded in different empirical and historical realities. In general, the hypothesis concerning elite strategies and intraelite political bargaining, which downplays the working-class role, has been a prominent feature of studies that focus on the recent transitions in Latin America and Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. By contrast, analyses that emphasize the importance of the working class have focused attention on earlier episodes of democratization. Therborn, who wrote before the later transitions, necessarily focuses on earlier time periods. Rueschemeyer et al. make the strongest case for an important working-class role for the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century democratic transitions in Europe. They do not include the recent European cases of the 1970s and devote only three pages to Latin American transitions in this latest period, in an analysis that largely accepts the dominant account of the "transitions literature," modifying it in only a couple of cases.

This difference in the strongest empirical base of the two types of arguments suggests the hypothesis that the working class played a key role in earlier democratization, whereas it played a marginal role in the current episodes. Historical period is correlated with different antecedent regimes and distinct processes of democratization. These contrasting experiences across the two periods make it seem plausible that the historical cases may be closer to working-class triumphs while the recent cases may be more like elite affairs. The earlier democratizations are typically seen as gradual processes, with different "components" of a democratic regime instituted incrementally; the "final" step in the process is frequently the introduction of full or mass suffrage, the last missing component of a democratic regime. Thus, early processes of democratization have often been seen as a move from a restricted democracy to a full one; they represent the politics

of incremental inclusion – the achievement of political rights stepwise down the social hierarchy. To the extent that the other components of a democratic regime were already in place, to inquire about the role of the working class in these cases of democratization is to ask about the role of the working class in obtaining its own political inclusion.

Indeed, Rueschemeyer et al. suggest such a process in presenting an image in which each class fights for its own inclusion, but not that of classes "below" or those that come after. In their analysis of Europe they emphasize what they call the "final push" for democracy, which they identify as manhood suffrage. The picture they paint is one in which the bourgeoisie fought for a restricted democracy that would stop short of mass enfranchisement, and they align themselves with Marx in "consider[ing] the achievement of universal suffrage the historical task of the working class" (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992:47). To a substantial extent, then, and with some obvious exceptions, the final step in the historical processes of democratization is typically thought of in terms of enfranchisement of the working class itself, so that it looks like a class process and even a particularistic benefit to the working class.

The process of democratization in the 1970s and 1980s was quite different in this respect. These were processes of *re*democratization. In most of the earlier cases, the principle of democratic rule was first being established in connection with institutional innovation and experimentation. In the later cases, the principle of democracy, along with universal suffrage as a sine qua non, had long since been established and the repertoire of democratic institutions was quite clear (though some democratic *restrictions* were still being invented).[10] Furthermore, in these cases, the antecedent regimes were not restricted democracies but outright authoritarian regimes or autocracies. With virtually all the components of a democratic regime lacking, democratization and the recovery of political rights affected virtually all groups in civil society, including rival elites and opposition party leaders. Hence, later democratization did not single out the working class as a beneficiary and looks less like a class-based process.

To these political distinctions between the historical and recent cases, we can add a socio-economic distinction. In the earlier period, workers constituted an emerging, rapidly growing class, organizing in parties and unions and fighting for basic rights in the context of a newly developing industrial society particularly in the advanced capitalist societies, the pri-

10 The emergence of an international consensus on democratic institutions is discussed by Markoff (1995).

mary locus of most early democratization. In the later period in the 1970s and 1980s, the working class was decidedly on the defensive in the face of economic recession, the uncertainty of the oil shocks, the debt crisis, and the reorganization of production at the firm, national, and global levels. By the 1970s, the age of national industrialism, with its material and political base for class compromise, was drawing to a close. The "post-industrial," socio-technological revolution, and global reorganization of capital brought a relative decline in the size of the working class, put unions on the defensive, and presented challenges to working-class parties and to the political clout of workers, particularly in middle-income countries, which were the locus of late twentieth-century democratization.

It thus makes some sense to hypothesize that the working class played a key role in earlier democratization, whereas it played a marginal role in the current episodes. This is, in a sense, the received wisdom, which this book critically explores. It will suggest that the role of the working class has generally been overstated and misspecified for the historical cases and underemphasized in the contemporary cases. In understanding the participation of the working class in democratization, it argues that the type of antecedent regime is indeed important, but in ways not anticipated on the basis of the literature. The analysis reveals the way the prior regime can affect the resources and perceived interests of different actors and therefore their choice to pursue the goal of democratic reform.

IDENTIFYING THE ACTORS

The issue of democratization from above or from below is here treated in terms of which actors had explicit democratic agendas and played a central role in achieving democratic reform. It is an agential question about the goals and effectiveness of actors concerned with the installation of democratic institutions. The present analysis distinguishes patterns of democratization according to which actors pushed for regime change or democratic reform and furthermore were effective or consequential in the politics of democratization. As indicated earlier, the analysis focuses specifically on the role in democratization of the working class and that of elites.

THE WORKING CLASS AND DEMOCRATIZATION

In this analysis, what is meant by "the role of the working class" in democratization? There are two elements here: the working class and the

role. As the very term suggests, "working class," or "labor," is a collective concept and is not equivalent to an aggregation of workers. What is at stake is not participation by atomized individual workers, but rather action in which some sense of solidarity or identity and collective purpose must be involved. This notion of class solidarity or identity can take the form of a common construction of meaning in the participatory act, as in the understanding of democratization as a workers' issue, as a benefit to workers as a collectivity. Usually (but not always) it is expressed organizationally. Hence, in *most* cases we are talking about the organized working class and pro-democratic action led or undertaken by *unions* and labor-affiliated or *labor-based parties*.

Since the organized working class is numerically only a part of the working class, this point raises another: in analyzing the role of the working class I obviously do not require, nor do I want to imply, that all or even most workers must be involved – either actively or even in terms of lending assent. Just as most peasants or workers did not participate in the Chinese and Russian revolutions and yet analysts refer to these as peasants' and workers' revolutions respectively (and not because of their subsequent "pro-peasant" or "pro-worker" policies or claims), so in the present study it is hardly appropriate to insist that a working-class role in democratization requires the participation of some minimum percentage of the workers, who may be – and, in fact, often were – divided over the issue of democracy. Rather, the issue is whether a group of workers became part of the democratization process as a self-conscious collectivity and played an active role that affected the democratic outcome.

Another point about the conception of working class employed here is that it does not single out proletarian wage earners or factory workers as distinct from artisans. While it is certainly the case that in many ways artisans occupy an ambiguous class position, given the timing of democratization we typically encounter them in the following histories at a point when there is evidence of their collective identity as workers – at a point in the nineteenth or early twentieth century when, as Michael Mann (1993: 517) put it, they also "felt entrepreneurial pressure" and were being displaced by the rapid growth of factory production and the process of proletarianization. Recent scholarship has emphasized the way in which the transformation of labor processes in nineteenth-century industrialization created working-class consciousness not only among the rising group of proletarians and factory workers, who would confront employers, but also among declining artisans, who were retreating with the penetration of factory production. As Mann suggests, it may be artificial and inappropriate, for present purposes, to draw a fine distinction among different

categories of workers (artisan, proletarian, factory worker), since the spread of entrepreneurial capitalism helped to forge a kind of class identity across very different labor processes and homogenized workers "in a distinctive, underappreciated way."[11] Indeed, the origins of working-class consciousness and worker protest can often be traced to the defensive reaction of artisans rather than the later mobilization of proletarians. As Sewell (1986: 52) suggested with reference to France, economic change transformed artisan production, reorganizing it and increasing the level of exploitation, so that artisans developed class consciousness and "had as much reason to protest as factory workers"; or, as Katznelson (1986:23) put it more generally, "artisans played the key role in developing a response to proletarianization." Thus, the present conception of working class includes workers on both sides of the transition from skilled artisan production to proletarianized wage labor, who, in response, developed collective identity and understanding. It also includes proletarianized agricultural workers but not peasants.

We come, then, to a consideration of what is meant by the working class playing a "role" in the democratic process. First of all, in attributing a role to the working class I am interested in those cases in which the working class (or the relevant part of it) took a *pro-democratic* position. I do not here include an "indirect" role in which the working class presented an apparent threat to the existing political or economic system that was met with a reform response by those in power. That is, for present purposes it is insufficient if labor protest centered around economic or workplace demands or nondemocratic revolutionary goals, which may have been seen as a threat to capitalism or destabilized authoritarianism by threatening the government's capacity to maintain order but did not constitute a demand for democracy. In such a situation democratization would be better analyzed in terms of an elite strategy to pursue a particular goal than a working-class strategy. In "scoring" the cases, then, the labor movement is considered to have contributed to democratization only if it engaged in activity that was pro-democratic, that is, if it had a democratic agenda.

This point merits some emphasis because it may diverge from some structural accounts of democratization. There is no question that the presence of a working class (especially a strong and organized one) may have altered the strategic calculations of many actors, posing challenges or even

11 Mann 1993:518–19. The important role of artisans in the early history of working-class protest is evident in many of the countries analyzed here. See, for example, Sewell 1986.

threats in a host of ways. As we shall see, working-class action may provoke co-optive or support mobilizational responses as well as repressive ones. But this, of course, is quite a different matter from asserting that the working class favors or acts to promote democracy. It is this latter issue that is of present concern.

Second, the present inquiry concerns a *consequential* role in democratic reform. That is, for the working class, or important parts of it, to have been pro-democratic is not sufficient. Rather the criterion concerns direct activity and participation in the events that constitute the democratization process. The distinction here is between two separate questions: was the working class pro-democratic, and did working-class action and agitation for democracy have an important effect in promoting or advancing episodes of democratic reform or the adoption of democratic institutions? The criterion, in other words, can be stated by asking the counterfactual question: would the democratization process have been quite different if the pro-democratic activities of the working class had not occurred? The focus is on the politics of regime change rather than on working-class activity per se: the issue is less whether the working class was pro-democratic than whether democratic reform was at least in part an outcome of pro-democratic labor action.

ELITES AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Although the central inquiry of this study concerns the working class, its role in the process of democratization is explored in juxtaposition to that of "elites." It is certainly possible, and no doubt relevant, to inquire about other actors, but this juxtaposition frames the present discussion, given the centrality of elite strategy in the current literature. The present analysis of the working class and elites in democratization sets up a number of polarities, which reflect different conceptions of "elite." In this regard, a three-way distinction may be made. One conception of elite is social and two are political.

The first is a class conception. It distinguishes the working class from classes "above" it in the social hierarchy. The elite strata may consist of the more traditional landed classes or the "middle classes" or "middle sectors" – a heterogeneous category of mostly urban social sectors (including bourgeois, professional, petit-bourgeois, managerial, and white-collar groups) spawned by the spread of industrialization, commercialization, and capitalist growth. Here the question becomes democratization as a product of working-class action, as opposed to the action of elite strata.

Second, the term elite may refer to those with political power, that is, to incumbents (including those participating in government but forming the opposition). In this sense, to ask about democratization as an elite strategy is to ask about the strategy of the "ins" or those already included by the regime, as opposed to the role of the "outs," or groups excluded by the rules of the regime, without political rights or accepted institutional avenues of participation.

A third conception of elite is again political and essentially refers to leaders. Much of the transitions literature emphasizes this notion of elite. In a more explicit but quite typical approach, Burton et al. (1992b:8) define elites as "persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially. Elites are the principal decision makers in the largest or most resource-rich . . . organizations and movements in a society." This conception of elite emphasizes the role of individuals more than mass protest or demonstrations. As in most of the transitions literature, their emphasis is on negotiation, bargaining, and "agreements that can be struck" (Burton et al. 1992b:10).

Although this conception theoretically includes union leaders (and perhaps even leaders of mass protest more generally), these are not the particular leaders generally singled out in the literature. Rather, the elites in these frameworks tend to overlap with the other two conceptions of elite. Thus, most accounts of the recent transitions focus particularly on two sets of leaders: the incumbents or the "ins," whose authoritarian projects were centrally anti-popular and especially anti-labor; and, among the "outs," the "moderate" party or political leaders in the opposition – not labor leaders but those willing precisely to reach agreements and give assurances about any potential working-class "threat," that is, assurances not only regarding amnesty to the military itself against human rights abuses but also regarding the protection of the original class-related goals of the regime. Although labor leaders are largely ignored in the theoretical literature, this leader conception of elite nevertheless invites an inquiry into the role of leaders of unions and of labor-affiliated parties not only in leading and coordinating mass protest but also in negotiating and reaching agreements.

The present analysis seeks to disentangle these various conceptions of elite. In doing so, it looks explicitly at the process of democratization in terms of the role of the working class as opposed to the middle and upper classes; those included as well as those excluded by the antecedent regime; and the negotiating role of leaders, including union leaders and leaders of

labor-based parties as well as government incumbents and leaders of other parties.

DIMENSIONS AND PATTERNS OF DEMOCRATIZATION

In order to establish an alternative framework, this analysis focuses on three dimensions that follow from the foregoing. These dimensions are *class*, *prior inclusion*, and *arena of action*. Patterns of democratization are distinguished in terms of the role of actors located at the intersections of these dimensions.

Figure 1.1 gives an overview of these three dimensions. The first is social class, with the central concern for present purposes to distinguish the working class from elite strata, that is, from the more traditional upper classes as well the middle classes or sectors, which in analytic traditions of both Europe and South America are considered elite strata. The second dimension is inclusion or exclusion under the prior regime. It distinguishes

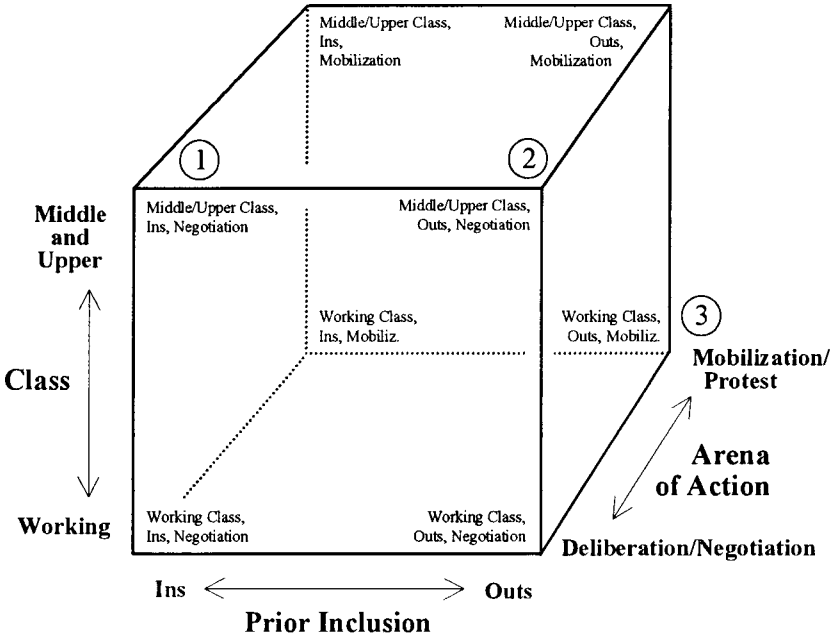

Figure 1.1. Dimensions of democratization: Class, inclusion, and arena of action

what we may refer to as the "ins" and the "outs." Finally, the third dimension concerns the arena of action. It distinguishes a mobilization/protest arena of collective action from a deliberation/negotiation arena of authoritative decision making. The contrast is between, on the one hand, collective action, mobilization, or protest in the streets and, on the other hand, the activities of individual leaders, as they negotiate, legislate, and adopt policies or positions, in some face-to-face forum (e.g., legislature, meeting). The one arena employs expressive or coercive action, ranging from strikes to rebellions; the other, decisions, deliberation, and/or bargaining. This dimension, of course, differs from the others in that a given actor, identified in terms of its positions on *one* end of each of the other two dimensions, can potentially be located at *both* ends of this dimension. For example, leaders of mass protests may also act in the deliberation/negotiation arena.

The contrasting images of democratization as a process from above or from below – as the outcome of elite strategies or working-class action – implicitly combine these dimensions. In stylized fashion and with some ambiguities and simplifications, one may suggest that these two images of democratization have tended to encompass the following constellations. The account from above emphasizes the role of leaders of the elite "ins" pursuing calculated strategies and often "bargaining" with pro-democratic reformists excluded from power, with both generally representing middle- and upper-class interests (corners 1 and 2 of Figure 1.1). The account from below emphasizes the role of the excluded lower classes engaging in mass action and protest to demand democracy and extract concessions (corner 3).

The following analysis demonstrates that neither of these images provides an adequate general description of the process of democratization. Nor is it appropriate to suggest that one fits the historical cases whereas the other adequately describes the later cases. The two approaches are complementary; each captures a meaningful aspect of the process of democratization. It is important to understand democratization in terms of both class and strategic perspectives – by the way it is "pushed forward by class interests" (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992:46) and also motivated by political strategies. In most cases the politics of democratization is a combination of processes from above and below, involving combinations of class interests, strategic actors, and forms, sites, or arenas of action.

The analysis, then, recovers a role for strategizing political leaders in the historical cases – including those cases in which the working-class role was most prominent. By the same token, the analysis recovers a role for the working class in the recent cases. This certainly is not to say that the working class single-handedly brought about democratic transitions or that other actors