French Politics

pp 1–28 | Cite as

The ideational origins of European democratization: the “French connection” and the case of Belgian liberals

Authors

Authors and affiliations

Nadim FarhatEmail authorPhilippe Poirier

Original Article

First Online: 08 June 2019

Abstract

Why, in some cases, did old elites promote democratization without the partisan capacity to embrace mass politics and without guarantees about their future participation in the new regime? This article investigates the case of the Liberals in Belgium who were eager, in the years between 1893–1921, to launch democratization while founding their actions and choices on a selfless approach to politics. In seeking to identify the source of this democratic preference, one factor, largely ignored in the studies on the first wave of democratization, emerges: the diffusion of democratic ideas and practices from France. Constructing and analyzing two original data sets including, respectively, the personal characteristics of Belgian Liberal MPs who were active during the democratic transition period and the speeches of those who addressed topics related to France, this article shows that the democratic ideas as well as the choices expressed by Liberal MPs in the parliament are significantly related to their prior socialization into French democratic norms. This result has broad implications for understanding ideational transfer and diffusion in the first wave of European democratization, opening new avenues for future research.

Keywords

European democratization Ideational diffusion Liberal elites France Belgium

References

Acemoglu, D., and J.A. Robinson. 2006. Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Google Scholar

Albertus, M., and V. Menaldo. 2018. Authoritarianism and the Elite Origins of Democracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Google Scholar

Aron, R. 1967. Les grandes heures de la Troisième République. Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin.

Google Scholar

Aron, P., and J.-P. Schreiber. 1994. La Réception de l’Affaire en Belgique. In L’Affaire Dreyfus de A à Z, ed. M. Drouin, 543–547. Paris: Flammarion.

Google Scholar

Bairoch, P. 1965. Niveaux de développement économique de 1810 à 1910. Annales: Economies, Sociétés Civilisations 20(6): 1091–1117.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Balace, F. 2011. Introduction. Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains 1(241): 5–12.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Barthélemy, J. 1912. L’organisation du suffrage et l’expérience belge. Paris: M. Giard & É. Brière.

Google Scholar

Berlinski, S., T. Dewan, and B. Van Coppenolle. 2014. Franchise Extension and the British Aristocracy. Legislative Studies Quarterly 39(4): 531–558.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Beyen, M., and H.T. Velde. 2016. Passion and Reason. Modern Parliaments in the Low Countries. In Parliament and Parliamentarism. A Comparative History of a European Concept, ed. P. Ihalainen, C. Ilie, and K. Palonen. New York: Berghahn.

Google Scholar

Beyers, J. 2005. Multiple Embeddedness and Socialization in Europe: The Case of Council Officials. International Organization 59(4): 899–936.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Bitsch, M.-T. 1994. La Belgique entre la France et l’Allemagne, 1905–1914. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne.

Google Scholar

Bitsch, M.-T. 2004. Histoire de la Belgique de l’Antiquité à nos jours. Bruxelles: Complexe.

Google Scholar

Boix, C. 2003. Democracy and Redistribution. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Braun, D., and F. Gilardi. 2006. Taking ‘Galton’s Problem’ Seriously: Towards a Theory of Policy Diffusion. Journal of Theoretical Politics 18(3): 298–322.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Capoccia, G., and D. Ziblatt. 2010. The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies: A New Research Agenda for Europe and Beyond. Comparative Political Studies 43(8–9): 931–968.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Centre Paul Hymans. 1993. Libéralisme. Numéros 11 à 15.

Google Scholar

Checkel, J. 2005. International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework. International Organization 59(4): 801–826.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Cook, B. 2004. Belgium: A History. New York: Peter Lang.

Google Scholar

Craeybeckx, J., and E. Witte. 1987. La Belgique politique de 1830 à nos jours: les tensions d’une démocratie bourgeoise. Bruxelles: Labor.

Google Scholar

De Maeyer, J. 1994. La Ligue Démocratique Belge et ses antécédents. In Histoire du Mouvement ouvrier chrétien en Belgique, vol. 2, ed. E. Gerard and P. Wynants. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Google Scholar

De Paepe, J.-L., C. Raindorf-Gérard, P. Gillard, and R. Brion. 1996. Le Parlement belge 1831–1894: données biographiques. Bruxelles: Académie Royale de Belgique.

Google Scholar

Delfosse, P. 1998. Enjeux, clivages et autonomie du Parlement en Belgique. Alliances et oppositions dans le premier Parlement belge issu du suffrage universel. Revue du Nord 326–327: 729–758.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Delpech, D., and S. Rollet. 2017. La France dans l’Europe du XIXe siecle 1802–1914. Paris: Armand Colin.

Google Scholar

Dumont-Wilden, L. 1905. Le parti libéral en Belgique. Revue politique et littéraire 848–851.

Google Scholar

Eling, K. 1999. The Politics of Cultural Policy in France. London: Macmillan.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Flockhart, T. (ed.). 2005. Socializing Democratic Norms: The Role of International Organisations for the Construction of Europe. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Google Scholar

Freyburg, T.M. 2010. Transnational Influences and Democratic Socialization in Authoritarian Contexts. Doctoral Dissertation, ETH Zurich.

Google Scholar

Gambetta, L. 1882. Discours et plaidoyers politiques de M. Gambetta. VII. 5e partie (16 mai 1877-14 décembre 1877). Paris: G. Charpentier.

Google Scholar

Gilissen, John. 1958. Régime représentatif en Belgique depuis 1790. Brussels: Renaissance du Livre.

Google Scholar

Gould, Andrew C. 1999. Origins of Liberal Dominance: State, Church, and Party in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Heinze, T. 2011. Mechanism-Based Thinking on Policy Diffusion. A Review of Current Approaches in Political Science. KFG Working Paper Series, p. 34.

Google Scholar

Hymans, P. 1930. L’œuvre libérale d’un siècle (1830-1930). Bruxelles: Conseil national du Parti libéral.

Google Scholar

Hymans, L.S., P. Hymans, and A. Delcroix. 1906. Histoire parlementaire de la Belgique: 3. série. t. 1. 1890–1896. Bruxelles: Bruylant-Christophe.

Google Scholar

Jones, M.P., and W. Hwang. 2005. Party Government in Presidential Democracies: Extending Cartel Theory beyond the U.S. Congress. American Journal of Political Science 49: 267–282.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Kusters, W. 2011. Les politiques éducatives de la Troisième République et les enfants d’immigrants belges dans le département du Nord. Documents pour l’histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde 46: 15–31.

Google Scholar

Lamberts, E. 2005. Catholic Congresses as Amplifiers of International Catholic Opinion. In The Papacy and the New World Order, ed. V. Viaene, 213–223. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Google Scholar

Laqua, D. 2013. The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880–1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Levasseur, E. 1907. Questions ouvrières et industrielles en France sous la Troisième République. Paris: Arthur Rousseau.

Google Scholar

Lory, J. 1979. Libéralisme et instruction primaire: 1842–1879. Introduction à l’étude de la lutte scolaire en Belgique. Louvain: Nauwelaerts.

Google Scholar

Luebbert, G. 1991. Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy. New York: Oxford University Press.

Google Scholar

Marwell, Gerald, and Pamela Oliver. 1993. The Critical Mass in Collective Action. A MicroSocial Theory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Marx, K., and Friedrich Engels. 1987. In Marx and Engels on the Trade Unions, ed. Kenneth Lapides. New York: Praeger.

Google Scholar

Moore, Barrington. 1966. The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Boston: Beacon.

Google Scholar

Nohlen, D., and S. Philip. 2010. Elections in Europe: A data handbook. ‎Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Nord, P. 1995. The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Google Scholar

O’Donnell, G.A., and P.C. Schmitter. 1986. Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Google Scholar

Pérez-Armendáriz, C., and D. Crow. 2010. Do Migrants Remit Democracy? International Migration, Political Beliefs, and Behavior in Mexico. Comparative Political Studies 43(1): 119–148.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Piketty, T., G. Postel-Vinay, and J.L. Rosenthal. 2007. The Increased Concentration of Wealth in Paris 1807–1912; Of Revolution and Demography. Paris School of Economics (unpublished paper).

Google Scholar

Pridham, G., and T. Vanhanen. 1994. Conclusion. In Democratization in Eastern Europe, ed. G. Pridham and T. Vanhanen. London: Routledge.

Google Scholar

Przeworski, A. 2008. Conquered or Granted? A History of Suffrage Extensions. British Journal of Political Science 39(2): 291–321.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Przeworski, A., F. Limongi, J.A. Cheibub, and M.E. Alvarez. 2000. Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950–1990. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Rebérioux, M. 1975. La République radicale? 1898–1914. Paris: Seuil.

Google Scholar

Reinert, Max. 2003. Le rôle de la répétition dans la représentation du sens et son approche statistique par la méthode “ALCESTE”. Semiotica 147: 389–420.

Google Scholar

Rosanvallon, P. 1992. Le Sacre du citoyen: histoire du suffrage universel en France. Paris: Gallimard.

Google Scholar

Röttger, R. 2005. Een rode draad voor een blauw verhaal. De links-liberale uitwerking van mimetische representatie en de opvattingen over democratisch burgerschap in België, 1893–1900. BMGN—Low Countries Historical Review 120(3): 435–465.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Rowell, D. 2009. The Power of Ideas: A Political Social-Psychological Theory of Democracy, Political Development, and Political Communication. Boca Raton: Florida.

Google Scholar

Schnapper, D. 1991. La France de l’intégration. Sociologie de la nation en 1990. Paris: Gallimard.

Google Scholar

Stengers, J. 2004. La Belgique, un foyer de dreyfusime. RBPH–BTFG 82: 273–290.

Google Scholar

Stengers, J., and E. Gubin. 2002. Le Grand Siècle de la nationalité belge: de 1830 à 1918. Bruxelles: Racine.

Google Scholar

Strikwerda, C. 1997. A House Divided: Catholics, Socialists and Flemish Nationalists in Nineteenth- Century Belgium. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Google Scholar

Thogmartin, C. 1998. The National Daily Press of France. Birmingham, AL: Summa.

Google Scholar

Thomsen, P., and M. Olsen. 2017. Re-examining Socialization Theory: How Does Democracy Influence the Impact of Education on Anti-Foreigner Sentiment?. British Journal of Political Science 47(4): 915–938.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Tordoir, J. 1999. Paul Janson (1840–1913). Un libéral à la conquête du suffrage universel. Bruxelles: Archives Libérales Francophones.

Google Scholar

Torfason, M.T., and P. Ingram. 2010. The Global Rise of Democracy: A Network Account. American Sociological Review 75(3): 355–357.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Van Molle, P. 1972. Le Parlement belge 1894–1972. Antwerpen: Standaard Wetenschappelijke Uitgeverij.

Google Scholar

Vangottom, D. 1985. Les libéraux belges et la question du suffrage universel 1894–1914. Louvain-la-Neuve: UCL. (unpublished).

Google Scholar

Wejnert, B. 2005. Diffusion, Development, and Democracy, 1800–1999. American Sociological Review 70(1): 53–81.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Weyland, K. 2010. The Diffusion of Regime Contention in European Democratization, 1830–1940. Comparative Political Studies 43(8): 1148–1176.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Witte, E., Jan Craeybeckx, and Alain Maynen. 2000. Political History of Belgium from 1830 Onwards. Brussels: VUB University Press.

Google Scholar

Ziblatt, D. 2008. Does Landholding Inequality Block Democratization? A Test of the ‘Bread and Democracy’ Thesis and the Case of Prussia. World Politics 60(4): 610–641.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Ziblatt, D. 2017. Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy. New York: Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics.

CrossRefGoogle Scholar

Copyright information