

Class 3: Social Movement Theories

Framing, civil society

Dr. Michael C. Zeller

Agenda for the day

- Opening notes
- Social movement theories covered so far
- Framing
- Poll: framing, SMs/CSOs, democracy
- Civil society: An alternative approach to understand social movements?
- Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Opening notes



Presentation groups

Remember: topic to me at least by Week 4

December

January

Presentations line-up

Date	Presenters	Method
4 Dec:		TBD
11 Dec:		TBD
18 Dec:		TBD

Social movement theories covered so far

- Collective behaviour theory
- Resource mobilisation theory
- Political process theory



Recall overview from Tarrow (2011)

Parent Scholarship

Social Movement Studies (SMS)

Marx and Engels, class conflict
structuralist (leaves little room for the mechanisms that actually draw individuals in collective action)
legacy for SMS: class forces and other cleavages spurring collective action

Collective behaviour theory
(grievances, [relative] deprivation)

Lenin and resource mobilisation
vanguardism
legacy for SMS: focus on leaders/organisers (mobilising interests) and organisations

Resource mobilisation theory

leadership, organisations, and various resources

Gramsci and cultural hegemony
counterculture of working class can overcome bourgeois hegemonic culture
legacy for SMS: constructivism, prefiguration, and movement impact on culture

Framing and Collective identity theories

'cultural turn' (from anthropology, sociology)

forming consensus in movements

Tilly's Polity Model

the structure of the state/polity

legacy for SMS: repertoires of contention, WUNC (worthiness, unity,

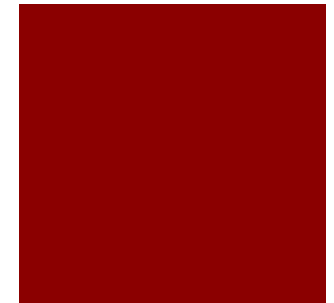
Political process theory

opportunities, constraints, and the structure of contentious politics

Framing

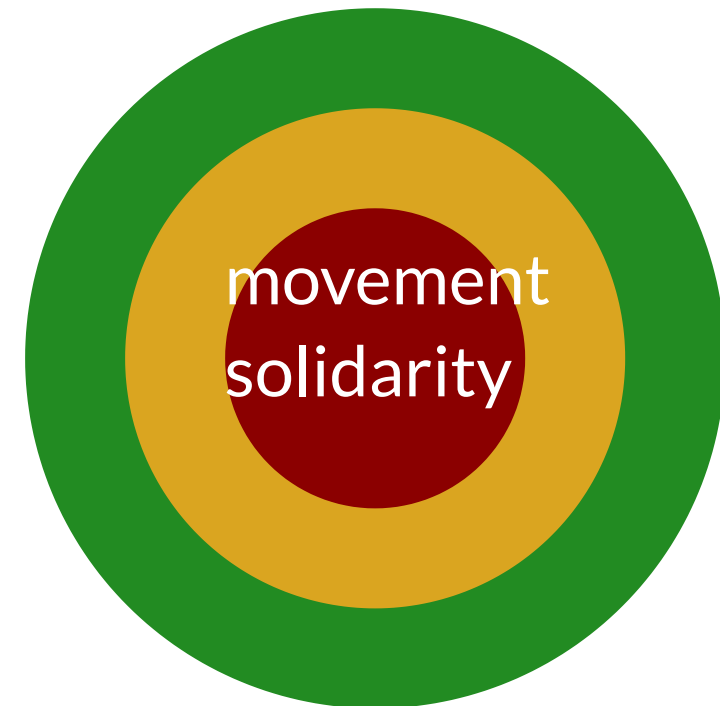
The 'cultural turn' and new social movements

- origins: **Gramscian** concentration on internal life of movements, values and **meaning-making**; otherwise the central contribution of '**new social movements**' is missed
- some key scholars: E. Goffmann, **framing** **emotion** **identity**
A. Melucci, F. Polletta, J. Jasper, **work** **construction**
R. Benford, D. Snow
- key concepts:
 - **collective identity**
 - **emotions**
 - **framing**



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 - **framing**



Framing - definition and origins

- broadly, **framing** refers to the meanings individuals or groups attach to events, developments, activities, and other individuals/groups.
 - previously, this had also been covered by referring to **ideology**
- origins of '**framing**': Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974)
 - frames link **objective conditions** to **subjective perceptions**
- Benford and Snow (1986) connect this concept to social movements
 - how do collective actors collectively determine *what's going on here* — and once they make that determination, how do they try to convince others?

Framing - why?

- Is there a problem?
- Can it be fixed?
- How can it be fixed?
- What must be done?
- **Frames provide answers to these questions—they are essential to movement activity**

Framing - why?

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- What must be done?
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- types of **frames**:
 - *diagnostic*: what's the problem and who's to blame
 - *prognostic*: how can the problem be solved
 - *motivational*: why should we go solve this problem

Framing - an example

- types of **frames**: *diagnostic*: what's the problem and who's to blame; *prognostic*: how can the problem be solved; *motivational*: why should we go solve this problem

deaths from drunk driving

- previously, 'just' sad, but bound to happen, like other accidents
- But then (re-)framed:
 - Some immoral person drank and drove
 - People should not drive drunk
 - It is not fair for a person to die because of another's immorality

Injustice frames (Gamson, 2013)

- When impersonal, abstract forces are perceived as responsible for problems/wrongs/suffering, people tend to accept, tolerate, and cope

BUT...

- When problems/wrongs/suffering are attributed to individuals' or groups' *ignorance, indifference, or malice*, the result is a **sense of injustice**

Injustice frames are often the core of **diagnosing** issues that movements care about

Further types of frames

- **Master frame:** an overarching frame that smaller/sub-issue frames fit into
 - e.g., the 'Great Replacement'
 - can accommodate subordinate frames about welfare provision, ethno-cultural identity, maintaining liberal democracy, religious heritage and/or freedom, etc.

Further types of frames

- **Counter frame:** a frame created to oppose another group's frame (cf. Mayer 1995; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996, 2008)
 - e.g., abortion contention in the U.S.:
 - one side: '*pro-choice*', freedom to choose to abort or not
 - other side: 'where is the baby's *choice*? (rights of unborn)

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 - one side: women's *right*
 - other side: *regret* of women who have aborted

Framing contest (Alex Wong, Getty Images)



other examples?

Frame alignment (Benford and Snow 2000)

- **frame bridging** - linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem
 - e.g., German activists against World Bank and IMF, linking their frames to those of peace, ecosystem, women's, localism, and labour movements
- **frame amplification** - idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or beliefs
 - e.g., white supremacists stressing 'white *pride*' or preserving white race (e.g., 14 words)

Frame alignment (Benford and Snow 2000)

- **frame extension** - depicting an SMO's interests and frame(s) as extending beyond its primary interests to include issues and concerns that are presumed to be of importance to potential adherents
 - e.g., peace movement: money spent on military could be used for education, infrastructure, social programmes, etc. — so groups that want more funding are potential recruits
- **frame transformation** - changing old understandings and meanings and/or generating new ones
 - e.g., drunk driving example: accident → moral failing

Frame resonance (Benford and Snow 2000)

resonance - degree to which a movement's framing aligns with beliefs, values, experiences of constituents/audience/public

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- **Salience:**
 - *centrality* - does it **matter** to potential members/participants?
 - *experiential commensurability* - does it fit with the experience of potential members/participants?
 - *narrative fidelity* - does it accord with wider cultural narratives/traditions?

Further on framing... interview with William Gamson



Poll: framing, SMs/CSOs, democra

LMU

LUDWIG-
MAXIMILIANS-
UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN



Take the survey at

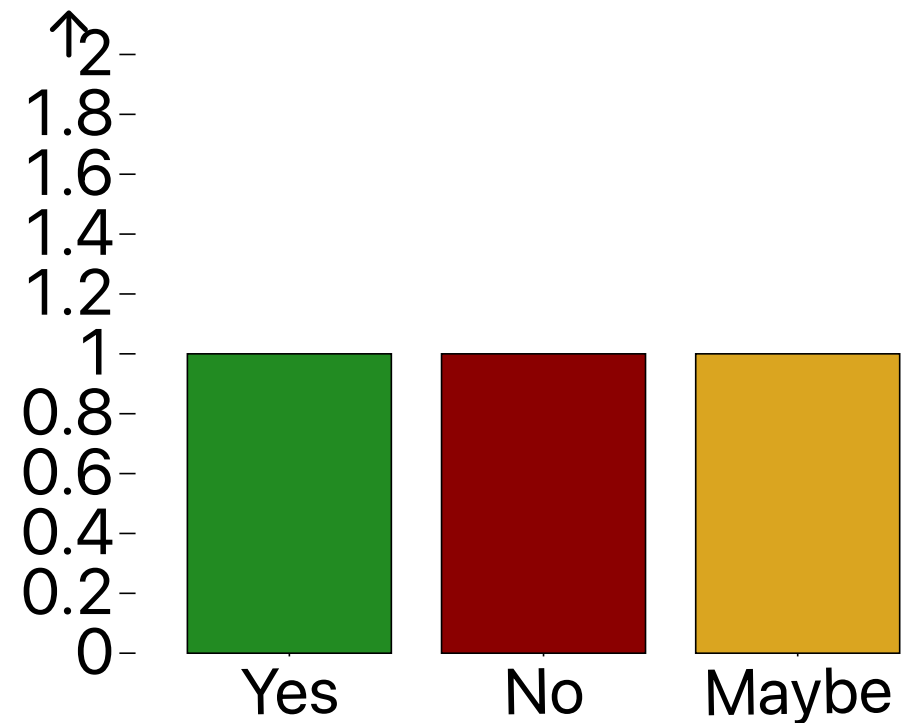
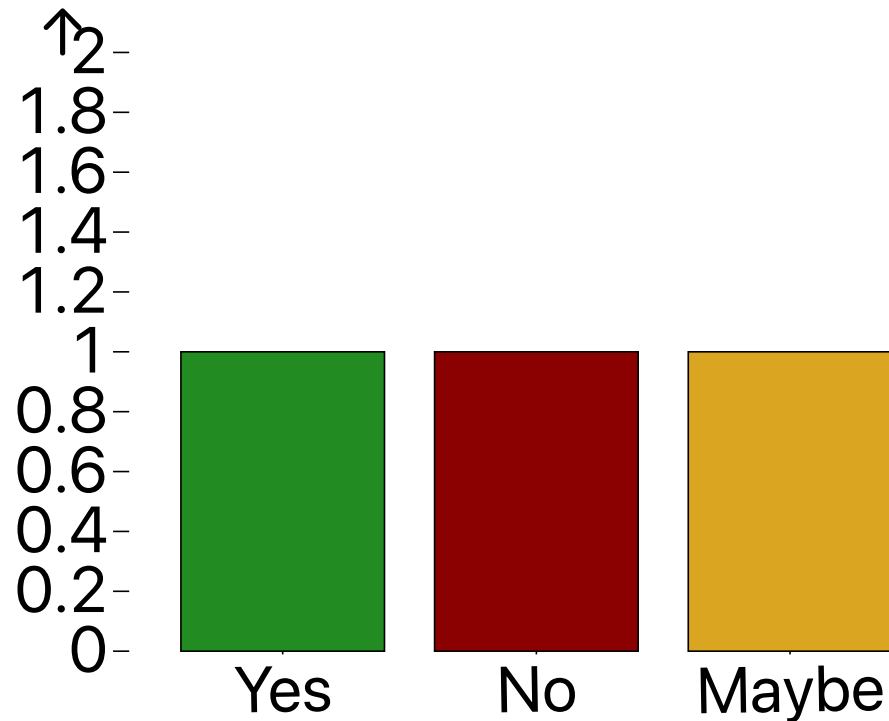
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- Do movements always challenge dominant frames within a society?
 - Does ‘frame bridging’ increase a movement’s chances of having an impact?
 - Do framing strategies differ significantly in authoritarian vs. democratic regimes?
-
- Movement activism is a good thing for democratic societies
 - A large civil society, with many citizens participating in voluntary associations, is beneficial for liberal democratic political systems

Poll results (Respondents: 5)

Do movements always challenge dominant frames within a society?

Does *frame bridging* increase a movement's chances of having an impact?



Civil society: An alternative approach to understand social movements?

- concept of civil society
- civil society and democracy
- (un)civil society (Berman 1997)



Introducing concept of civil society

- **civil society**: organised (non-state, non-market) societal activity
 - composed of *voluntary association* based on *shared interests*
 - fuzzy conceptual boundaries
 - *Bolleyer*: voluntary members, non-profit, private, self-governing, formalised infrastructure
- Alexis de Tocqueville: **free association** essential for democracy

Larry Diamond on civil society and democracy (until



- i. monitoring government performance; (ii) mobilising political participation (voting is bare minimum—democracy needs more engagement); (iii) force [parties] to become more

Civil society and democracy

- organisational participation (contributing to democratic citizenry)
- interest representation (similar function to parties)
- societal responsiveness (alternative mechanism of political input)

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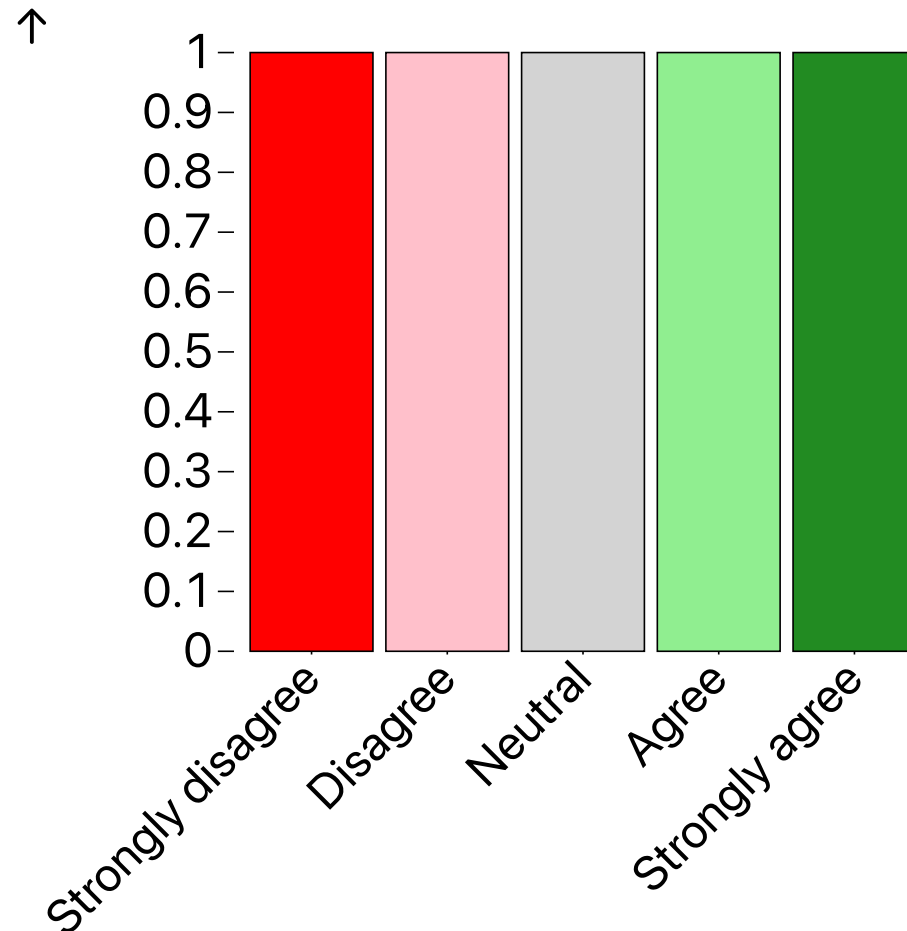


democratic culture

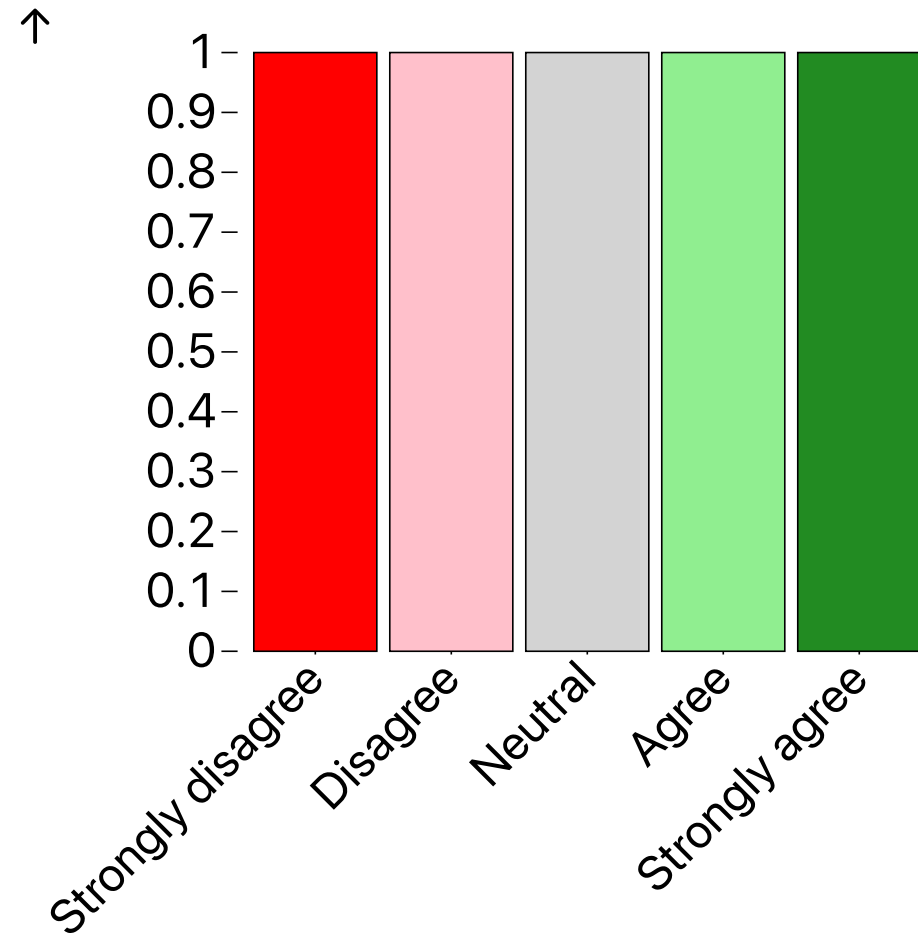
- BUT... assumption that political engagement is democratically positive
- is this a *fair weather* theory: civil society contributes to democracy only in already healthy democratic settings? Can it combat strains/crises?

Movements/Civil society and Democracy

- movement activism *good* for democracy



large civil society is beneficial for liberal democracy



Berman (1997) - Civil society in Weimar - theory

- Tocqueville
 - neo-Tocquevillian scholars: Putnam's focus on community and social capital (e.g., *Bowling Alone*)
 - **associationism** both indicator of healthy democracy and prerequisite for it
- W. Kornhauser, H. Arendt: 'mass society' (collapse of intermediate associations)
 - industrialisation and modernity estranged citizens from each other — lack of *belonging*

Theory puzzle

- neo-Tocquevillean theories:
 - high levels of associationism = good for democracy
- Huntingtonian institutionalist theories:
 - without high **political institutionalisation**, active and mobilised citizenry degenerates into instability, disorder, and even violence

Types of puzzles (Day and Koivu 2019)

- Empirical puzzles
 - Contra expectations - against conventional wisdom or theoretical expectation
 - e.g., Soviet liberalisation and disintegration—no one expected it!
 - Divergence/convergence - (D) multiple cases that look similar experience different outcomes; (C) multiple cases that look different experience the same outcome
 - e.g., (D) post-Soviet transition – looks the same, but...
 - e.g., (C) third wave of democratisation - Portugal, Latin America, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan
 - Variation over time - conditions appear stable but suddenly change
 - e.g., Mugabe ouster (in power 37 years, 1980-2017)—all seemed stable...
- Theoretical puzzles
 - Conceptual omission - necessary concept missing from theoretical framework
 - e.g., private agents in repressive action (Jennifer Earl, social control)
 - Theoretical convergence - one body of literature weighs in on another
 - e.g., Schock (2005): non-violence theory to modify social movement theory
 - e.g., 'Punctuated equilibrium' (evolutionary biology) used in institutionalism
 - Squaring the circle - contradictory theoretical arguments against each other
- Methodological puzzles
 - Measurement - new way to measure a concept

Contextual background - *Wilhelmine Germany*

- various spurts of associational growth in 19th and early 20th century
 - legal liberalisation, expanding wealth (rise of bourgeoisie), universal suffrage granted – BUT...
 - failure of liberal political parties to aggregate interests and bolster institutional politics
 - economic deprivation
 - trend of associations emerging in response to strain
 - nationalist/anti-democratic actors targeted dissatisfied for recruitment

- influential/crucial case (Gerring 2007)
 - Weimar as ‘crucial theoretical testing ground’
 - (Wilhelmine) Germany as comparable to U.S. for high level of associationalism (*Vereinsmeierei*)

Civil society in Weimar

- post-WWI, another spurt of associational growth
 - corresponding exodus from centrist parties, which were numerous and fractious – and seen as not representing the needs of constituents (tool of ‘big capitalists’)
- influential civil society organisations like Stahlhelm – promote nationalist agenda
- NSDAP capitalises on foundations of nationalist associationalism and others dissatisfied with status quo



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Without the opportunity to exploit Weimar’s rich associational network, in short, the Nazis would not have been able to capture important sectors of the German electorate so quickly and efficiently. (p421-422)

What occurred in Germany was no less than an **inversion of neo-Tocquevillean theory**; not only did participation in **civil society organizations fail to contribute to republican virtue**, but it in fact **subverted it**. ... Private associations were correctly seen to offer benefits that the traditional bourgeois parties were failing to provide, such as a sense of community and unity. (p417)

(cf. **Allen 1984**)

- **what do you know about associational activity in the Weimar era?**

- “*It was weak political institutionalization rather than a weak civil society that was Germany’s main problem...*”
- NSDAP rise: not through attracting apolitical Germans—instead, attracting highly active individuals ↓
 - expand party’s appeal and consolidate position

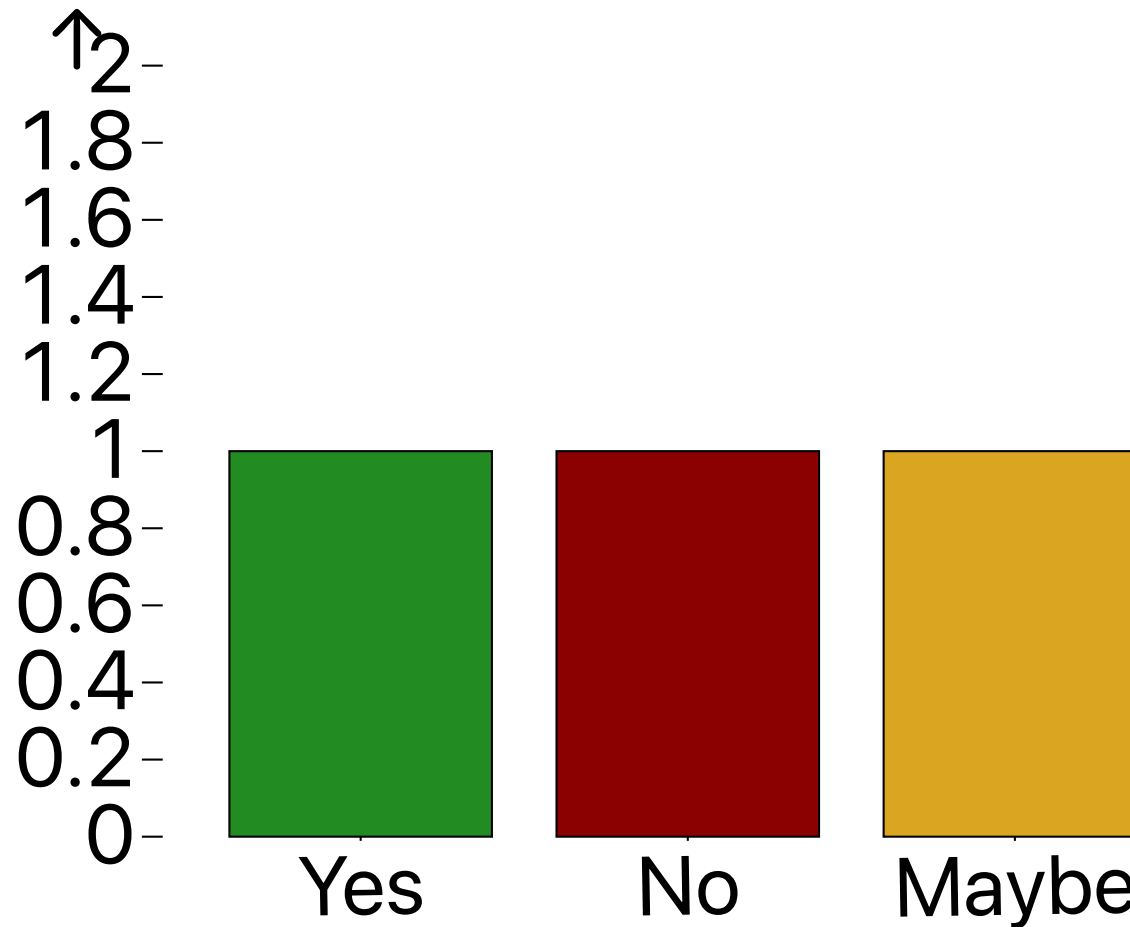
Civil society activity alone, in short, could not overcome the country’s social divisions or provide the political cohesion that would have been necessary to weather the crises which beset Germany beginning in 1914. For this, strong and flexible political institutions, particularly political parties, were necessary.

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Coda: authoritarian vs. democratic contexts

Do framing strategies differ significantly in authoritarian vs. democratic regimes?



Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Anonymous feedback here: <https://forms.gle/AjHt6fcnwZxkSg4X8>

Alternatively, please send me an email: m.zeller@lmu.de

References

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