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Introduction

A Theory of National Variation in Interest Mobilization

"The organizations of revolutionaries must consist first and foremost of people whose profession is that of a revolutionary. . . . Give us an organization of revolutionaries, and we shall overturn the whole of Russia!"

Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?* (1902a)

"(F)reedom can be created only by freedom, that is by a universal rebellion on the part of the people and free organization of the toiling masses from the bottom up."

Mikhail Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* (1873)

"(Social democracy) is a revolutionary but not a revolution-making party. . . . Our task is not to organize the revolution, but to organize ourselves for the revolution."

Karl Kautsky, *The Road to Power* (1909)

" . . . a distinct Labor group in Parliament, who shall have their own whips, and agree upon their policy, which must embrace a readiness to co-operate with any party which for the time being may be engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interests of labor."

James Keir Hardie, *Motion to the first conference of the Labor Representation Committee* (1900)

"The Federation has maintained that economic organization is adequate to deal with all of the problems of wage-earners. Its political action is simply to utilize the functions of trade unions in another field."

Samuel Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (1924)

Political leaders mobilize interests. They are not just auxiliary extensions of political and economic structures, nor are they mechanically driven by ideological commitments. But they do adopt different strategies. This book explains their choices and what lasting consequences they produce, using the mobilization of workers and the formation of class politics as an example. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, workers made identical demands for economic improvement and political recognition in all industrializing countries, yet national labor movements embraced staggeringly diverse strategies to mobilize workers and advance their interests into the political arena – different kinds of social democratic parties, revolution through insurrectionism, and moderate syndicalism. In some countries, the choices of leaders for one of these strategies responded effectively to the challenges of their political environment, while leaders in other countries made ill-fitting choices. The book explains not only why leaders make fitting or ill-fitting choices for different mobilization strategies, but also how their choices affect the success of interest mobilization and subsequent patterns of political development.

This book is the first to assert the critical role of leaders in the mobilization of interests. Prior studies claim that economic context, political environment, or prevailing ideas reflected in ideological commitments directly determine divergent paths of interest mobilization and political development. In contrast to these static accounts, I theorize the agency of leaders as the dynamic processing center of multiple, sometimes contradictory, influences. I develop and test my explanation for the causes and consequences of interest mobilization through a comparative case study and statistical analyses of class politics in all twenty countries that industrialized between 1863 and 1919. My account extends to the full range of strategic recommendations made by Lenin, Bakunin, Kautsky, Hardie, and Gompers, from which labor elites selected a dominant model of class politics in their country: "form a cadre organization of professional revolutionaries to stage an insurrection" (Bolshevik insurrectionism), "initiate a spontaneous rebellion from the bottom up" (anarchist–syndicalist insurrectionism), "launch a political party that is revolutionary in rhetoric but not in action" (quasi-revolutionary social democracy), "establish a party to pursue gradual change through the legislative process" (evolutionary social democracy), and finally, "stay away from direct involvement in partisan politics and rely on unions to lobby the politicians" (moderate syndicalism).[1]

How leaders mobilize workers explains for all industrializing countries which one from the range of strategic recommendations became

the dominant model of class politics, it explains why mobilizing leaders adopt fitting or ill-fitting strategies, it demonstrates the positive effect of fitting choices on mobilization success, and it delineates the lasting impact of cross-national variation in trajectories of choice, dominant models, and mobilization success on subsequent political development (see Figure 1.1). The book argues that national variation in interest mobilization emerges through the responses of leaders to their political environment. In their efforts to mobilize workers into the political arena, labor elites face opportunities and constraints imposed by national political environments through different degrees and mechanisms of labor inclusion. Variation in labor inclusion describes the extent to which and the way in which political institutions and the behavior of regime elites include workers and labor elites into the political process. In every environment of labor inclusion, one particular model of class politics represents the best-fitting strategy for mobilizing workers. The extremely repressive Russian environment of lowest labor inclusion, for example, offered no opportunity for the labor movement to express its grievances in a legally sanctioned fashion. As a result, all models of class politics were equally costly, since activists of all varieties were permanently exposed to the threat of severe punishment. The adoption of Bolshevik insurrectionism represents the fitting response to this environment, because it offered the greatest benefits by envisioning a complete turnover of political power.

In most industrializing countries, labor elites were confronted by an environment of low inclusion that combined limited political incorporation with serious repression. Due to its unique blend of radicalism and pragmatism, quasi-revolutionary social democracy is generally the best-fitting approach to mobilize workers for politics in this environment. The radical rhetoric typical for this type of social democratic party resonated with a constituency yearning for fundamental change, while the pragmatic accommodation with the regime helped to shield the organization against state intervention. The majority of low inclusion countries, such as Belgium and Sweden, accomplished limited political incorporation by instituting responsible government and some political liberties, yet without giving workers the right to vote. In this rendition of the low inclusion environment, electoral mobilization is ineffective, so that a variant of quasi-revolutionary social democracy focusing on extra-parliamentary mobilization represents the fitting response. Low inclusion in Germany and Denmark was accomplished through the incorporation of workers into the electoral process, while political liberties and responsible government remained precarious. In this environment, the parliamentary variant

of quasi-revolutionary social democracy that emphasizes electoral mobilization constitutes the best-fitting choice.

By offering stable democratic institutions, the environment of higher labor inclusion, for example in Britain and Switzerland, is conducive to the evolutionary type of social democracy, which pursues gradual improvements for workers through an earnest involvement in parliamentary proceedings. Compared to higher inclusion, an environment of highest labor inclusion does not only provide democracy, but also the active incorporation of workers and labor elites into the party system through entrenched partisan elites. In this exceptionally inclusive environment, which existed only in the United States, labor elites do not need to incur costs for organization building by forming their own political party, so that the decision against party formation and in favor of moderate syndicalism constitutes the best-fitting approach for mobilizing workers into politics.

Labor elites will adopt the fitting strategy for constituency mobilization in their domestic environment of labor inclusion when their decision-making context is favorable and thus conducive to instrumentally rational decision-making on behalf of constituency interests.[2] For a decision-making context to be favorable, leaders need adequate information about their environment and the available models of class politics, they should not be pressured by the diffusion – from their peers in other countries – of misleading advice in the form of an incompatible model, and they need to have a meaningful sense of loyalty toward their constituency. When only one of these conditions is absent, the decision-making context becomes unfavorable, prompting the decision-making process of leaders to deviate from a path of instrumental rationality for the purpose of constituency mobilization, so that in the end, leaders will make an ill-fitting choice. In this scenario, instead of making strategic decisions, leaders will rely on the cognitive shortcut of heuristic preference formation and embrace the approach to mobilization they perceive as paradigmatic.

Whenever leaders make an ill-fitting choice, they will be less successful in mobilizing their constituency into the political arena. For instance, adopting quasi-revolutionary social democracy as the dominant model of class politics was an ill-fitting response to an environment of higher labor inclusion in Switzerland. As a result, the Swiss labor movement achieved significantly less success in the political mobilization of workers, and a party system dominated by liberal and conservative forces emerged. By contrast, labor elites' choice for quasi-revolutionary

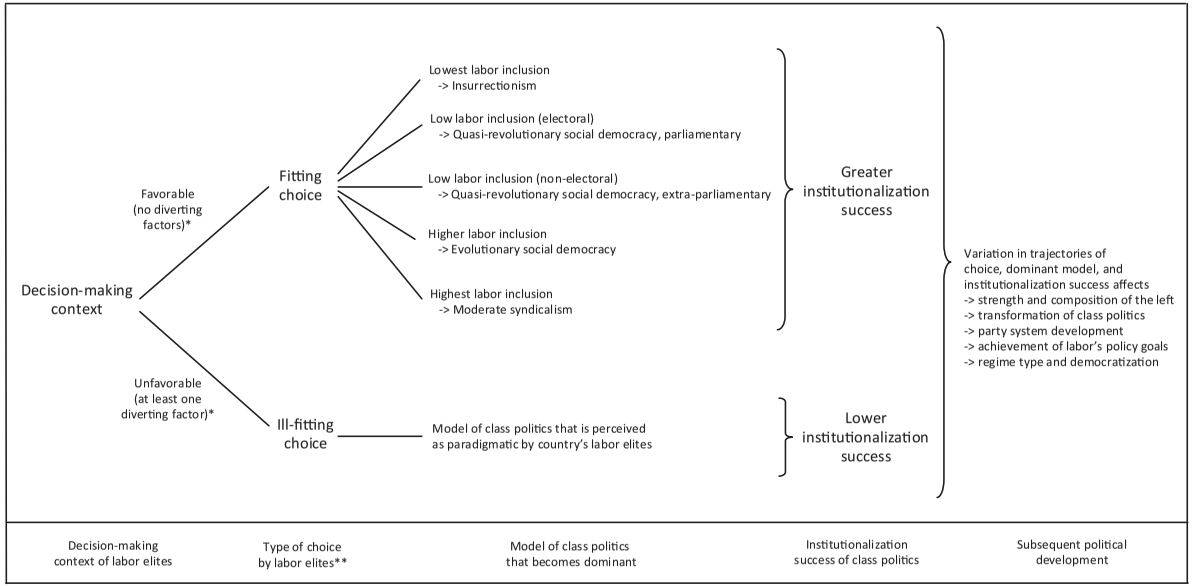

FIGURE 1.1. The causes and consequences of cross-national variation in class politics. *Notes:* (*) Diverting factors that can create an unfavorable decision-making context: (1) overwhelming misleading ideational pressure; (2) diminished loyalty of labor elites to their constituency; (3) unclear environment of labor inclusion; (4) neither production nor diffusion of knowledge about fitting model of class politics (**) Type of choice by labor elites identifies whether the adopted model of class politics is a fitting or ill-fitting response to the national environment of labor inclusion.

social democracy was a fitting response to the low inclusion environment of the Nordic countries resulting in pronounced mobilization success and a long period of social democratic dominance. I show that a fitting response of leaders to the challenges of their political environment of labor inclusion is the most critical determinant of successful constituency mobilization, considerably more important than the entire array of structural factors, including economic development, prevalent non-economic social cleavages, higher levels of education, greater urbanization, higher population density, and a more advanced communication infrastructure.[3]

The key concern of this book is to explain the emergence of varying approaches to mobilization and their differential degrees of institutionalization success, but it also shows how national trajectories of class politics affect subsequent political development, specifically the strength and composition of the left, the transformation of class politics, the composition of party systems, the achievement of labor's policy goals, and the emergence of different types of political regimes (see Figure 1.1). Highlighting the sometimes paradoxical impact of political mobilization on political development, I argue that the adoption of the best-fitting strategy for constituency mobilization will always bring about greater institutionalization success, while it might also have a range of additional unintended and undesirable ramifications. For instance, the choice for insurrectionism brought encompassing mobilization and a successful revolution to Russia, but also the establishment of a long-lasting autocracy, the perpetuation of repression and violence, an ever-continuing strain on state-society relations, and a process of democratization that remains incomplete until today. In the United States, the decision against party formation and in favor of moderate syndicalism was the most efficient strategy for the successful political mobilization of workers in the American environment of highest labor inclusion. However, given the comparatively small size of the welfare state, the choice for the best-fitting mobilization strategy arguably failed to accomplish the greatest long-term policy rewards for the labor movement. Fitting strategies of constituency mobilization can have unintended negative consequences for the achievement of policy goals and global objectives such as democracy.

PRIOR EXPLANATIONS

Existing scholarly contributions looking for causes of political mobilization and national variation in class politics emphasize *structures* or *ideas*.

Structural arguments are based on the fundamental premise that varying outcomes across countries are independent consequences of different structural environments, either economic or political in nature. Ideational arguments highlight the prevalence of varying ideas about political mobilization in different national contexts that produce prevailing ideological commitments. Both approaches establish a direct link between environments of class politics, either structural or ideational, and corresponding variation in outcomes. In contrast to this perspective that omits the agency of leaders, I argue that the choices of labor elites determine the nature of class politics in the context of multiple influences, including not only ideational repertoires and political and economic structures, but also the social and information-related components of leaders' decision-making context and the cognitive and motivational mechanisms sustaining their decision-making process.

The Economic Perspective

Ted Gurr (1970) claims in an influential contribution to the social movement literature that political mobilization is driven by relative deprivation, which describes the discrepancy between the material goods people believe they should have and those they do have. He suggests that the vigor of mobilization "... varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity" (23). The more deprived people feel, the more willing they are to engage in the most radical and vigorous forms of contention, while the lack of considerable deprivation should reduce radicalism and vigor. Perlman (1928) and Sombart (1906) rely on this proposition to explain the failure of radical worker mobilization and the absence of social democracy in the United States.[4] Their argument is immortalized by Sombart's (1906, 106) conclusion that in America "(a)ll socialist utopias came to nothing on roast beef and apple pie."

A second group of economic arguments highlights the impact of the nature of industrialization on political mobilization and class politics. According to a universalist point of view, the breakthrough of an industrial mode of production might occur at different points in time and in the context of different national or regional circumstances, but in the end, the overwhelming force of industrialization is said to produce the same effects wherever it was set in motion. The Marxist version of this perspective would predict, and hope, that economic universalism will manifest itself through the formation of revolutionary organizations, as soon

as a country crosses a minimum threshold of industrial development.[5] Modernization theory is equally universalist, but in contrast to Marxism, it would expect class politics to become less radical in the course of economic development.[6] According to modernization theory, declining radicalism is the result of functional adaptation in a linear process of political modernization and democratization facilitated by economic growth through industrial development.

Another argument emphasizing the direct impact of industrialization on the nature of class politics attempts to reconcile the universalism of Marxism and modernization theory with the contrasting idea of national uniqueness by conceptualizing industrialization as a process with important universal and equally consequential idiosyncratic components (cf. Gerschenkron 1962). The cognate explanation for class politics suggests that differences in the nature of industrialization, including its speed, timing, direction, and scope, determine how workers' interests are created and then channeled into the political arena. Edvard Bull (1922, 330) argues that, compared to Sweden and Denmark, in Norway, "(t)he sudden reorganization of the traditionally agrarian nature of society, and the foundation of industrial centers in proximity to the new electric power plants created a working class more open to revolutionary ideas than the comrades from the two neighboring countries, which emerged from an older and more gradual development."[7] The "varieties of industrialization" approach has produced several sophisticated arguments, but its most influential theoretical statement remains Bull's original conjecture that more rapid industrial development will cause more radical class politics.

Bringing in Political Context

Economic theories rest on the assumption that discontent occurs because of economic exclusion. By introducing political exclusion as an alternative cause of discontent, Bendix (1964) offered a new argument about the material reasons that motivate individuals and collectives to protest. He proposes in his analysis of the "lower classes" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the denial of citizenship is more important than economic deprivation for causing political contentiousness. His argument has been firmly embraced by studies of class politics. Marks et al. (2009), Kautsky (2002), Burnham (1974), and Lipset (1983, 1996) build their accounts for national differences in class politics on the

fundamental premise that workers protested and formed organizations because of their desire to gain political recognition.

Political approaches have moved beyond economic arguments not only by introducing political exclusion as a material reason for discontent. Social movement theorists emphasizing political context in resource mobilization, political process, and similar models also began to ask an entirely new question about political mobilization: what explains the actual occurrence of protest? In contrast to the economic perspective, the political approach thus distinguishes between the causes of discontent and the causes for the expression of discontent. It proposes that some material cause of discontent (such as economic or political exclusion) needs to coincide with political opportunity and sufficient movement resources to result in the actual expression of discontent. Without political opportunity (Tilly 1978), and without a movement that has sufficient resources at its disposal (McCarthy and Zald 1977), discontent might exist, but it will not be expressed and mobilized.

Once certain structural changes, such as industrialization, provide the prerequisite for the emergence of discontent, the restructuring of political power relations triggered by these changes can create the necessary political opportunity for the actual expression of discontent through political mobilization and the formation of organizations. McAdam (1982) highlights two mechanisms through which political opportunity emerges from structural change: either the contentious group acquires leverage through gains in power, or the regime confronted with structural change becomes more reluctant to implement repressive measures, because the expectation of an increasingly powerful contender makes repression more costly. Based on political opportunity as a permissive condition, McAdam (1982, 59) then outlines the movement resources that need to be in place for the successful expression of discontent: on the one hand "organization strength," and on the other hand certain features of the organization's constituency, specifically "cognitive liberation," "consciousness," and "success expectation." Analyses of class formation (cf. Katznelson 1986) rely on similar ideas to describe the successful emergence of politically self-aware national working classes.

Variation in the Nature of Political Mobilization

The political context perspective argues not only that political opportunity is required for the expression of discontent. It also suggests that differences in the degree of political opportunity are responsible for

variation in the success of social movements, that is the extent to which they mobilize their constituency and achieve their substantive goals (cf. McAdam 1982; Amenta et al. 2005). According to political context models, a given level of structural political openness provides a concomitant degree of political opportunity, which then facilitates an according degree of policy success, for example in terms of legislative outcomes (Amenta et al. 2005). This proposition constitutes an extension of the underpinning argument that a minimum of political opportunity is required for the expression of a minimum level of discontent. Both expectations are sustained by the assumption that movements have the ability to effectively engage in collective mobilization as a rational political endeavor (cf. McCarthy and Zald 1977). This point of view contradicts the more skeptical conjecture that collective mobilization frequently fails as an effective mechanism for the achievement of political goals, because participation is averted by freeriding, which promises the benefits of collective mobilization without the costs of participation (Olson 1965). McCarthy and Zald (1977) delineate how movement organizations use rewards, incentives, and cost reduction measures to overcome the problem of freeriding. The efficiency and effectiveness of these measures, within the confines set by the given level of political opportunity, decide the success of mobilization, which then determines the movement's policy success.

According to the political context approach, the mobilization success of social movements thus constitutes a critical component of the movement resources that determine policy success. However, in contrast to my argument, political context models do not investigate the considerable impact of qualitatively different mobilization strategies on mobilization success and policy success. The understanding of strategy proposed by the political context approach revolves around the efficiency with which movements provide incentives to their constituency for overcoming the problem of freeriding. The more efficient they are, the more successful they will be in mounting enough of a counterforce against the initial force exercised by the state to advance their agenda. According to political context models, the force projected by the state through a certain degree of political openness, which constitutes an according level of political opportunity, thus plays a crucial role for the emergence of social movements, their mobilization success, and eventually their policy success.

The political context approach proposes that social movements have the political opportunity to express discontent when a state is incapable or unwilling to establish an insurmountable force through repressive institutions. Variation in the degree of political openness, in turn, is indicative