

and religious conservatives intensified in the 1890s, politicians in the former camp realized that public school teachers could be a powerful political force in defense of their ideals, and passed laws to encourage the rapid growth of national teacher organizations and promote their *esprit de corps*. These associations were not yet functioning as unions. It took the devastation of World War One to radicalize enough teachers to change that. By 1923, both major teachers' federations identified themselves as trade unions and demanded the legal right to organize as such; by 1928, France's two major labor federations had organized more than 70 percent of France's teachers, compared with just 10 percent of blue-collar workers (p. 121). In the wake of World War Two, teachers formed their own national federation (FEN); and over the next five years, FEN organized the first large-scale teachers' strikes, autonomous from other state workers, in French history. A law legalizing public sector unions, including teachers, was finally passed in 1949, but by then France's teachers had already established that right *de facto*.

The framework that Toloudis brings to the analysis of his cases is useful for organizing his historical presentation because it highlights key causal relationships, but it is not a fully developed theory. We may see this more clearly if we broaden the comparative net to include Canada. In that country, educational policy and teacher organization occurs mainly at the provincial level, rather than the national level as in France or the city level as in the United States. Selective engagement dynamics doubtless favored more conservative teachers' associations and unions as they did in the other two countries, but in Canada this imperative did not result in centralization of state policy or teacher organizations. While both France and the United States had one or two national teachers' unions by the 1960s, Canada still has different K-12 teachers' unions in every province and no national federation of these provincial unions. This despite the fact that most other public sector workers are organized into two major national unions (CUPE and NUPGE), and university faculty almost all belong to a single national federation (CAUT). Moreover, some provinces

(such as Ontario) have multiple teachers' unions while others (e.g., British Columbia) have just one. To explain these kinds of international and inter-provincial variations, we need more analytic tools and a more fully developed theory than this book provides. That said, anyone who aspires to develop a theory capable of explaining such variations must read this book.

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*Strength in Numbers: The Political Power of Weak Interests*, by **Gunnar Trumbull**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012. 256 pp. \$49.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780674066410.

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It is customary to think that "diffuse interests" (i.e., the interests of large pools of "unaffiliated individuals" [p. 10]) lack the capacity to act on their interests. Gunnar Trumbull's *Strength in Numbers* directly challenges this contention. "Diffuse interests" are not weak: they "have historically nearly always found representation in public policy" (p. 1). Of particular importance is the ability to have one's own policy claims endorsed as "publicly legitimate" (p. 22). Activists, firms and policymakers can address this legitimacy challenge in two ways. They can elaborate legitimating narratives that help coordinate constituents' self-representations, structure policy responses, and diffuse normative expectations about policy needs (pp. 26-27). They can also form coalitions. In addition to legitimating narratives and group coalitions, Trumbull emphasizes the significance of economic and political institutions, chief among them electoral law. Liberal economies favor "highly diffuse interests" (p. 30). Proportional representation tends to give precedence to "sectoral" interests (p. 31).

To corroborate this argument, the author examines the degree of representation of diffuse interests in five policy domains: consumer protection (Chapters Two and Three), the regulation of the retailing sector (Chapter Four), credit protection (Chapter Five), European Union agricultural policies (Chapter

Six), and the regulation of pharmaceutical standards (Chapter Seven). The approach is comparative and historical with a focus on advanced industrialized countries: Austria, Britain, France, Japan, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the United States. With the exception of Chapter Three, which is exclusively devoted to consumer mobilization in postwar France, each chapter juxtaposes or contrasts different case studies. These are tightly argued and documented. Herein lies the strength of the book: its documentation and narratives are impeccable.

To retrace the historical developments of the different types of public policy under consideration, Trumbull draws on a wide array of sources: archival material, newspaper articles, administrative and organizational reports, association bulletins and newsletters, obscure specialized journals, and interviews with key protagonists. Readers willing to endure the bane of endnotes by checking their contents will quickly realize the soundness of these historical forays. The first contribution of *Strength in Numbers* is therefore to shed light on groups that have not been studied by the social-movement literature: consumers, small retailers, and borrowers on the credit market. A second, analytically related, contribution is to show that the regulatory capacity of concentrated interests—such as the farm lobby in Europe and the pharmaceutical industry in the United States, France, Germany, and Britain—can be constrained by policy narratives that are not fully under their control.

The case studies are well grounded empirically. They are also rich with stimulating comparative insights. For instance, Trumbull documents the varying successes of small shopkeepers reacting to the competition of large retailers in Germany and France (Chapter Four). The contrast is instructive. Shopkeepers in Germany were able to check effectively the economic expansion of their large-format competitors, the hypermarkets, by allying themselves with labor unions and the Catholic right in the name of decent work hours and the preservation of family life. The proportional system of representation helped them in this endeavor because of the incentives for cross-group coalitions which it creates. By contrast, mass retailers

in France, operating within the institutional setting of majoritarian rule, were in a position to credibly portray themselves as the champions of the consuming public's broad interests. Their alliance with consumer groups was consistent with this strategy and the legitimating discourse that accompanied it (p. 119).

Throughout the book, Olson's *Logic of Collective Action* punctuates the analysis as a negative foil (pp. 3–8, 30, 66, 71–72, 99–100, 157, 207–208), and it is worth asking what this book adds to the state of the debate on the relationships between collective interests and collective action. On this score, several remarks need to be made. It should first be noted that, in contradistinction to some statements presented at the outset of the book (see the reference to “the historical record of group mobilization,” p. 2), its primary focus is on policies, not collective mobilization. With the exception of borrowers, all the cases of diffuse interests being considered are instances of interests that are already *organized*. Consequently, the book leaves aside the question of how diffuse interests get organized in the first place and, perhaps more importantly, how they come to be perceived as “interests.” While Olson is theorizing the factors enabling groups to organize for action geared to shared interests, Trumbull is actually concerned with the impact of organized groups on policies.

This focus probably explains why *Strength in Numbers* does not explore how different properties of collective goods (their jointness of supply, their exclusive character, or their jointness of production) affect political capacities and strategies (on this issue see, for instance, the work of Chong and the analyses of Marwell and Oliver). Obviously, political capacities and strategies bear on policy outcomes. This is one of the leitmotifs of the book. It is therefore not so clear why Trumbull bypasses theoretical developments that account for discrepancies between Olson's predictive claims and some obvious facts about collective action.

*Strength in Numbers* points to various explanatory leads that have been identified as relevant, or conditionally relevant, for quite some time: framing effects (the issue of legitimacy), opportunity structures (the

impact of institutional settings) and political coalitions. Still, these leads taken together do not amount to a theory. Why do some explanatory factors appear to be more significant in some cases than in others: "tradition" for Scandinavian countries (p. 35), electoral law in the case of France (Chapters Three and Four), types of economic institutions for the United States, Britain, Japan, Germany, and Austria (Chapter Two), or narratives in the case of credit market policies in France and England?

Numerous questions are therefore left open. We still need to know to what extent institutional settings turn out to be constraining depending on the type of interests at stake. The language adopted by Trumbull on this score is ambiguous ("Institutional contexts . . . have the power to *shape* and constrain a group's ability to translate its interests into policy," p. 123). Similarly, we need to know whether and under which conditions economic institutions might trump political ones, as the observations presented in Chapter Two suggest, or the extent to which narratives have an independent effect.

An additional challenge concerns the validation of the main claims. The research idiom adopted by Trumbull, exclusively centered in narratives, makes it difficult to assess which metrics would operationalize explanatory factors (narratives, institutions, coalitions). The very notion of diffuse interests is also open to varying interpretations. Size obviously is not the decisive criterion: in France the number of retail businesses fluctuated around 400,000 between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s (p. 206). In 2005, the number of farmers totaled 400,000 (p. 153). Despite this similarity in size, the author classifies the former as "concentrated" and the latter as "diffuse."

Equally worthy of attention is the role played by state actors. In two-thirds of the cases, state agencies either initiated consumer organizations or provided them with crucial resources (Chapter Two). Chapter Five, on credit market policies, places almost exclusive emphasis on the action of government officials. Borrowers do not weigh in. The book's main thesis then is open to question: what exactly do we mean by the "strength" of diffuse interests if, in most

instances, their success is conditional on the state's active involvement?

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*The Cuban Revolution as Socialist Human Development*, by **Henry Veltmeyer** and **Mark Rushton**. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2013. 368 pp. \$28.00 paper. ISBN: 9781608462445.

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*The Cuban Revolution as Socialist Human Development* is a wide-ranging, accessible, and well-researched account of the various definitions and approaches to human development in general, and of the Cuban Revolution's socialist model, in particular. Henry Veltmeyer and Mark Rushton argue that the Cuban Revolution represents a desirable alternative to the model of human development advocated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP model, the authors state, aims to reform the capitalist system and thus fails to deal with the structural and systemic sources of poverty and inequality. The UNDP model incorrectly assumes that social conditions inevitably improve as a result of economic growth, and is bound to a liberal notion of freedom as individual economic and political freedom (i.e., abstract rights) and of equality as equality of opportunity. The Cuban model of human development, they argue, rejects the opposition of equity to growth and understands freedom and equality to be inextricably connected, with the establishment of equal socio-economic conditions necessary to secure freedom, defined not as freedom of choice, but as freedom from constraints (p. 211). The ideology of the Cuban Revolution, as articulated by Che Guevara (channeling the early Marx), emphasizes the importance of establishing conditions of wellbeing for everyone in health, education, employment, housing and basic necessities so that individuals may freely pursue self-fulfillment, not in opposition to one another but as part of a collective (p. 125). Veltmeyer and Rushton contend that in spite of certain policy errors committed during its 55-year history and a "democratic deficit"