

Plan Overview

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Title: Racial Enfranchisement as a Distinct Act of Democratization: A Comparative Historical Analysis of the United States, Germany, and Austria

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Template: NSF-SBE: Social, Behavioral, Economic Sciences

Project abstract:

Why do elites ever agree to give power to groups that could shift the balance? What informs their decisions towards this radical political change? These are the serious questions and dilemmas that democratization literature has been tackling since its emergence as a newly organized body of work. The literature on enfranchisement can be roughly organized around two competing frameworks, which are elite-based (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006; Boix, 2003; Llavador and Oxoby, 2005) and bottom-up explanations (Collier, 1999; Rueschemeyer et al., 1992; Teele, 2018). Nevertheless, these rival frameworks mostly formulated to address the enfranchisement of economic classes – and less so for women suffrage – fall short of accounting for racial enfranchisement mostly due to 1) irreducible numerical specificity of racial minorities, 2) considerable likelihood of electoral retaliation triggered by such reforms, and 3) class-based conception of society in most of these accounts. In this project, I seek to address this blind-spot in democratization literature by tackling the question: Why did the United States and Germany extend the franchise to racialized minorities respectively in the 1960s and 1990s whereas Austria persisted their disenfranchising citizenship policy. Inspired by the methodological tradition of CHA, my study relies on textual analysis of legislative proceedings, party-programs, newspaper contents, judicial records, and other important documents. My preliminary expectations suggest that ideational change plays a crucial role in racial enfranchisement. The emergence of a counter-hegemonic elite group with a new and more expanded notion of democratic peoplehood will foster the opening of existing democratic institutions to new comers, and their leverage over pro-status-quo groups in key veto player institutions is necessary for them to institutionalize their new conception through these radical political reforms of suffrage extension to racialized minorities.

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Racial Enfranchisement as a Distinct Act of Democratization: A Comparative Historical Analysis of the United States, Germany, and Austria

I will personally manage all the data components of this project.

For my dissertation project, I will rely upon a few sources of pre-existing data. I will pull legislative proceedings from the United States between 1930 and 1965, Germany between 1970 and 2000, and Austria between 1970 and 2020. For the US leg, I will use the bound edition collected by Matthew Gentzkow, Jesse Shapiro and Matt Taddy. To the best of my knowledge, the transcripts of legislative speeches have not been collected by anyone for Germany and Austria. Thus, I will need to manually pull the relevant sessions from the legislative websites of these countries. Additionally, I will closely read and code election manifestos of major parties in these countries. Comparative Manifestos projects already made the post-1945 manifestos available for the three countries, which include all the relevant manifestos for Germany and Austria and around half of the necessary ones for the United States. I will need to manually collect the missing ones for the United States online. The file types for the US congressional records is .txt. For the party manifestos supplied by the Comparative Manifestos project, the file format is mostly .pdf. For the legislative records in Germany and Austria, the files are saved as a .pdf file.

Most of the data I will rely on is already publicly available. I will collect the relevant legislative records for Germany and Austria which will be made available for the timely and rapid distribution.

-I will rely upon already available congressional records collected by Matthew Gentzkow, Jesse Shapiro, and Matt Taddy. This data is available in .txt format in the following page: https://data.stanford.edu/congress_text I will also use the party manifestos for the United States, Germany, and Austria. Comparative Manifestos projects already made the post-1945 manifestos available for the three countries, which include all the relevant manifestos for Germany and Austria and around half of the necessary ones for the United States. Most of these manifestos are provided as .pdf files at the following website: <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/> I will need to manually collect the missing ones for the United States online and make them available as .pdf files. I will also pull the transcripts of the legislative records of the relevant sessions for Germany and Austria. I will save and disseminate them as .txt files.

I will create a website for my project and all the original data will be accessible on this site. Since all the records are publicly available official documents, I do not foresee any issue of confidentiality or sensitivity.

I will store the data in a Box folder, a secured cloud service offered by the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

If additional requirements to manage and preserve my data is specified, I will follow all the necessary steps to ensure that my data management plan adheres to the expectations.
