Online Appendix for

Impartial Administration and the Development of  
a Political Society of Compromise in Scandinavia

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# Previous research

Except for a few comparative accounts (e.g., Pettersson 1995; Sørensen and Stråth 1997; Trägårdh 2007; Alapuro and Stenius 2010; Glenthøj and Ottosen 2021), the native Scandinavian scholarship on political society formation in the long 19th century has lived a life apart from the international literature, though it does constitute a fully developed body of research. Generations of Scandinavian historians have examined the development of democracy in the long 19th century (Nielsen 2009; Knutsen 2017; Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell 2018), including related phenomena such as nation-building (e.g., Nielsen 2009; Stråth 2012; Østergaard 2018), welfare state formation (e.g., Kuhnle 1996; Sejersted 2011), social capital (see, e.g., the special issue edited by Rothstein and Stolle 2003), and corporatism (e.g., Trägårdh 2007), but few have brought these literatures together in explaining political society formation in the long 19th century. With the gradual opening of parliaments and state administrations to the public during the 19th century, in what was already one of the most bureaucratized regions of Europe, access to government documents is relatively extensive. In addition, the social movements and parties of the period have maintained a tradition of writing their own histories. Thus, I build my analysis on the following documents:

* Official laws
* Parliamentary debates
* Administrative decrees
* Commission reports
* Minutes and outside accounts of negotiations between interest groups, parties, and the state and local administration
* Yearbooks and histories of associations and parties

This set of documents amounts to three historiographies, one for each country (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), consisting of secondary sources. In searching and selecting them, I took account of three criteria (see Møller and Skaaning 2021):

1. Prioritize those with definitions relatively in line with the definitions of the theory under consideration.
2. Prioritize those that are relatively atheoretical or based on theoretical vantage points that compete with the theory under consideration.
3. Prioritize those that take updated evidence into account.

As a result, I ended up with a close to equal mix of national-historical, comparative-historical, and issue-specific studies. Although there is often some overlap between these genres, they tend to have certain different traits. The former two genres tend to be based on broad comparisons over time within one country (e.g, Seip 1987) or between multiple countries (Trägårdh 1993). As my unit of analysis is the country, these are important types of sources. Also, comparisons may be highly valuable to help categorizing the four countries in relation to one another. The latter genre, however, is also important in practice because only few national-level studies can get to the level of detail required for examining the mechanisms of my theory. Therefore, I have searched and found multiple studies explicitly focused on issues like Swedish local self-government (e.g., Nydahl 2010), Danish worker societies (e.g., Bryld 1992), Norwegian workers’ parties (e.g., Terjesen 2017), and landlords’ role in elections in Prussia (e.g., Anderson 2000).

On the first criterion, I ensured that the studies’ definitions were consistent with my main concepts. Terms like ‘civil society’ (typically referred to as *civilsamhället* or *folkrörelser* in Swedish; *civilsamfundet*, *bevægelser*,or *vækkelser* in Danish; *civilsamfunn* in Norwegian), ‘parties’ (equivalent words across Scandinavia), and ‘violent conflict’ (variations of *våldsam konflikt*, *demonstration*, or *sammanstötning* in Swedish; *voldelig konflikt*, *demonstration*, or *sammenstød* in Danish; *voldelig konflikt*, *demonstrasjon*, or *sammenstøt* in Norwegian) are frequently referred to and firmly defined in most accounts. However, the term ‘impartial administration’ rarely occurs. Nevertheless, terms like ‘patrimonialism’ (*patrimonialism* in Swedish; *patrimonialisme* in Danish and Norwegian) or ‘corruption’ (*korruption* in Swedish and Danish; *korrupsjon* in Norwegian) often cover substantially the same concept. The same can be said about some of the key concepts that define state-society relations in Scandinavia, such as ‘cooperation’ (*samarbete* in Swedish, *samarbejde* in Danish, and *samarbeid* in Norwegian) and ‘corporatism’ (*korporatisme* in all three languages). In cases where such terms and connotations were not available, I used the (often thorough) descriptions of state and local administrative functions and organizational traits and the interaction with farmers’ and workers’ movements to make novel assessments.

On the second criterion, my general approach was to abstain from using other researchers’ interpretations, particularly of causal theories similar to mine. However, I did use other researchers’ interpretations of descriptive facts that I then had to weigh in as evidence for or against the mechanisms of my theory. Specifically, I sought to minimize theoretical bias by using, as a general trait, different studies for the analysis of the organizational and ideational features of associations and parties on the one hand and the potential explanations on the other. Fortunately, the literature on early-modern (e.g., Maarbjerg 2004; Hallenberg, Holm, and Johansson 2008) and 19th century state-building (e.g., Seip 1987; Nilsson 1999; Knudsen 2000) is fairly separate from that on the political society (e.g., Gundelach 1988; Sørensen and Stråth 1997; Trägårdh 2007; Stenius 2010), although some overlap exists (e.g., Gran 1994; Rothstein and Trägårdh 2007). Relevant evidence on impartial administration and state behavior more generally is, quite naturally, an integrated part of the political society accounts and analyses as is also expected given the endogenous nature of state-society relations. However, I examined whether state traits affected the first reaction to political society formation and thus whether they could be claimed to be exogenous by visiting other studies on path dependency from the pre-1789 period. As I point out in the main paper, impartiality and state support generally originated before and continued through political society formation.

Relative to accounts emphasizing local peasant politics, Protestant culture, and national homogeneity (e.g., Sørensen and Stråth 1997; Österberg 2008; Nielsen 2009; Alapuro and Stenius 2010; Østergaard 2018) or political-economic factors (e.g., Kuhnle 1996; Sejersted 2011), few studies of Scandinavia hold impartiality or state characteristics as their theoretical point of view, and most of those that do (e.g., Rothstein 1998) focus on the industrialization period (see Gran 1994 for the only substantial exception, which nevertheless looks broadly at state action without coupling this with impartiality or organizational modes of governance). This drastically mitigates the problem of theoretical bias. I used studies by political or other social scientists with a more deductive approach to verify my own reading of the works of historians in relation to state-building (e.g., Ertman 1997; Knudsen 2000; Christensen 2003; Teorell and Rothstein 2015). However, few of the works that describe or explain political society formation formulate and test hypotheses; rather, they use standard historical methodology. They thus seek to interpret evidence within the confines of a more or less explicit theoretical framework. Many are purely atheoretical; in others, theoretical interpretations are implicit or emerge as concluding reflections (e.g., Trägårdh 2007; Alapuro and Stenius 2010). Among those with explicit theoretical frameworks, some focus on religious factors (e.g., Sørensen and Stråth 1997; Østergaard 2018) but most focus on political-economic factors (e.g., Kuhnle 1996). In many of these, the state also plays some role as an independent variable, while a few use the Weberian bureaucracy model as framework for analyzing corporatist relations (e.g., Knudsen 2006; Rothstein and Trägårdh 2007). Relying on these studies may of course bias my reading. Yet the two studies (Knudsen 2006; Rothstein and Trägårdh 2007) that explicitly connect the political society features with factors equivalent to impartial administration come to their conclusions via an inductive rather than a deductive approach. Beyond these two, I build my conclusions on compiling observable implications from separate studies on impartial administration as well as civil society and party organizational and ideational traits and their interrelationships.

On the third criterion, I used, as baseline, the most recent general studies or reviews of the state-building (e.g., Hallenberg, Holm, and Johansson 2008; Teige 2010; Jensen 2013; Bagge 2014; Teorell and Rothstein 2015), democratization (e.g., Knudsen 2006; Nielsen 2009; Østergaard 2018; Myhre 2018; Bengtsson 2019), and political society (e.g., Trägårdh 2007; Alapuro and Stenius 2010; Terjesen 2017; Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell 2018; Hilson 2019) literatures. Studies solely focused on Norwegian modes of administration are generally fewer and older (e.g., Nagel 1985; Seip 1987; Dyrvik 1995), but otherwise well covered by the Danish scholarship for the pre-1789 period at least (e.g., Johansen 2006). Where recent contributions interpret old evidence differently, the main paper explicates uncertainties and disagreements and aligns with the interpretation that has received the most pronounced support, if such clear assessment is possible.

This, however, does not mean that more recent evidence is by definition more credible. When basing the analysis on secondary sources, following the debate and the most updated evidence and responses from those originally criticized is one of the most effective ways of reaching credible conclusions. On the other hand, there is also the risk of recency bias if one automatically accepts more recent evidence as superior simply because of its novelty. My point is that even the most recent evidence should also be critically assessed in being conceptually relevant and preferably atheoretical.

## Studies comparing Scandinavia and Prussia

Some of the studies that include either Prussia or one of the Scandinavian countries as primary focus compares them at least indirectly to the rest of Europe. However, there are few systematic comparisons of political society developments over the long 19th century. The most obvious candidates for such comparisons, Bermeo and Nord’s (2015) study of civil society in Europe and Gould’s (1999) study of liberalism in 19th century Europe, do not include Scandinavia. Some studies compare one Scandinavian country with one or more other European country but not Prussia/Germany. One important example is Hilson’s (2006) study of labor movement formation in Sweden and Britain. Such a study provides valuable information on the relevant Scandinavian country, in this case evidence of a strong labor movement intimately tied to democratization in Sweden contrasted by Britain’s more fragmented movement, which does support my analysis but is also less valuable as it compares different contexts, a late industrializer (Sweden) with an early one (Britain).

There are of course studies comparing one Scandinavian country with Prussia/Germany in some limited part of the long 19th century and for some limited part of my outcome of interest. This includes, e.g., Trägårdh’s (1993) comparison of political culture in Sweden and Germany (for another example, see Åberg 2011). The study’s main point is that Sweden’s concept *folk* became more conducive to civilian-ideological understandings of nationhood, whereas Germany’s was more essentialist and thus more conducive to right-wing extremism. Although not exactly the same type of outcome as in my analysis (I focus on moderateness of political society, whereas national identity is a broader concept, which does not necessarily implicate politics), this study, if anything supports the differences pointed out between Sweden and Prussia (for a similar notion comparing Denmark and Prussia, though with more emphasis on deep religious differences, see Østergaard 2018).

Another example is Berman’s (2006) study of social democratic parties in Europe, including comparisons of Sweden and Germany. This study’s focus on the fight between reformists and radicalists in the party bases and leaderships supports my conclusions that SPD developed a more radical wing than the Swedish counterpart, and I make frequent use of in my analysis. Other studies focus on related but different outcomes, such as welfare state development (e.g., Valocchi 1991). Finally, some studies compare Prussian/German regions with regions in Scandinavia (e.g., Hurd 2000), which, however, create the problem of aggregating from the subnational to the national. Another problem occurs if, as in Hurd’s (2000) study that compares Hamburg, these include regions not part of early 19th century Prussia.

## Scandinavian “Sonderweg” debates

Classic theories of Scandinavian exceptionalism can be framed as positing one or more “Sonderwegs,” i.e., particular pathways to modernity. They comprise important studies like Sørensen and Stråth’s (1997) edited volume, which in various versions emphasize peculiar types of conformity, compromise, and equality in civil society (especially among peasants) rooted in Scandinavia’s particular histories of Protestantism. These are connected to another stream of studies emphasizing legacies of popular participation rooted in premodern local peasant politics (Österberg 2008; Nielsen 2009).

The classics have been criticized by newer literature for being teleological (see e.g., Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell 2018; Bengtsson 2019; 2022). The criticism is twofold. First, in their causal interpretations there is some tendency to reading history backwards, making facts of the past, such as local peasant institutions, fit the outcomes of interest, such as peasant-worker cooperation, corporatism, the welfare state, or stable democracy. Second, the particular assessment of the peasantry in democratization tends to be overly positive to the extent that the role of other social groups is underestimated, such as urban industrial workers in later phases of suffrage extension.

These criticisms hold valuable truths. Notions of the deep roots of social equality, trust, or peasant participation in local government from medieval or Viking times rest on thin evidence that is often contradictory across the three Scandinavian countries (Bagge 2014: 169–71). Likewise, the positive role of petitions (one of the allegedly most important peasant institutions) rests on limited evidence of contemporary attitudes and questionable assumptions (Almbjär 2019). Finally, available evidence supports that after the 1809 constitutional reform in Sweden, Swedish farmers were for long most interested in economic improvements and opposed universal suffrage way into the 20th century (Bengtsson 2019).

However, my argument, emphasizing the legacies of pre-1789 state administrative institutions, does not follow the classic theories but in fact aligns with major parts of the criticisms. For instance, in my analysis, the case of Denmark clearly demonstrates that strong local peasant participation did not exist in all Scandinavian countries but only really existed in Sweden (and to some extent also in Norway). As I demonstrate, cross-Scandinavian peasant participation in politics only developed in the first half of the 19th century, partly as a result of impartial state actions. I have also demonstrated that the political societies of compromise that developed across Scandinavia during the 19th and early 20th centuries never hinged on any one social group; peasant societies did develop first, but industrial workers developed their own models, which were equally moderate and strong and affected by much the same state-based mechanisms.

My argument thus does not support the notion that political societies of compromise in the long 19th century were predestined by premodern participatory legacies among the peasantry. Rather, the point of my analysis is to show that the unifying trait across Scandinavia was a premodern legacy of impartial state administration that was essential for how political societies of compromise developed during the long 19th century, but also that these societies did not develop automatically; it took specific impartial actions by civil servants and, in response, successful oppositional participation in politics by both peasants and workers. In this way, peasants and workers developed an ability to deal peacefully with different political situations and thus to gain effective political influence, such as is illustrated by the process of universal enfranchisement in Sweden.

## The German Sonderweg debate

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a heated debate among German historians on how to explain the advent of Nazism and Holocaust. Known as the German Sonderweg thesis, the traditional proposition emphasized how these particular outcomes in Germany were caused by a peculiar pathway to modernity that contrasted the more liberal-democratic ones in Western Europe, such as France and United Kingdom. According to scholars like Wehler, Kocka, and Gerschenkrohn, Germany’s pathway to modernity was rooted in the failure of a bourgeois revolution in 1848 and the dysfunctional nation-building in the 1860s and 1870s, which consolidated in the Bismarckian era in a series of labor-repressive laws and a conservative welfare state led by agrarian-industrial elites aimed at keeping any form of civil society at bay.

Some scholars like Rosenberg traced this string of events and societal-institutional developments even further back to Prussia’s premodern state-building, which created bonds between Junker agrarian elites and the state bureaucracy and military, whereas others like Blackbourn and Eley emphasized that the bourgeoisie was stronger than assumed, and that the problem instead pertained to heavy industry in the final decades of the 19th century. As a synthesis, the Sonderweg entailed an unusually strong alliance between state and societal elites that excluded, first, peasants and, later, workers, from any significant political influence. World War I augmented the resulting tensions in society, creating the foundations for the antisemitic stab-in-the-back myth (Smith 2008).

Several parts of the Sonderweg thesis came under attack. Novel research suggested that Nazism was solely the product of World War I and the Weimar period, or that the failure should be traced back general, international currents such as ethnic disintegration, collapse of empires, and economic volatility that had accumulated over many decades and hit Germany in particularly detrimental ways (Smith 2008:225). Others criticized the notion that the nobility necessarily dominated the bourgeoisie, noting for instance how Bismarckian welfare policies opposed agrarian interests (Steinmetz 1996). Some of the Sonderweg proponents have reflected on the new research in publications, admitting that World War I was indeed a disastrous critical juncture for German society and politics (e.g., Wehler 1995:464), and that the agrarian influence on the upper bourgeoisie was in fact no larger than in the rest of Europe while the bourgeoisie was stronger than in most of Southern and Eastern Europe (e.g., Kocka 2018: 140–41).

The purpose of this paper is not to resolve this Sonderweg debate, as I merely use Prussia as comparison to tease out distinct characteristics of Scandinavia. In so far as my analysis contributes to the Sonderweg debate, it is via the relative strength of social groups and the state bureaucracy in Prussia vis-à-vis Denmark, Norway, and Sweden – not any other (European) countries. It is also important to note that among social groups, my analysis compares the peasantry, specifically freeholders, and industrial workers. While terms like “bourgeoisie” in the Sonderweg are not always clearly defined, they tend to describe urban middle classes among merchants, artisans, and functionaries, which is probably because the debate has been anchored in a comparison with United Kingdom and France based on Barrington Moore’s notion of “no bourgeoisie, no democracy.” My analysis directs attention to a different set of social actors that were more important for the stability and functioning of democracy in late industrializing countries like the Scandinavian ones and Prussia/Germany. Therefore, translation is not always easy. Finally, the outcome of interest in my analysis is not interwar democratic stability, as in the Sonderweg thesis, but the features of political society before World War I. While, as indicated, political societies of compromise certainly contributed to democratic stability in interwar Scandinavia, explaining political societies in the first place is a separate task, and they likely had important consequences beyond the interwar period – in Scandinavia as well as in Germany.

My argument basically follows a (revised) Sonderweg thesis. As I show in the main manuscript, the Prussian farmer freeholder societies before 1848 were *relatively* weaker than in Scandinavia. Although it is not part of my analysis to explain regime developments, this was most likely one reason why the 1848-revolutions across Europe failed to produce the kind of liberal constitution in Prussia as they did in, for instance, Denmark. At this point, Denmark and Prussia diverted institutionally while Sweden (with the Instrument of Government in 1809) and Norway (with the *Eidsvoll* constitution in 1814) had already taken a more liberal path. In the next phase, from around 1870 onwards, industrial workers in Prussia became *relatively* more prone to revolutionary violence than in Scandinavia. This was not given in advance, but as labor movements developed and took turns back and forth between radicalism and moderation over three to four decades, this cross-country pattern crystallized.

Finally, what I show in the analysis is that these two phases of political society building can only be understand properly if we study actions of the state administration, specifically whether they were partial or not. The Prussian state administration was *relatively* more biased against peasant and worker political societies and in favor of agrarian and industrial elites than in Scandinavia. This pattern of action, in turn, can be traced back to state-building experiences before the French Revolution. The continuation of local patrimonialism in Prussia negatively affected the ability to implement extensive agrarian reforms. This had a number of important consequences. Those relevant in my analysis include the weakening of a farmer class capable of pushing for democratic change and the strength of a local landlord officialdom to act as alliance partner for the central-level bureaucracy’s conservative projects, such as when dealing with the emerging working class.

This aligns with some of the basic tenets of the Sonderweg debate that have withstood criticism, most notably that there is still good reason to draw continuities in Prussian/German history from premodern semi-feudal peasant societies and administrative institutions over long 19th century dysfunctional political society developments to the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the Nazi takeover in 1933, despite the importance of junctures such as 1789, 1848, and World War I (see also Wheler 1995: 449–54; Smith 2008: 226–27).

# Case selection

## The Scandinavian cases

Throughout the paper, I treat Denmark, Norway, and Sweden as separate analytical entities or cases. Their political developments were clearly interconnected. Most notably, Norway was subordinate to Denmark in a union from 1537 to 1814 and to Sweden from 1814 to 1905. However, Norway also had a very different socioeconomic history from Denmark and Sweden (Østerud 1978) and preserved most of its local customs and societal characteristics through the periods of subordination (Derry 1979).

## Cases to compare with Scandinavia

I choose Prussia as the most suitable, negative case to compare with based on the ‘Possibility Principle’ (Mahoney and Goertz 2004: 657–58). According to this principle, we should include cases with a negative outcome, i.e., the non-occurrence of moderate and organizationally strong civil societies and parties. Prussia qualifies because significant parts of the party system and civil society were prone to revolutionary violence, and most parties were organizationally weak. Next, cases should adhere to the rule of inclusion, where at least one independent variable is positively related to the outcome of interest, and the rule of exclusion, where no eliminatory independent variable predicts non-occurrence of the outcome. As none of the alternative theories related to rural inequality, state-church relations, and political-institutional legacies is proposed as a theoretically sufficient condition for the outcome (indeed, the theories are formulated in probabilistic terms), only the rule of inclusion is applicable. By this rule, Prussia qualifies through its shared high proportions of Protestants and church subordination to the state.

Alternative cases do not fulfill these criteria as well. United Kingdom, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland primarily fail to qualify because they are not negative cases. Indeed, they had strong civil societies and party systems by World War I (Ertman 1998: 499). France misses the mark due to a combination of its political society history and religious factors. While its political societies ended up resembling those in other liberal countries by World War I, the country’s civil society also embodied significant extremist elements associated with anarcho-syndicalism reflected also in a more unstable democratic history during the 19th century (Tilly 1989; Huard 2015: 153). If a somewhat more ambiguous but still positive case, the Catholic population and church in France makes comparisons with Scandinavia less manageable, complying less neatly with the rule of inclusion. Spain, Portugal, and Italy qualify as negative cases. However, like France, they do not qualify in terms of the rule of inclusion because they had dominant Catholic societies and autonomous Catholic churches guided by Vatican doctrine (Killinger 2002: 12–13; Barton 2009:103–11, 189–95; Costa, Lains, and Miranda 2016: Ch. 5; Birmingham 2018: 41–42).

# Civil Society and Party Formation

The literature agrees that by 1913, the political societies of Scandinavia and Prussia differed markedly with civil societies and parties being well developed in Scandinavia, while they comprised powerful extremist groupings and were weakly integrated into the political system in Prussia (Ertman 1998: 498–99; Berman 2006). However, observing to what extent farmers and workers acquired political societies of compromise requires conceptualizing and analyzing systematically the density and extremism of their civic associations and the institutionalization and extremism of their political parties. This section does that.

Civil society is the organizational layer between state and private life composed of voluntary associations of people joined together in common purpose (Bernhard et al. 2020: 4). I include all types of voluntary associations irrespective of their purpose, be it political, economic, social, or cultural. I thus consider civil society dense when it comprised many different types of associations together engaging a substantial number of people within the relevant social group.

Regarding the ideational dimension of civil society, I focus on associations with a clear political purpose. A social group’s associational landscape could be extremist when either of two conditions applied; first, if it considered dogmatic revolution a political end or, second, used violence to reach its ends, be they revolutionary or not. Moderate associations favored either status quo or reform, if needed, by compromise, and used peaceful channels of voice or parliamentary strategies (Berman 2006).

Political parties are organizations that coordinate candidates to participate in elections. The level of party institutionalization varied a great deal within countries and even within groups, which often had multiple parties representing them (Ziblatt 2017). Thus, I consider a social group’s parties institutionalized when they had a robust organization of a central-level bureau, local offices, and distinct and valuable labels to both voters and candidates (see Bernhard et al. 2020: 5).

Parties varied in terms of extremism only partly as a consequence of organizational strength or the extremity of their societal base. As with civil society, parties’ relationship with the established system varied from revolutionary and violent to pragmatic and peaceful. Thus, I consider each social group extremist when significant parts of its party(ies) agitated for dogmatic revolution or used violence.

## The development of political societies

Figure A1 provides country-specific overviews of the development of farmer and worker associations and parties from 1789 to 1913. Although there were substantial differences between Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, two trends are clear.

First, across Scandinavia, farmers were first-movers in building organizationally sophisticated and moderate associations and parties. This is evidenced in Denmark by the consultative provincial assemblies (*Stænderforsamlingerne*) of the 1830s mobilizing from peasants’ temperance or revivalist movements and freeholders with collective petitions and declarations as their main instrument (Mikkelsen 2018: 24–25); and the outgrowth of the national party of *Venstre*, which tied to a dense network of local voter associations, folk high schools, and agrarian cooperatives, and which was firmly liberal and exclusively employed legal and parliamentary strategies even when confronting conservative power grabs in the 1880s (Gundelach 1988: 109).

In Norway, nation-wide temperance movements early on dominated civil society with peaceful missionary work (Dyrvik and Feldbæk 1996a:72–73; Sevelsted 2024: 64); an organized farmer opposition from independence in 1814 exclusively aimed for parliamentary representation and participation and education of its constituency (Myhre 2018: 16); and the outgrowth parties of *Bondevennerne* and, later, *Venstre* were densely organized to compete in elections and managed to channel radical nationalist and redistributive demands to parliament both before and after the 1884 parliamentary reform (Dyrvik and Feldbæk 1996b: 122; Kjeldstadli 2018: 213).

In Sweden, the pre-1789 organization of a farmer estate in the two-chamber system delayed nation-wide associations vis-à-vis Denmark and Norway, but the mobilization of a radical farmer opposition organized in parliament (Åberg 2011: 51–52) and the peasant-born Temperance Society (*Sällskapet för Nykterhet och Folkuppfostran*) from the 1820s (Amnå 2007: 168) quickly caught up Scandinavian trends (Sevelsted 2024: 66–67). The farmer estate and, from 1867, *Lantmannapartiet* were conservative, anti-democratic forces, but they were based on a strong voter organization, relied on pragmatic agrarian cooperatives, and emphasized inter-party compromise and legislative constraints on the executive (Nielsen 2009: 278; Bengtsson 2019: 22). The more radical-liberal farmers organized in country-wide popular movements (*folkrörelser*)focused on public deliberation and democratic participation (Stenius 2010: 58).

Second, in Scandinavia, workers’ associations and parties developed in similarly well-organized and emollient ways as farmers, emerging as second-movers with industrialization. Danish workers organized the Social Democratic Party (*Socialdemokratiet*) in 1871 based on close-knit networks of trade unionists and consumer cooperatives, which quickly defeated its revolutionary wing by adopting the legal-reformist Gimle Program in 1876 and later precluded the development of a successful communist party (Bryld 1992 :41–42).

In Norway, even the first and radical (urban and rural) workers’ movement, *Thranebevegelsen*, respected property rights and followed the founder Thrane in using “Sandhedens ord” [words of the truth] through agenda-setting and petitioning (Dyrvik and Feldbæk 1996a: 184). The social democratic party, *Arbeiderpartiet* (DNA), formed in 1887 as a nation-wide organization based on a variegated landscape of rallying and pamphleteering trade unions, language associations, and women’s emancipation movements. It abandoned revolution in its first program of 1891 (Kjeldstadli 2018: 222), while an otherwise significant Marxist wing from the early 20th century received no more than 1–2 percent of votes in elections (Sejersted 2011: 150). This wing dominated DNA organizationally from 1919 to 1923, during which it led the party join Comintern, but as Terjesen (2017: 218–25) points out, DNA’s radicalness before 1914 had more to do with lack of leadership and party organizational incoherence than structural, ideological foundations, and the party always followed an unambiguously parliamentary strategy of influence. DNA only abandoned communism decisively in the 1930s, but a genuinely communist party remained weak throughout the 1920s (3-6 % of the vote) and less than 2 % during the 1930s (Nilson 1984: 286).

Swedish labor began dominating the popular movements from the 1880s, coalescing with the Temperance Movement (Bengtsson 2021: 22). The Swedish social democratic party (*Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti*, SAP), founded in 1889, was at first firmly Marxist and contained more orthodox elements but from its inception adopted a relatively flexible and undogmatic view of Marxism, emphasizing gradual reform through political deliberation and negotiations with employers and cooperation with farmers around the concept of the “people’s home” (*Folkhemmet*) (Berman 2006: 152–58). It linked up with the unusually strong network of trade unions, organized in a nation-wide umbrella organization (LO) from 1898, as well as the highly influential *Kooperativa Förbundet*, which organized consumer cooperatives from 1899 (Micheletti 1995: 37–38). The cooperatives sought to advance democratic governance and built an entire educational system (*Arbetarnes Bildningsförbund*) for this purpose, which provided an essential ideational background for the labor movement (Micheletti 1995: 54; Hilson 2019: 474).

By contrast, Prussian farmers only began developing significant, nation-wide movements in the final decades before World War I, by then conducive to right-wing paramilitary extremism. Prior to industrialization, farmers were instead fragmented along regional and class conflict lines (Blackbourn 1984a: 195–96; Guinnane 2012). Moreover, from the beginning of electoral politics in 1867, farmers were generally unenthusiastic about the prospects of organizing politically let alone voting in universal franchise elections, which they tended to see as threats to the comfort and simplicity of traditional village life (Anderson 2000: 4, 194, 364). This hindered the formation of a genuine farmer’s party until the German Peasant League (*Deutscher Bauernbund*) in 1909 and, instead, drove significant parts of the peasantry into the arms of the extreme nationalist and militant Agrarian League (*Bund der Landwirte*) (Vascik 1991).

Prussian workers built a strong associational landscape similar to their Scandinavian counterparts. Most notably, the social democratic party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) was strongly organized in and around elections from the very beginning of the Bismarckian era, and it developed into a formidable political force during the first years of the 20th century (Sperber 1997: 54; Anderson 2000: Ch. 4). However, SPD had difficulties creating a stable constituency, and the labor society as such was significantly challenged by dogmatic and violent Marxism. SPD formed in 1890 and took an ambiguous stance on parliamentary democracy and violent revolution, basing itself on the pro-democratic Gotha Program of 1875 but later revising this program to legitimize illegal activities (Lidtke 1966: 44, 98). Although revisionism came to dominate the party leadership of the SPD before WWI, aggressive trade unions still existed and allowed dogmatic Marxist movements with their underground, revolutionary and violent activities to flourish among workers much more than in, e.g., Sweden (Berman 2006: 154, 158).

To be sure, by the advent of World War I, SPD was not an all-out revolutionary party. Especially after an electoral setback in 1907, the party development a strong reformist impetus led by Jospeh Bloch’s faction and magazine *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, which agitated against dogmatic Marxism. This reformist part of SPD emphasized German nationalism and imperialism and emphasized preparations for war more than socialist revolution. Nevertheless, SPD remained reluctant in its stance on reformism and defense of parliamentary democracy, even after Germany’s defeat in the war and the transition to democracy (Berman 2006:86-99).

Figure A1: Associations and parties with major farmer or worker components, 1789-1913

***Farmers:***

*Liberal parties*

*Country-wide interest groups*

***Farmers****:*

*Proto-fascist and conservative parties*

Norway

Denmark

Sweden

***Workers:***

*Marxist and social*

*democratic parties*

*Country-wide trade unions*

*Marxist, militant groups*

***Farmers:***

*Scattered cooperatives*

Prussia

***Farmers:***

*Liberal and conservative parties*

*Folk high schools and missions*

***Farmers****:*

*Political reform**advocacy groups*

***Workers:***

*Social democratic parties*

*Country-wide trade unions*

*Country-wide cooperatives*

***Farmers:***

*Country-wide cooperatives*

***Farmers****:*

*Media and advocacy groups*

*Country-wide temperance movements*

***Farmers:***

*Assembly estate*

***Workers:***

*Social democratic parties*

***Farmers:***

*Liberal parties*

***Workers:***

*Country-wide cooperatives and trade unions*

***Farmers:***

*Country-wide cooperatives*

***Farmers:***

*Folk high schools, missions, and language movements*

***Farmers:***

*Political reform**advocacy groups*

***Farmers:***

*Parliamentary groups*

*Country-wide temperance movements*

***Farmers****:*

*Country-wide political-religious movements*

***Workers:***

*Country-wide cooperatives and trade unions*

***Workers:***

*Social democratic parties*

***Farmers:***

*Liberal parties*

***Farmers:***

*Country-wide cooperatives*

***Farmers:***

*Folk high schools and missions*

***Farmers****:*

*Media and*

*advocacy groups*

***Farmers:***

*Country-wide political assemblies*

***Farmers:***

*Mostly local*

*temperance movements*

1913

1880

1850

1820

1789

Industrialization

take-off (approx.)

Note: If reported, associations and parties survive for the remainder of the time series, although their scope and strength may develop over time. Arrows mark pre-1789 movement.

# Alternative explanations

## Elaboration of pre-1789 factors

Table A1: Pre-1789 explanatory factors and political society of compromise

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Denmark* | *Norway* | *Sweden* | *Prussia* |
| Level of rural inequality | High | Low | Low | High |
| Level of constitutionalism | Low | Low | High | Low |
| Level of popular participation | Medium-low | Medium | High | Medium-high |
| Predominantly Protestant population | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Church subordination to state | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Political society of compromise | Strong | Strong | Strong | Weak |

Note: Explanatory condition scores are approximations of the conditions right before 1789 and based on relative comparisons across the four cases. Based on Andersen (2023:6-7). Outcome scores are approximations for 1913.

Table A1 summarizes the pre-1789 explanatory alternatives. While pre-1789 levels of rural inequality were relatively low in Norway and Sweden, levels were high in Denmark and Prussia. Also, Denmark-Norway alongside Prussia exhibited some of Europe’s most absolutist regimes, contrasting constitutional Sweden. Finally, some local participation rights were present in all four cases, but the level was substantially higher in Sweden, followed by Prussia, Norway, and Denmark (see also Andersen 2023). Finally, Prussia shared with Scandinavia predominantly Protestant societies and church subordination to the state before 1789 (Gorski 2003; Stenius 2010).

## National identity and ethnic homogeneity

A firm but inclusive national identity and ethnic homogeneity have been connected with the building of interpersonal and institutional trust and thus a political culture of consensus in the 19th and 20th centuries (e.g., Stenius 2010; Østergaard 2018). I hold that national identity and ethnic homogeneity are contributing rather than competing factors to impartial administration. First, nationhood and ethnic composition looked much the same in Scandinavia and Prussia around 1789 and thus do not qualify as critical antecedents. Around the French Revolution, national identities at the mass level had yet to build in Scandinavia and Prussia. All four countries were relatively homogenous countries in ethnic terms, although Denmark with her German possessions was arguably more heterogenous and accordingly a weaker candidate of a harmonious national identity in the 19th century. At the elite level, the Danish monarchy presided over a conglomerate state, subduing Norway and Schleswig-Holstein, and thus understood itself as a great power much like Prussia and Sweden, which fought recurring wars with Russia over control of the Baltic Sea (Stråth 2012: 25).

Second, historical circumstances after 1789 created an ethno-religiously homogenous landscape in Scandinavia, which was more prone to moderate political society building than in Imperial Germany. However, this landscape was only complete by the late 19th century and thus does not explain the early 19th century political society differences between Scandinavia and Prussia, including notably the diverging organizational developments among farmers. Whereas Sweden and Norway developed national identities in relative peace with their neighbors after, respectively, Sweden’s loss of Finland in 1809 and Norway’s independence from Denmark in 1814 (although Norway kept struggling politically with Sweden for full independence until the resolution in 1905), this process took several more decades in Denmark (Derry 1979).

Denmark turned into a European small state via two catastrophic defeats: the loss of Norway and bankruptcy in 1814 and, which was decisive, the loss of the German duchies in 1864. Until 1864, the country’s ethnic homogeneity levels were if anything lower than Prussia’s, and the national identity was similarly focused on great power preservation or conquest. While popular culture started turning inwards already from the 1820s, there was a firm perception of greatness and ambition to keep the German possessions right until 1864 (Glenthøj and Ottosen 2021).

There were substantial movements, also among government members in Denmark and Sweden, who pledged for a Scandinavian union and at times conspired against the Danish kings Frederick VII and Christian IX. National Liberals and parts of *Venstre* were common among so-called ‘Scandinavianists,’ but Scandinavianism crossed social classes among the political elite. While the significance of Scandinavianism has been underestimated in Scandinavian historiography so far, it is safe to say that 1864 contributed to decisively turning the tables against such unionist revolutionary ideas (Glenthøj and Ottosen 2021). Moreover, there was a tendency for the folk high schools to forward a more homogenous and inclusivist version of Danish nationhood after losing the German duchies (Gundelach 1988: 115–16). In this sense, there is still much truth to the traditional reading focusing on a number of disastrous political decisions by the National Liberals and King Christian IX as the actions that finally convinced the broader political establishment of Denmark’s place as a small state (see Kaspersen 2008: 66). In 1872, Danish poet H.P. Holst wrote the sentence “Hvad udad tabes, skal indad vindes” [what you lose outwards must be gained inwards], which became an accurate reflection of the subsequent national identity formation.

In sum, firm and inclusive national identities and high ethnic homogeneity were only established by the 1870s (due to Denmark’s late arrival) across Scandinavia. Certainly, these factors helped political society along and hindered conflicts in this process. Conversely, nation-building remained a challenging task in Germany even after Prussia’s successful unification project, primarily due to Protestant-Catholic conflicts between Northern (including Prussian) areas and southern areas. It is even evident that national-religious conflicts augmented problems of political society formation by frustrating society-building and radicalizing certain groups (see Holborn 1969: 258–66; Eley 1980). However, the basic traits of political society, among farmers in particular, were set before unification and generally unrelated to ethnic or national identity conflicts (see Gould 1999: 23, 86). Tellingly, national identity formation was to a great extent driven by the folk high schools and nation-wide cooperatives in Scandinavia (Gundelach 1988: 115–16; Berman 2006: 158; Hilson 2010: 218; 2019: 473), illustrating that national identity was a product of political society rather than the other way around.

## State capacity

It could be that the lack of revolutionary tendencies among political societies in Scandinavia simply reflected how these social movements feared state repression, and thus that Scandinavia’s political societies of compromise were not a product of impartial administration but rather a state with major coercive capacities. While there is no doubt that this mechanism was at work occasionally, for instance around worker demonstrations in Sweden in the 1900s and 1910s (Bengtsson 2020: 64–65), the qualitative evidence enlisted in the main manuscript documents two findings that serve to reject state capacity as an alternative explanation (quantitative indicators of state capacity unfortunately do not cover Norway and Prussia in the 19th century and therefore preclude an examination based on descriptive statistics, see Coppedge et al. 2022a).

First, the Prussian state most likely had no less coercive capacity than the Scandinavian states. The French philosopher Voltaire famously noted that in Prussia, the army possessed the state rather than the other way around. Indeed, the resources of the military clearly superseded those of any competing force in society, beginning already with Frederick William I’s monopolization of taxation and military conscription rights from 1640 (Clark 2006: 55). Coercive capacities developed to a new and sophisticated level in the second half of the 19th century. The Prussian army was used to pacify other German areas during the process of unification through ‘blood and iron,’ as the saying goes (Ziblatt 2006). Moreover, beyond being used for suppressing what was widely perceived as an emerging proletariat, the army to an extraordinary degree engaged in a modernization attempt to prepare society for total war. By coalescing with industry, the army thus became a formidable force (Showalter 1983).

Second, the application of coercive capacity for purposes of domestic order, most notably in repression of demonstrations, strikes, and preventive measures against emerging movements, was a major source of radicalization in Prussia, such as among trade unionists and socialists. As demonstrated in the main manuscript, blunt repression without any accommodation clearly showed the leaders and activists of movements that the state was their enemy and could not be trusted. That is, coercive capacity did not have the expected pacifying effects. Rather, the contrast with Scandinavia suggests that impartial administration to some extent may substitute for repression. Indeed, in Scandinavia, the strength of impartial administration ensured successful accommodation of social movements, which in turn made it less relevant for decision-makers to Scandinavian.

## Democratization trajectories

Democratization and political society developments are highly endogenous to one another. On the one hand, civil society and party institutionalization drive democratic progress and stabilize democracy (Bermeo 2015; Bernhard et al. 2020). On the other, we must take seriously that democracy in general, including the historical sequence of contestation and rights of political participation, shapes well-functioning civil societies and parties (Dahl 1971; Bermeo 2015). One hypothesis that emerges from this is that Scandinavia’s potent yet moderate political society development until World War I stems from a history of deeper and more gradual democratization. This, however, does not hold empirically.

Table A2: Democratization events in the long 19th century

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Denmark* | *Norway* | *Sweden* | *Prussia* |
| Liberal constitutionalism | 1849 | 1814 | 1809 | 1919 |
| Competitive elections | 1901 | 1884 | 1917 | 1919 |
| Parliamentarism | 1901 | 1884 | 1919 | 1919 |
| Universal male suffrage | 1915 | 1898 | 1919 | 1867 |
| Universal female suffrage | 1915 | 1913 | 1919 | 1919 |

Note: Codings are based on the single-case historical studies of Eley (1984), Knudsen (2006), Möller (2011), and Myhre (2018) as well as the updated Lexical Scale of Electoral Democracy (Skaaning 2021).

One way of testing this is to look at the timing and sequence of pro-democratic reforms. Table A2 presents a simplified overview of the democratic trajectories, including major democratization events along the most important dimensions of democracy: 1) liberal constitutionalism, i.e., the government being accountable to the law administered by independent courts, 2) competitive elections including free and fair elections for parliament and government offices, 3) parliamentarism, i.e., that governments can be controlled and deposed by parliament, and 4) rules of suffrage divided in female and male due to their systematic separations in time. The overview makes clear that democratization in Denmark and Norway was to some extent deeper and had come about in a more gradual fashion closer to the ideal-typical ‘contestation-first’ sequence, but the trajectories of Sweden and Prussia resemble each other quite closely.

The Kingdom of Prussia saw some political liberalization with the *Allgemeine Recht* (1794), the Stein-Hardenberg Reforms (1807-1814), and the March Revolution (1848), which established an elected, consultative parliament. Yet autocratic restorations always followed, and democracy only gained ground with the Weimar Constitution of 1919 (Eley 1984; see also Skaaning 2021). The North German Confederation of 1867 established a constitutional monarchy with a secret ballot and an unusually broad franchise for the *Reichstag*, which is most often characterized as universal male suffrage (all men above the age of 24 were eligible to vote, but this did not apply to women) (Sperber 1997: 1; Anderson 2000).

The traditional view has been that the *Reichstag*, despite its broad franchise, was very weak, being merely a rubber stamp for the *Bundesrat*, which was controlled by the emperor. However, most laws could in fact only be enabled with the consent of the *Reichstag*, which also had comparatively strong agenda setting powers and increasingly wide opportunities to dismiss ministers. The real weaknesses vis-à-vis the parliaments in Denmark and Norway after 1901 and 1884, respectively, were its lack of powers in government appointment and investiture (Kreuzer 2003: 337–41). Also, despite the presence of the secret ballot, election panels administered significant election manipulation (Anderson 2000; Ziblatt 2008). Beyond the long 19th century, it is worth including the incumbent takeover of Hitler in 1933, which marked a clear democratic breakdown and was the culmination of the Weimar democracy’s inherent instability.

In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, liberal constitutions were inaugurated in, respectively, 1849, 1814, and 1809, but democracy was only complete by, respectively, 1915, 1913, and 1919. Along the way, Denmark saw a notable setback with the weakening of the second chamber (*Folketinget*) in 1866, and the introduction of competitive and inclusive elections as well as parliamentarism in Sweden was particularly delayed (Knudsen 2006; Myhre 2018; Bengtsson 2019; see also Skaaning 2021). Yet, we may also remark that Scandinavia’s democracies survived the interwar period (Møller, Skaaning, and Cornell 2021).

Thus, there are important similarities between Prussia and Denmark in the latter half of the 19th century and between Prussia and Sweden in the early 20th century. In addition, there were differences between Denmark and Sweden in particular. Indeed, the system of government and wider political regime in unified Germany from 1867 and Denmark from 1866 to 1901 resembled one another quite closely. In turn, it is also not the case that Denmark and Sweden by far beat Prussia in terms of stable democratization. In Ziblatt’s (2017: 15) count, Denmark had lower levels of what he terms ‘democratic volatility’ in the period from 1848 to 1950, but obviously, this is at least partly driven by the Nazi takeover in 1933. Moreover, the 1866 constitutional reform in Sweden, while abolishing estates-based suffrage rules, is more often described as introducing an oligarchic regime rather than a genuine democracy (e.g., Bengtsson 2019a). Delays in parliamentarism of unified Germany and Sweden were very similar.

Second, endogeneity undermines an explanation focused on democratization trajectory. Together with other factors, virtually all democratization events listed in Table A2 came about as consequences of pressure from civil society and/or party oppositional groups in Scandinavia as well as in Prussia. Only the installation of a liberal constitution in Norway (1814) and Sweden (1809) were relatively elite-driven achievements. In turn, political society mostly came first, followed by democracy. Subsequently democracy likely fed back positively on political society, but in this way, democratization trajectories cannot fully explain civil society and party formation before World War I.

In sum, Scandinavia’s democratization trajectory was indeed more stable than Prussia’s, but this does not describe an early breakthrough and perfectly linear, upwards trend towards liberal democracy across Scandinavia. More accurately, the primary difference between Scandinavia and Prussia was that periods immediately before and after democratization events saw less political violence in Scandinavia (Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell 2018; Andersen 2021). Democratic gains saw fewer regressions once achieved, but because of Denmark’s setback in 1866, this Scandinavian peculiarity hinges mostly on Norway and Sweden.

## Social capital and welfare state universalism

High levels of social capital and universal welfare services are often portrayed as features that separate Scandinavia from the rest (e.g., Rothstein and Stolle 2003). Although most accounts focus on the impact of the 1930s crisis agreements as the events that established today’s systems of universal coverage and secured post-WWII democratic stability (e.g., Luebbert 1991; Sejersted 2011; Brandal, Bratberg, and Thorsen 2013), the relationship and sequence between the development of welfare state universalism on the one hand and democratization, democratic stability, and the formation of reformist labor movements and social democratic parties on the other is not always clear and is rarely systematically investigated.

While it is probably true today that the universal welfare state and democratic stability are closely intertwined, this does not undermine the importance of impartial administration as the most critical antecedent. Welfare state universalism came after the basic traits of Scandinavia’s political societies of compromise were established. Kuhnle and Hort (2004: 5–6) provide an overview showing that the first social policies in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were old age pensions and/or sickness and accident insurance laws in the 1890s based on means tests or employment status. Laws introducing universal coverage, though most combining with voluntary payment as well, were passed in the first two decades of the 20th century.

Not only did universalism develop very late in the long 19th century; universalism only developed as functioning worker-farmer alliances crystallized and consolidated with the famous worker-farmer crisis settlements of the 1930s (Esping-Andersen 1985: 74–82). As the main manuscript also indicates, the reformism of social democratic parties, which took shape in the 1880s in Denmark and a few years later in Norway and Sweden, alongside the cooperation with small-scale farmers and urban constituencies in particular, was instrumental in pushing through and continuously securing support for more universalist social policies (Baldwin 1990: 71; Valocchi 1992: 196–97; Terjesen 2017: 229). It is thus fair to say that political societies of compromise caused welfare state universalism rather than the other way around.

In line with this, it becomes clear, when looking across scholarly debates, that the proposed causes of universalist welfare state formation, political society reformism, and stable democratization in Scandinavia are often the same or at least highly overlapping. Some parts of the literature explain universalist welfare state formation by deep-seated roots in the Scandinavian-Protestant route to modernity (e.g., Stenius 1997); others reject this, focusing instead on contingent developments among parties in the early 20th century and in crisis situations of the 1930s (e.g., Sejersted 2011; Stråth 2012: 26–27); a third alternative focuses on the role of state capacities and bureaucratization (e.g., Rothstein 1996; Ansell and Lindvall 2021). These factors reflect those employed to explain both political society formation and stable democratization, as shown in the main manuscript (section on “Alternative explanations”). In a review of important background conditions by Esping-Andersen (1985: 71–72), we find the following:

* No parallel to the German fear of socialism – rather alliance between farmers, peasants, and workers.
* Unusually strong linkages between social forces and party system.
* Farmers’ capacity for self-organization.
* Law abidance and little political repression.

The first three of these factors are overlapping with the dimensions of political society that I seek to explain, whereas the fourth is, as I have shown in the main manuscript, part of the mechanism unleashed by impartial administration.

Rather than a competing explanation, social capital in Scandinavia was endogenous to impartial administration. Although Putnam’s definition of social capital, such as in his *Making Democracy Work* (1993), has been much criticized for excessive aggregation to the societal level and for being notoriously hard to measure, the Scandinavian political societies of compromise illustrate well Putnam’s understanding of social capital as “features of social organizations, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1993: 35). Indeed, as the main manuscript shows, density of civil society and willingness to cooperate with others and the state were not just features of single, bearing organizations but general traits that existed across social groups and sectors. However, challenging Putnam, impartial state institutions forged political societies of compromise, and by implication also social capital, rather than the other way around. As Rothstein and Stolle (2003: 21) proposed while reflecting on the historical causes of social capital across Scandinavia, one understudied factor was the “comparatively very low levels of political corruption and patronage.” My analysis lends empirical support for this proposition.

## Education levels

Education may confound the effect of impartial administration on a political society of compromise. At least two aspects of education are relevant. We should expect higher primary school enrollment and university enrollment rates to raise the likelihood of a strong but also moderate civil society. This is due to the civilizing and socializing impacts of education and the improved resources and autonomy that education provides each individual to be used for, e.g., political campaigning. In addition, both elementary schooling and higher education should make it easier for state administrations to be able to recruit competent and impartial personnel.

Neither primary school nor higher education levels can explain the differences between Prussia on the one side and Scandinavia on the other. Prussia was indeed a frontrunner both in primary and higher education, inspiring reforms in Sweden as well as Denmark-Norway (Caruso and Töpper 2019: 41–42; Larsen 2019: 119; Westberg 2019:195–96). Yet, through the first half of the 19th century and by the middle of the 19th century, Denmark had comparatively higher enrollment rates of schoolchildren than in Sweden and Prussia. All four countries had quite high levels (around 80 % or above) in absolute terms and relative to the rest of Europe (Schleunes 1979: 317; Larsen 2019: 134; Westberg 2019: 195). Although Prussia’s publicly funded, universal school act came later than in Sweden’s (1880s vs. 1842), the development patterns in Sweden and Prussia were practically highly similar, accelerating from 1860s through 1880s (Olson 1971: 2; Westberg 2019: 195). University education levels were indeed higher in Sweden than in Prussia by the mid-19th century (Sandberg 1979: 231). However, Sweden was an outlier, with Denmark and Norway achieving levels comparable to Prussia. In fact, Denmark only opened up for all schoolchildren to attend secondary education from 1903 (Danmarkshistorien 2025).

In addition, the rise of both primary and higher education in all four cases was a function of a complex of similar religious beliefs (Lutheranism and, specifically, Calvinism or Pietism) and (lack of) state support rather than the other way around. The same religious beliefs made kings and their advisors choose to invest in primary schooling for all children from the early 18th century in Denmark-Norway, Sweden, and Prussia (Gorski 2003: 111–12; Larsen 2019: 119; Westberg 2019: 195–96). In Scandinavia, public officials also played important roles by inviting intellectuals to deliberate in reform commissions out of the same motivations of creating an economically viable peasantry that drove 18th century agrarian reforms and state support for political society in the 19th century more generally (Larsen 2019: 122–24; Westberg 2019: 195–96). Prussian central-level officials also tried to implement similar school acts, but they were sabotaged several times during the 19th century due to local-level, noble resistance (Caruso and Töpper 2019: 44–55).

# Impartial administration as a critical antecedent

The point that impartial administration was a critical antecedent is crucial in order to demonstrate that the proposed explanation for Scandinavia’s political society of compromise is not endogenous to political-institutional or other determinants. As Slater and Simmons (2010) note, a critical antecedent is a factor that varies across cases before a critical juncture and, together with factors operating during the juncture, produces divergent outcomes after the juncture. A critical juncture, in this understanding, is a period in history when the presence or absence of a specified causal force pushes multiple cases onto divergent long-term pathways.

My argument, in essence, is that the existence of impartiality in central and local administration diverged between the four cases before the French Revolution in 1789, which is broadly recognized as a critical juncture in European, including Scandinavian and Prussian, political development. It then proposes that this divergence in impartial administration, in interaction with pressures for mass liberalization and democratization unleashed by the French Revolution, produced a series of divergent impacts on society in the long 19th century. In sum, the point is that pre-1789 state-administrative legacies produced long-term path dependencies in terms of state-society relations after 1789 that resulted in different political society societies trajectories and endpoints by 1913.

Table A3 summarizes all implications of the argument that impartial administration was a critical antecedent. Apart from the impacts on society, which are discussed in the main manuscript, I here present elaborate discussions of three of these implications: 1) pre-1789 administrative institutions at the local and central levels were ‘the first cause,’ i.e., that cannot be explained by systematic variation in factors of the past; 2) the basic traits of administration basically continued across the 1789-divide; 3) the integration of workers was not a product of diffusion from modes of state interaction with farmers, but impartial state officials simply approached workers in similar ways as they approached farmers and got a similar reaction.

## Origins of administrative institutions

I take my cue from Andersen’s (2023) close reading of early-modern Scandinavian and comparative historiography and argue that we should begin our explanation in the 16th and 17th centuries. Contingent war outcomes and responses, most notably related to the Reformation conflicts of the 1500s and the continued rivalry between Denmark-Norway and Sweden in the 1600s, triggered the building of high levels of state control over local administration and meritocratic recruitment to the central administration (for Denmark and Norway, see also Nagel 1985: 119; Jespersen 2007: 60–61; Jensen 2013: 46; Bagge 2014: 167; for Sweden, see also Nilsson 1990: 200–1; Maarbjerg 2004:400; Hallenberg, Holm, and Johansson 2008). This penetrative bureaucracy was not only unusual by European standards but also diverged from contemporary Prussia.

In Prussia, the Thirty Years’ War changed the balance of power between the Hohenzollern royal family and the landed elite in favor of the former, but never decisively undermined the landed elite as in Scandinavia. Rather, a compromise emerged in which the Hohenzollern princes got their standing army and control of a public finance and military administration, which implied the building of a central-level bureaucracy based on meritocratic recruitment, whereas the Junkers were granted full autonomy in the administration of manorial estates and justice, thus preserving local-level patrimonialism (see also Rosenberg 1958; Fischer and Lundgren 1975: 510–17; Clark 2006: 61).

Together, meritocracy and state control formed an impartial administration that not only led the process of agrarian reform-making from the mid-18th century into the first decades of the 19th century, as shown by Andersen (2023). As I show in the main manuscript, impartial administration also led to a relatively state-supportive approach towards farmers and workers throughout the ling 19th century in Scandinavia as opposed to state repression in Prussia.

Table A3: Impartial administration as critical antecedent

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Denmark* | *Norway* | *Sweden* | *Prussia* |
| Pre-revolutionary origins | Contingencies of war and exclusion of landlords,  approx. 1657-1665 | State-building policies of  union hegemon,  from around 1665 | Contingencies of war and  inclusion of landlords,  approx. 1523-1680 | Contingencies of war and  inclusion of landlords,  approx. 1618-1653 |
| Status around the critical juncture of the French Revolution | State control  over local administration  Central-level meritocracy | State control  over local administration  Central-level meritocracy | State control  over local administration  Central-level meritocracy | Landed elite patrimonial  jurisdiction and  administration locally  Central-level meritocracy |
| 🡪 Impacts on society | Extensive agrarian reforms | Extensive agrarian reforms | Extensive agrarian reforms | Stalled agrarian reforms |
| Administrative developments, approx. 1789-1870 | Consolidation | Consolidation | Consolidation | Only partial abolition of local  administrative patrimonialism  Enrollment of landed elite  as state officials  Landlord-bureaucrat alliance |
| 🡪 Impacts on society | Political integration of farmer associations  and parties | Political integration of farmer associations  and parties | Political integration of farmer associations  and parties | Weak and politically  suppressed farmer  associations and parties |
| Administrative developments, approx. 1870-1913 | Continuity | Continuity | Continuity | Continuity |
| 🡪 Impacts on society | Repeated political  integration of  worker associations and  parties | Repeated political  integration of  worker associations and  parties | Repeated political  integration of  worker associations and  parties | Repeated political  suppression of worker  associations and parties |

## Reproduction of administrative institutions

The basic traits of the administration across the cases were set by 1789 and later developments tended to reproduce this administrative legacy. After the loss of Norway in 1814 and subsequent reorganization of the administration, the central-level chancellery in Denmark stayed in control of all appointments, including in the counties (Jørgensen 2000). The creation of urban and rural municipalities in 1837 and 1841, respectively, replaced the village and town councils and thus implied new structures of political-administrative decision-making at the local level. However, the county governors remained in place and their function as organs for control of the local administration was strengthened with the constitution of 1849. Likewise, conflicts between the mayor and the council that proved insolvable were handled by the relevant ministry (Nielsen 2009: 229). The constitution also replaced the collegial system with a ministerial system, which installed ministers as highest authorities and responsible for all affairs within their ministry. However, this did not impact the recruitment norms or culture of the administration, which fundamentally stayed the same (Knudsen 2000: 466–67). Many civil servants openly supported the Right (*Højre*) in the late 19th century, but they withdrew from political agitation as dissatisfaction mounted. With the transition to parliamentarism in 1901, party politics became the main source of election of parliament and civil servants smoothly transferred from semi-political to purely administrative positions (Knudsen 2000: 538, 547–48).

The Norwegian constitution of 1814 established a dual structure separating parliament from the public administration and reaffirming the principle of meritocracy inherited from the union of Denmark-Norway (Gran 1994: 122; Myhre 2018: 46). At the same time, a ministerial system, inspired by Napoleonic reforms, was established with a strict division of labor and further cemented with reforms in 1819, 1831, and 1844 (Gran 1994: 123; Dyrvik and Feldbæk 1996a: 172). Over the 19th century, relatively autonomous directorates and agencies within the ministerial hierarchies took shape, strengthening the level of professionalism (Christensen 2003: 163–64). After 1884, the so-called ‘civil servant state’ (*embetsmannsstat*), which had consolidated a strong *reechtstaat* (Seip 1987; Dyrvik and Feldbæk 1996a: 169), transformed into a modern parliamentary state in which party representatives rather than civil servants were elected to parliament (Christensen 2003: 164–67). As in Denmark, civil servants withdrew from politics. Also like in Denmark, the creation of municipalities did not weaken state control over local administration. The traditional role of local civil servants and county governors in Denmark-Norway continued (Næss et al. 1987: 26–29), even as peasants entered the ranks from around the 1850s (Pryser 1999: 75).

Having been subject to more political contestation between the estates and the proto-parties of Hats and Caps (during the Age of Liberty 1719–1772), Sweden’s administration entered the modern era with less firm norms of meritocracy and higher corruption levels than in Denmark and Norway (Teorell and Rothstein 2015). During the 19th century and particularly from around 1860 to 1875, a series of reforms decisively rooted out patrimonial practices across the administration. This included institutional reforms such as the abolishment of the last formal aristocratic reservations for higher state offices from 1845; a Weberian-like system of payment for civil servants 1855–1860; a new criminal code introducing a law on misconduct of public office in 1862; the abolishment of direct pays for services to individual civil servants in 1868, thus de facto decoupling the civil servant as private person from his or her public office; and reorganizing from a collegial to a bureaucratic, specialized system in 1876 (cementing the ministerial system installed in 1841); and the confirmation of this system of neutral, ministerial civil servants in 1908 (Andersson 2001: 38; Rothstein 2011: 243–44). These reforms created a firmly meritocratic system and led to a remarkable drop in corruption levels from around 1850, which brought the Swedish administration in line with its Scandinavian counterparts (see Teorell and Rothstein 2015: 232).

Rothstein (2011), in one of the most recent assessments, calls this a ‘big bang,’ a dramatic period of institutional change (see also Rothstein and Teorell 2015). Yet, although the administration certainly to major qualitative steps forward via reforms over a short period, the administration was, relatively speaking, extraordinary stable from the first bureaucratic reforms under Gustav Vasa until the breakthrough to democracy in the early 20th century (see, e.g., Therborn 1989; Andersson 2001; Asker 2007; Hallenberg, Holm, and Johansson 2008). If we compare with the rest of Western Europe, Sweden clearly achieved an extraordinarily bureaucratic state from local to central levels already from the early 17th century – as did Denmark-Norway half a century later. Although administrative misconduct was high and systemic at times during the 18th and early 19th centuries, there was an unbroken tradition of the rule of law and a fundamentally bureaucratic model going back to Vasa’s and Oxenstierna’s reforms (Therborn 1989: 14; Ertman 1997: 306-14; Asker 2007: 128–29; see also the discussion in Andersen 2023). Indeed, when the 1809 constitution affirmed the principle of merit and the installation of ombudsmen to control public servants, it referred to provisions in the 1719 Instrument of Government and, in turn, Oxenstierna’s reforms of the 1630s (Nilsson 1999: 114; Andersson 2001: 15–16).

Thus, while we should not underestimate the importance of the post-1789 institutional changes across Scandinavia, which made a real difference in strengthening meritocracy and improving administrative impartiality, we should see these changes as big steps forward on a path already taken before 1789.

Prussia’s administration remained meritocratic at the central level throughout the 19th century. Judges remained firmly protected from political interference and state civil servants were recruited on merits as the clear norm (Gillis 1971: 13; Ledford 2000: 1067). The formal affirmation of the merit principle in the Stein-Hardenberg reforms, the dissolution of the General Directory and installation of ministries, and the introduction of a university education as requirement for employment as state civil servant in 1846 only strengthened the bourgeois trend in the bureaucracy to the point when the bulk of civil servants came from mid-level strata (Gillis 1971: 6–7, 11, 29, 37).

In the first half of the 19th century, the central-level bureaucracy remained dependent on a patrimonial system of local administration and jurisdiction privileging landed elites as officeholders whose rulings were, at least in practice, non-refutable. Although the *Allgemeine Recht* in 1794 installed some limited opportunities for appealing local decisions, landlord privileges continued through the Stein-Hardenberg reforms and only changed in 1848 when local patrimonial courts were formally abolished (Wienfort 2016: 220).

Nevertheless, German historiography generally agrees that the Junkers preserved important strongholds of influence, at least until 1918. Until 1872, the landed elite preserved important formal prerogatives, including the exclusive access to the office of *Landrat*, which remained the chief administrative official of the county, and the right to distribute state taxes and assess county taxes as well as appointing committees to settle disputes between lords and peasants (Blackbourn 1984a: 192). From 1872, the county councilor was no longer necessarily a *Junker*, which marked a decisive blow to the landed elite’s formal powers and the establishment of the principle of bureaucratic accountability (Holborn 1969: 255; Blackbourn 1984a: 192). Yet, even after reforms in the transition to the North German Confederation of 1867 and the German Reich of 1871, some administrative county offices were in practice reserved for noblemen (Berdahl 1972: 8–10). Moreover, the representation in county diets weighed heavily in favor of landed proprietors, and since towns were smaller than rural counties in Prussia, the Junkers dominated politics (Holborn 1969: 255).

Biased administration continued after 1848 not only because of the Junkers’ de facto administrative privileges locally but also due to their strengthened alliance with the central-level bureaucracy. Starting in the late 18th century, the increasing inflow of bourgeois recruits with more liberal views meant that the central-level bureaucracy often looked down upon the quasi-feudal aristocracy. However, the central-level bureaucracy took a conservative-authoritarian turn already from the 1820s, exactly as the liberal-agrarian reforms of Stein and Hardenberg were watered down and came to a halt (Holborn 1964: 466).

This went one step further from the 1850s as part of the reactionary movement in which Junkers and the bureaucratic-industrial elite famously allied ‘iron and rye’ (see Gerschenkrohn 1989). After the 1848-revolution, the monarchy and bureaucracy badly needed an alliance partner to protect against the flooding of the political system by social democrats, and the Junkers with their local administrative privileges seemed the most reliable partner (Bonham 1983: 636; see also Blackbourn 1984b: 210; Steinmetz 1996). Thus, Junkers and bureaucrats came to see it as a common mission to reign in revolutionary forces, in particular the working class (Gillis 1971: 31–35). Two factors further strengthened the alliance: First, reserved seats in the county diets and the three-class voting system of the Prussian Diet were designed to ensure domination of aristocratic interests in politics. Second, over the 19th century Junker sons had managed to convert from agriculture to civil service, which meant that Junkers continued to dominate local administrative offices and courts and, from 1848 in particular, increasingly enrolled into the central-level ministerial agencies, which naturally united Junker interests with those of the bureaucracy (Beck 1995: 132).

In sum, central-level meritocracy and important practices of local-level patrimonialism continued over the long 19th century, which enabled a conservative-repressive alliance between the bureaucrats and local administrative elites from 1848. This historical explanation implies that Scandinavian bureaucrats would have allied with landed elites against farmers and workers over the long 19th century if these landed elites had preserved the kinds of administrative privileges that they did in Prussia.

## Repeated state-society relations

It may have been the case that the state relations with farmers diffused to workers via learning or network overlapping, which would require us to consider socialization factors alongside the state-institutional factor that I propose (see McAdam and Rucht 1993). Alternatively, the top-down and bottom-up mechanisms sketched in the main manuscript may simply have recurred in a new social or historical context.

As it turns out, there was little diffusion at play. Instead, state-farmer relations simply repeated, albeit in a new context of industrialization and with a new social group of workers that was arguably more prone to revolution to start with. Thus, the road to a political society of compromise, or the opposite, was mostly determined by the impartiality of the state administration rather than just the qualities of a single social group or isolated social movement dynamics.

Some elements of diffusion did exist. Across Scandinavia, lib-lab cooperation between liberal farmers’ parties and socialist labor parties became prevalent towards the end of the 19th century, and solidaristic legislation that formed the backbone of the first welfare measures was rooted in existing poor relief policies and health care organized in municipalities by, among others, the peasantry (Elder, Thomas, and Arter 1982: 36–37; Hedström, Sandell, and Stern 2000; Lin and Carroll 2006: 349). Moreover, in Denmark, the consumer cooperatives were based on similar, economic ideas as their agricultural counterparts (Grelle 2013:8). In Norway and Denmark, achieving universal suffrage was a major source of cooperation between liberals and social democrats (Terjesen 2017: 225–27). In Sweden, social democrats adopted agrarian reform as integral part of its program and thus started to mobilize smallholders from the 1900s (Berman 2006: 158).

However, even though inspiration on organizational practices was evident, farmers and workers of Scandinavia remained fairly separated social groups with basically different interests (Gundelach 1988; Bengtsson 2019b: 11). Each party had its own form of interaction with the state. When lib-lab cooperation materialized, it was largely due to a common fight against conservatives but one that involved compromise rather than integration of preferences in which farmers and workers got their own concessions (Esping-Andersen 1985: 74–82).

In Prussia, the organizational and interest overlap between farmers and workers was even weaker (Eley 1980: 21–22, 122; Berman 2006: 158). Not least, this was due to the pattern of state repression, which had, first, pacified peasants and, later, made them susceptible to alliance with extremists among landlords and others. Basically, the authorities continued repression when, under industrialization, a new group of factory workers emerged. Only, the organization of repression was more systematic and brutal as legalized through anti-socialist legislation and sometimes going beyond legal mandates. Together, as I show in the main manuscript, these state practices contributed to polarizing farmers and workers and thus make lib-lab alliances impossible.

# Quantitative evidence

## Outcomes

Although quantitative indicators are deficient in several crucial ways, which instead invites for qualitative analysis, some proxies are available that may be seen as preliminary evidence. Figures A1-A3 examines the robustness of my qualitative findings using expert-coded, interval-scaled, quantitative indicators from the Varieties of Democracy dataset, which includes country-level quantitative indicators of political regimes, civil society, political parties, and state apparatuses from 1789 till today (Coppedge et al. 2022a; Coppedge et al. 2022b). As point of reference, all figures compare Prussia and the three Scandinavian countries with the region of Western Europe, an average across Austria, Bavaria, Belgium, Brunswick, France, Hamburg, Hanover, Hesse-Darmstadt, Hesse-Kassel, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mecklenburg Schwerin, Modena, Nassau, Netherlands, Oldenburg, Papal States, Piedmont-Sardinia, Portugal, Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, Saxony, Spain, Switzerland, Two Sicilies, United Kingdom, and Würtemberg, but excluding Prussia and Scandinavia.

First, I study the outcome, but given the limitations of the quantitative measures, I can only look at the organizational and ideational features across all civic associations and parties of a given country. Figure A2 studies civil society density based on the indicator ‘CSO participatory environment,’ which is a composite assessment of the extent of voluntarism and broadness of active participation in associations outside the state. We see the same pattern as for the qualitative data in the main manuscript. The three Scandinavian countries started with relatively low levels, but these accelerated from the mid-19th century and outpaced Prussian and Western European average levels. Since the data do not enable distinctions between association type or social group, they may hide the differences in Prussia between farmers and workers found in the qualitative evidence.

Figure A2: Civil society density level, 1789-1913



Figure A3 shows levels of anti-systemic activity in civil society, using the indicator ‘CSO anti-system movements.’ To ensure that we only focus on the anti-systemic movements, I only consider those movements identified as ‘Insurrectionary,’ ‘Paramilitary,’ or ‘Anti-Democratic’ (i.e., unwillingness to accept constitutional provisions and electoral outcomes) in the indicator ‘CSO anti-system movement character.’ Again, the results are similar to the qualitative evidence with Prussia ranking highest and with Prussia and Western Europe ranking much higher than Norway and Denmark. Sweden is consistently lower than Western Europe and Prussia until a sharp increase from 1899 to 1900, which may, however, be due to coding inconsistencies between the standard and historical V-Dem data.

Figure A3: Civil society extremism level, 1789-1913



Figure A3 also illustrates the point that Scandinavian civil society was not uniformly peaceful. There were revolutionary elements in the Norwegian workers’ movement in the 1840s and the early 1900s as well as among Danish workers (Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell 2018) and at times among Scandinavian unionists in the 1840s and 1860s in particular (Glenthøj and Ottosen 2021), some of them causing violence. Yet, as also shown in the main manuscript, the Scandinavian civil societies were significantly less revolutionary and less violent than their Prussian counterpart.

Figure A4 employs the party institutionalization index, comprising components of general party organizational strength and stability of voter constituencies. While no separate indicators of party extremism exist, this index may be used to measure party extremism as well. The trends corroborate the qualitative evidence with sharp increases in Scandinavia from the late 19th century, quickly outpacing Prussia and Western Europe.

Figure A4: Party institutionalization, 1789-1913



## The explanation

The second part of this quantitative examination includes data on the main explanatory variable (impartial administration) and the specific state actions of the top-down mechanism. There are no indicators for the impact of state actions on political society organization and ideas, i.e., the bottom-up mechanism. Nor are there separate indicators for the two organizational factors of central-level meritocracy and state control over local administration, undergirding impartiality. V-Dem’s ‘Criteria for appointment decisions in the state administration’ comes closest, but only focuses on the central level. Figure A5 instead displays the development of impartial administration over time, using V-Dem’s indicator of ‘Rigorous and impartial public administration,’ which proxies the aggregate level of the public (i.e., local and state) administration’s impartiality.

This shows, as expected, that Scandinavia began the modern period (i.e., after 1789) with higher levels of impartiality than Prussia, and this ranking remained intact throughout the period. We also see that Prussia to some extent catches up with Scandinavia from around 1848 but not entirely, which probably reflects the formal abolishment but strong continuation of local patrimonialism as well as the conservative turn of the central administration. Finally, Sweden probably improves stepwise from the mid-19th century due to well-known anti-corruption and pro-meritocracy reforms, eventually raising the level of impartiality beyond the Western European average (for elaboration of these developments, see the section ‘Impartial administration as a critical antecedent’ below).

Figure A5: Level of impartial administration, 1789-1913



Figures A6 and A7 examine the state actions of the top-down mechanism using quantitative indicators from V-Dem and comparing Scandinavia with Prussia and Western Europe. Figure A5 shows levels of what we might describe as state support for civil society. I created an index of five indicators (‘CSO entry and exit,’ ‘CSO repression,’ ‘CSO consultation,’ ‘Religious organization repression,’ and ‘Religious organization consultation’) representing the extent of de facto allowance, repression, and consultation of civil society as a whole. As civil society grows in Scandinavia from around the mid-19th century, the level of support by the state quickly catches up with Prussia and Western Europe eventually outpacing them by the late 19th century.

Figure A6: Level of state support for civil society, 1789-1913



An alternative indicator of state support for civil society is freedom of speech. Figure A7 shows an index I created of two indicators (‘Freedom of discussion for men’ and ‘Freedom of discussion for women’). The data support the qualitative findings with Scandinavia scoring higher than Prussia and Western Europe throughout most of the period. Prussia catches up in 1848-1849 but not completely. Denmark makes a similar, dramatic move upwards with the new constitution in 1849 but to a much higher level than in Prussia. This reflects the more sustained liberal development in Denmark relative to the restoration in Prussia from the 1850s, while it also shows that both Norway and Sweden were well ahead already before 1848.

Figure A7: Freedom of speech, 1789-1913



Figure A8 conducts the same analysis for state acceptance of parties, using an index I created of two indicators (‘Barriers to parties’ and ‘Party ban) that represents formal and informal repression of parties, hindering them from organizing effectively and participating in regular politics. The data support the qualitative findings with Scandinavia scoring higher than Prussia and Western Europe throughout the period (except Norway in a short period before 1850).

Figure A8: Level of state acceptance of parties, 1789-1913



# Other supplementary evidence

Table A4: Membership in farmer associations, ca. 1850 and 1900

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Denmark* | *Norway* | *Sweden* | *Prussia* |
| Ca. 1850 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Ca. 1900 | N/A  (*De danske Landboforeninger*) | 150  (*Norsk Landmandsforbund*, 1896) | N/A  (*Svenska Lantmännens Riksförbund*) | 210000  (*Deutscher Bauernverband*) |

Table A5: Municipal institutions

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Denmark* | *Norway* | *Sweden* | *Prussia* |
| Creation of  municipalities | 1837 (urban) 1841 (rural) | 1837  (urban and rural) | 1862  (urban and rural) | 1848  (urban and rural) |
| Suffrage criteria | Males  Property  Ownership  Smaller  households | Males  Property  Ownership  Smaller  households | Males  Property ownership and tenants  Graded voting according to size of property/land inhabited | Males  Three-class tax-based |

Table A6: Formal equality and freedom of religion, 1789–1913

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Denmark* | *Norway* | *Sweden* | *Prussia* |
| State church  established | 1537–1849 | 1537– | 1571– | 1817– (1875– only in Prussian provinces of Germany) |
| Legal to form churches outside state church | 1849– | 1842– | 1860– | 1871– |

# The pathway of Prussia

Figure A9: Explanation of weak and extremist political society in Prussia

Biased  
administration

Weak and extremist political society

State  
repression

State  
repression

Radicalization of workers’ movements

Undermining and  
 radicalization of farmers’ movements

French Revolution 1789

Industrialization  
approx. 1870

Figure A9 elaborates the pathway of Prussia in a causal model similar to Figure 1 in the main manuscript. Before 1789, the Prussian administration was, to put it simply, relatively impartial at its central level but biased at its local level. The critical antecedent in the model is ‘biased administration,’ emphasizing the local administrative component, which was decisive for the path taken in two ways: First, it was responsible for stalling agrarian reform, which was an indirect form of state repression that weakened farmer political societies to begin with. Second, it directly repressed farmer and, later, worker movements through everyday decision-making in village and Länder politics and administration before and after 1848. The latter was augmented by the alliance of local administrative elites with central-level bureaucracy, which started in the 1820s but accelerated in the 1850s. As expected, state repression succeeded in decisively undermining farmer movements. However, it did not, despite the intention, succeed in decisively undermining worker movements, as the pressures from industrialization were simply too strong. Nevertheless, as expected, it did radicalize workers to the extent that this part of political society became revolutionary and unhelpful for stable democratization.

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