

# Ideas and Interests in the Emergence of European Democracy

R. D. Congleton  
Adam Smith Professor

Bayreuth University  
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Office : GW II 02.25  
Phone: 55 - 4208 office  
E-Mail: Congleto@gmu.edu  
Web Site: rdc1.net

Office Hours: Wednesday and Thursday 10:15 - 11:45, and by appointment

## Required Texts:

Mueller, D. C. (1996) *Constitutional Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-514407-4 paper back

Congleton R. D. (2003) *Improving Democracy through Constitutional Reform: Some Swedish Lessons*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press. (also available in Swedish)

## Overview:

During the 19th century, a great transformation swept through much of Europe. For the most part, Europe began the 19th century with a medieval government and agrarian economy and ended it with a parliamentary democracy and an industrialized economy. How did these two radical changes happen? This course demonstrates that liberal ideas, economics, and interest groups played important roles in this remarkable and largely peaceful transformation.

The course is organized into three parts. Part I introduces the "puzzle" and explains differences in the goals of social science and history. Part II develops historical implications of rational choice models of politics. Using narrow and extended models of rational choice, it explores how new economic interests, liberal ideology, and economic theory can create new "gains from trade" in reassignments of political power. Part III uses European history demonstrate the relevance in limits of this theory of transitions to democracy.

## Tentative Course Outline

### I. Two 19th Century Revolutions

- 10/5 Industrialization and Democracy: A Coincidence? (see class website)
- The historical back ground: the omnipresence of dictatorship and poverty
  - The amazing nineteenth century
  - How to explain this transformation: problems with revolutionary models
  - How to explain this transformation: ideology and economic development.
- 17/5 Differences between the Social Science and Historical approaches to the past
- Illustration: the dice rolling machine
  - How predictable is social development?
  - Necessity of mistakes in rational choice models with limited information.

## II. Analytical History: Models of Peaceful Constitutional Reform

- 24/5 The continuum between democracy and dictatorship (see class website)
- a. The Medieval Constitution: Kings and "their" Parliaments.
  - b. Parliaments as tax councils.
  - c. The possibilities for Constitutional Exchange in the King and Council model
- 31/5 Economic Change and the Balance of Power between King and Parliament
- a. The power of the purse.
  - b. The comparative statics of the demand for and supply of tax resources.
- 7/6 Choosing Members of Parliament
- a. By interest group (not class)
  - b. Through (wealth) limited suffrage
  - c. First past the post elections and the median voter
- 14/6 Expanding Suffrage, a Slippery Slope?
- a. The median voter's demand for suffrage reform.
  - b. Suffrage is not an ordinary superior good.
  - c. Beyond narrow self interest, a demand for the good society?
- 21/6 Persuasive suffrage movements
- a. The Leveler Agenda?
  - b. Economic and Political "liberals"
  - c. Persuasion and the demand for suffrage
- 28/6 The Liberal-Labor Alliance
- a. Shared interests in suffrage reform
  - b. Strike threats as a bargaining method

## III. Case Histories as Tests of a Theory

(see class website)

- 5/7 Illustration: the British, Danish and Swedish Cases C:3-5
- 12/7 Illustrations: the Danish and Belgian Cases
- 19/7 Parallel developments in Germany, France, Italy, and Japan (Limits?)
- 26/7 Conclusion and Overview

Grades: Take Home Midterm (20%) and Paper (80%)