

Political Sociology CSS Lent semester 2007

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“Political sociology” is an amorphous label under which a number of themes and problems having anything to do with social change and distribution of power could be subsumed. This is easy to see from a quick scanning of various syllabuses over the www and various textbooks in the field.

However, core themes are: “Groups”, old and new social movements as well as ethnic groups in big cities; Lobbying; The development of democracy and civil society as social change; The representative system and political communication in post-Enlightenment; Elites vs the masses in knowledge based society and the problem of accountability; The relevance of the class concept; Classes and ideologies; Political socialization; Citizenship and identity; Problems of multilevel government and so called democratic deficit; non-decision making; political extremism as mass phenomenon; voting behavior, conflict theories; the intelligentsia and its relation to power.

The discourse(s) on civil society evidently is an essential part of political sociology, as well as the political orientation of participants in political life, e.g. ideologies and other motivations for political behavior.

We will deal with some important classics in the various fields of “political sociology” and with some standard themes. We will be able to draw on some still unpublished “works in progress” at the research frontier.

Code for assignments, grading and attendance follow “standard procedures” as described in the ma-handbook.

There will be ten sessions at seven occasions (two double sessions).

Optional topics for sessions include:

§ The development of sociology and political science and the place of “Political sociology” in Intellectual history: an overview. (Group approach, Chicago school, survey and aggregate analysis, comparative analysis).

§ Conceptualizing Nation building, Civil society and Social movements (Rokkan, Titmuss).

§ Weber and his East of the Elbe studies (e.g. Freiburger Antrittsrede) and the relevance today (Mancur Olson-link, parallels to Brazil and Russia today).

§ Rethinking and realigning Charisma: Weber’s Types of legitimacy and operationalization of charisma.

§ Weber and Michels on oligarchy and its relevance today, for “Iron triangles”, knowledge societies and the democratic deficit.

§ de Tocqueville, Weber and Myrdal in America and Civil society and social science concepts as an import/export trade. (e.g. Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma* as political sociology and social engineering prototype also in other societies).

§ Comparative perspectives: e.g. S M Lipset: *Political Man and American Exceptionalism*. Sombart on why no socialism in the USA.

§ Debate over *Parteiverdrossenheit*, the political parties as a crisis branch West of the Elbe, esp. Sweden and Germany. Huge debate in Sweden and Germany on party oligarchies and subsidizing themselves via parliament, membership losses, and lost links between social class, ideology, and voting behaviour.

§ Modalities of Civil Society. (e.g. the use of the concept East and West of the Elbe, recent and old conceptual history, from Pufendorf to WZB).

A more detailed “road map” will be presented at the first session.

List of literature:

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-“-: *Trust*. Free Press, 1995.
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- “-: *American Exceptionalism*. New York, 1996.
- Marx, Karl: *Das Kapital*. Vol. 1. 1867.
- Material from Norwegian Power investigations.
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- Myrdal, Gunnar: *An American Dilemma*. Harper: 1944.

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