



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



Coversheet

This is the accepted manuscript (post-print version) of the article.

Contentwise, the post-print version is identical to the final published version, but there may be differences in typography and layout.

How to cite this publication

Please cite the final published version:

Møller, J. (2016). Composite and Loose Concepts, Historical Analogies, and the Logic of Control in Comparative Historical Analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 45(4), 651-677.
DOI: [10.1177/0049124115578031](https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124115578031)

Publication metadata

Title:	<i>Composite and Loose Concepts, Historical Analogies, and the Logic of Control in Comparative Historical Analysis</i>
Author(s):	<i>Jørgen Møller</i>
Journal:	<i>Sociological Methods & Research</i>
DOI/Link:	10.1177/0049124115578031
Document version:	Accepted manuscript (post-print)

General Rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

**Composite and Loose Concepts, Historical Analogies, and the Logic of Control in
Comparative Historical Analysis**

Jørgen Møller

Professor, PhD

Department of Political Science, Aarhus University,

Bartholins Allé, Bygning 1331,

8000 Aarhus C, Denmark

E-mail: jm@ps.au.dk

Telephone: +45 8915 2203

Forthcoming in *Sociological Methods & Research*

**Composite and Loose Concepts, Historical Analogies, and the Logic of Control in
Comparative Historical Analysis**

ABSTRACT:

The use of controlled comparisons pervades comparative historical analysis. Heated debates have surrounded the methodological purchase of such comparisons. However, the quality and validity of the conceptual building blocks on which the comparisons are based have largely been ignored. This paper discusses a particular problem pertaining to these issues: the danger of creating false historical analogies which do not serve to control for relevant explanatory factors. It is argued that this danger increases when we use composite ('thick') concepts which are aggregated via a ('loose') family resemblance logic. It is demonstrated that this problem seriously affects the way the concept of feudalism has entered comparative historical analysis. On this basis, an alternative conceptual strategy—centered on teasing out the core attributes of thick and loose concepts—is proposed

COMPOSITE AND LOOSE CONCEPTS, HISTORICAL ANALOGIES, AND THE LOGIC OF CONTROL IN COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Historical sociologists have produced a series of influential attempts to answer some of the most important questions of social science, including questions concerning state formation, regime change, and the international order (e.g. Moore [1966]1991; Tilly 1990; Downing 1992; Ertman 1997; Hui 2005; Møller 2015). The methodological pros and cons of historical analysis have been the object of heated debates. A number of scholars have highlighted the ability of historical sociology to deal with endogeneity and causal complexity, timing and path dependency, to elucidate micro-foundations of causal relationships, and to investigate whether contextual factors suppress relationships in particular time periods (Skocpol and Somers 1980; Tilly 1984; Sewell 1996; Thelen 1999; Mahoney 2000; Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010; Boix 2011). Others have singled out a number of potential pitfalls of comparative historical research, including the many variables, small n-problem, the non-independence of cases, historical multicollinearity, and the tendency to fit theories to cases (Lijphart 1971; Bartolini 1993; Coppedge 2012; more generally, see Western 2001).

In this paper, I focus on an issue that has been strangely absent in these debates. My point of departure here is that—as some have applauded (e.g. Skocpol 1979, 1984; Skocpol and Somers 1980) and others derided (Abbott 1991; Sewell 1996; Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010)—‘history’ has entered much of this scholarship via a logic of comparative control (Sewell 1967; Skocpol and Somers 1980; Sartori 1991; cf. Slater and Ziblatt 2013).¹

That is to say, historical comparisons are used to eliminate some factors that are constant

¹ This point is put into relief by the way a recent attempt to inaugurate a “historical turn in democratization research” expressly disavows the logic of such comparative control in favor of process tracing and analyzing critical junctures (Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010). The very reason Capoccia and Ziblatt (2010) find it necessary to come down so strongly on this point is that what they term the ‘classical’ tradition on the development of political regimes—from Barrington Moore to Thomas Ertman—uses this logic of comparative control.

across the historical cases investigated, meanwhile investigating the effect of other factors that vary.² Indeed, as we shall see in the examples below, controlled comparisons even enter some comparative historical analyses which emphatically claim *not* to resort to this logic.

Part and parcel of the general debate about historical sociology outlined above has been a vibrant discussion about the methodological purchase of this logic of comparative control (Skocpol 1979; Skocpol and Somers 1980; Sartori 1991; Abbott 1991; Bartolini 1993; Sewell 1996; Mahoney 2003; Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010; Slater and Ziblatt 2013). However, the importance of the character and validity of the conceptual building blocks on which the logic of control is premised has been almost completely ignored.³ Needless to say, some lumping is always necessary in comparative historical work. But the very attempt to systematically contrast ‘cases’ that are situated very far from each other in historical time (and often also in space) raises the question about the extent to which the historical data can be used to score the cases on theoretically relevant properties in similar ways. There is a danger of making false historical analogies or, more precisely, of erroneous use of the logic of control to eliminate causal conditions from the analysis. Using a more quantitative vocabulary, the problem that looms is one of non-uniform (quasi-)experimental treatment.

This problem is particularly salient because sociologists and political scientists doing comparative historical analysis depend on the work of historians, who normally use different concepts. This raises both the question about the extent to which historians’ narrative accounts can be translated into something that fits social scientists’ conceptual containers and about the aggregation rule used to combine the scores on the defining attributes. It is surprising that political scientists and sociologists have largely ignored the danger that, when

² Or, alternatively, to identify factors that are constant across cases with similar outcomes, while many other potentially relevant factors vary (Lijphart 1971; Mahoney 2003, pp. 341–42).

³ There has been a vibrant discussion about the proper definitions of phenomena such as social revolutions, democracy, and the state (e.g. Skocpol 1979; Ertman 1997; cf. Mazzuca 2010). But this discussion has not focused on the importance of the conceptual choices for the validity of controlled comparisons.

processing historical data to categorize cases belonging to different historical periods and often situated far apart in space, the findings of comparative historical analysis can be based on false or at least strained historical analogies.

One example is Victoria Tin-bor Hui's (2004, 2005) bold comparison of Warring States China (656–221 BC) and early modern Europe (1495–1815), in which she processes several generations of historical works to expose similarities and differences between these two historical 'cases'. Especially the data on ancient China is based mostly on archeological excavations and later literary sources, and Hui refers extensively to studies of China in the decades after World War II when scholars had little actual access to its past. This historical data material is then used to describe how ancient China differs from and resembles medieval and early modern Europe, a comparison straddling 2,000 years of historical time. In one of the few attempts by historians to seriously consider Hui's work, Di Cosmo (2006, p. 796) points out that Hui's "loose terms [are] used to create what is ultimately a false analogy" between Warring States China and early Modern Europe. Di Cosmo never really substantiates this point, something I will do in this paper with respect to a particular conceptual building block of Hui's, namely so-called 'Zhou feudalism'.

In what follows, I first discuss the logical issues pertaining to conceptualization and the establishment of historical analogies and then propose a recommendation for how to deal with these issues: to tease out the core attribute of composite concepts and to avoid a family resemblance logic of conceptualization. To illustrate these considerations, I interrogate a particular example of concept formation and empirical measurement in comparative historical analysis, namely the way feudalism has been conceptualized and mapped outside of Europe. This example has been chosen because it brings out the issues in a very illustrative way, because the concept of feudalism has been very prominent among several generations of historians and sociologists (e.g. Hintze [1931]1975; Bloch [1939]1971a, [1939]1971b;

Ganshof [1944]1952; Strayer [1965]1987; Anderson 1974a, 1974b; Poggi 1978; Hui 2005), and because it has recently been resuscitated in an attempt to explain the European development of institutions of constraints (Blaydes and Chaney 2013). The paper contends that the problems identified with respect to the treatment of feudalism have a more general bearing on the way historical analogies and the logic of control have entered comparative historical analysis. Against this background, I return to the alternative conceptual strategy proposed and use some additional examples from the literature to illustrate its merits.

CONCEPT FORMATION AND HISTORICAL ANALOGIES: THE PROBLEM

In the first volume of *The Sources of Social Power*, Michael Mann (1986, pp. 167–74) points out that historical sociology is pervaded by observations about fundamental similarities between “historic empires located over the whole globe and throughout the five millennia of recorded history” (1986, p. 167). Mann criticizes this tendency, not from the point of the historian who argues that every case is unique, but for not taking historical time into consideration. Body politics or state structures separated by millennia will often differ because of the historical time lapsed (1986, p. 174). While comparison and generalization are certainly possible, striking similarities identified across great distances of time and/or space are, Mann argues, often suspect (see also Sewell, 1996, 258).

Some would argue that it follows from this that controlled comparisons are simply not viable in historical analysis. Mann (1986, pp. 501–3) basically draws this conclusion and opts for the “careful historical narrative” instead. Likewise, Sewell (1996) argues that controlled comparisons in historical analysis should be replaced by what he terms an eventful approach, which also draws on the historical narrative. Critiquing Skocpol’s (1979) methodological framing of her analysis of social revolutions, Sewell (1996, pp. 248–59) correctly points out that the use of the logic of control rests on the twin principles of

independence and equivalence between the compared cases and argues that it is almost impossible to achieve both as independence requires large distance in time and space, which in turn compromises equivalence.

This paper takes a more constructive approach to the logic of control in comparative historical analysis, which accepts the criticism made by scholars such as Mann and Sewell but attempts to mitigate the problems rather than abandoning the method. My point of departure is that the problems of finding true historical comparisons are likely to be aggravated when the similarities are established via the use of relatively abstract—one might be tempted to say ahistorical—concepts. The point here is not that general categories and analytical distinctions should be avoided in comparative historical analysis. Przeworski and Teune (1970, p. 25) are correct to point out that “[t]he bridge between historical observations and general theory is the substitution of variables for proper names of social systems in the course of comparative research”—a conclusion that also holds for the use of the logic of controlled comparison (Slater and Ziblatt 2013, p. 1306).

However, composite and loose concepts multiply the danger of making false analogies. A composite (or ‘thick’) concept is one that contains multiple dimensions or attributes. A thick concept is ‘loose’ if it employs a family resemblance rather than an Aristotelian understanding of concepts. An Aristotelean conceptualization is one which treats the defining attributes as individually necessary and jointly sufficient for the concept (Sartori 1970). A family resemblance conceptualization instead treats defining attributes as sufficient, at least if an adequate proportion of them are present. This notion can be traced back to the work of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and the analogy with family membership is apt: families tend to share a wide set of characteristics, only some of which characterize the individual family member (Collier and Mahon 1993; see also Goertz 2006).

Crucially, the family resemblance logic turns the Aristotelian ‘ladder of abstraction’ (Sartori 1970) on its head: the more defining attributes are present, the wider the family membership is (Goertz 2006). This has an important bearing on the discussion about historical analogies. As illustrated in Table 1, the use of the family resemblance conceptualization increases the danger of making false analogies because a case can be classified as an instance of a multi-dimensional concept if it has some but not all of the defining attributes.

[Table 1 about here]

Suppose that we are categorizing nine cases with respect to three attributes, which—anticipating a point made below—can either be present or absent. On the basis of the illustrated empirical distribution of attributes, the family resemblance logic identifies either five out of nine or eight out of nine cases as instances of the concept, depending on how many traits a family member need retain. Using the Aristotelian notions of individual necessity and mutual sufficiency as the aggregation rule, only two out of nine cases will be identified.

Here, it is pertinent to delve a little further into the notion of a false historical analogy. ‘Analogy’ is often used to denote an inference in the form of a causal relationship from one particular to another particular. However, it can also be used in a broader way, namely as a transference of meaning from a particular subject (the analogue) to another particular subject (the target). It is in the latter, descriptive, sense that analogy, more particularly historical analogy, is used in this paper. The premise of my argument is that any historical analogy in the form of a causal relationship is based on a descriptive analogy insofar as the logic of control is employed.

False historical analogies can, in this sense, be conceived as one instance of what Sartori (1970) terms conceptual stretching. To get a better grasp of the problems associated with composite concepts, it is pertinent to touch briefly upon some technical aspects of conceptual stretching. As Munck (2001, pp. 119–44) has pointed out, pure (or theoretical) concepts can travel much further than envisaged by Sartori (1970) in his classic article on the issue in that we can always score them continuously. To anticipate the example from the literature analyzed in depth below, on the basis of a particular set of defining attributes, we could probably score any case according to the (usually very low) degree to which it is feudal.⁴ However, to actually designate something as an empirical instance or member of a set of e.g. feudalism imposes a resort to thresholds demarcating the presence of these defining attributes. Here, we are much closer to Sartori’s (1970, 1991) insistence on employing differences in kind.

At this point, some would probably object that—to render historical analogies false—it is not enough to show that concepts have been stretched. Most historical analogies do not fall in the extreme categories where phenomena are either completely similar or completely dissimilar; rather, they express a mix of similarities and differences (Kornprobst 2008, pp. 29–49, 39). The real issue is thus whether a concept has been stretched *too* far. To specify with respect to the concept of feudalism once more, might different cases not often—invoking Munck’s point about the logical possibility of scoring concepts continuously⁵—be feudal *enough* to make a useful comparison?⁶

⁴ At least, there is no logical obstacle to doing so (whereas the practical obstacles pertaining to data would often be prohibitive).

⁵ One can do so based on a family resemblance logic and on an Aristotelian logic of necessity and sufficiency. This distinction has to do with the aggregation rule, not the possibility of grading or not (cf. Goertz 2006).

⁶ To illustrate this point, Hui (2001, p. 397) grants, in one of her attempts to grapple with the concept of feudalism, that “there is no other feudal system that looks exactly like medieval Europe” but that ancient China was characterized by a “feudal era which witnessed significant checks and balances in the relations between rulers and ruled” and that ancient China therefore is feudal according to a minimalist definition.

This takes us back to the issue of categorical versus continuous distinctions. It is crucial to observe that any use of the logic of comparative control necessitates a use of crisp distinctions, i.e., of dichotomous empirical concepts. Comparative control is obtained via categorical classification: we control for a particular factor because the cases we are analyzing are in the same class, meaning that we can hold the underlying theoretical attribute constant (Sartori 1991). We therefore need to determine whether two cases are similar enough with respect to an underlying theoretical factor to claim that it is held constant.

AVOIDING FALSE ANALOGIES: THE RECOMMENDATION

Below, I show that this is very difficult to do in a valid way, using a composite ('thick') concept aggregated via a ('loose') family resemblance logic and confronted with periods when most of the evidence hails from the work of historians. Instead, it is pertinent to isolate the core attributes that matter theoretically and that can be scored in a relatively valid manner even across great distances and long periods, based on the work of historians, who seldom employ the general concepts used by political scientists and sociologists. To elaborate, though we can never entirely escape the danger of making false historical analogies in comparative historical analysis, we can decrease the risk for a dubious identification of historical similarities by using simpler concepts (containing fewer dimensions) and stricter aggregation rules (based on the Aristotelean notions of necessity and mutual sufficiency). My recommendation can be captured as a call for thinning and specifying thick and loose concepts⁷ in comparative historical analysis.

⁷ This is a paraphrase of Coppedge's (1999; 2012) call for "thickening thin concepts". The main thrust of Coppedge's (2012: 44-47, 58-62) argument is that we need thicker theory (containing multiple parameters) to arrive at better explanations and that this, in turn, necessitates a resort to thicker concepts (containing multiple dimensions). In what follows, I expose the methodological problems that such thick concepts occasion in the context of comparative historical analysis.

Here, a caveat is necessary. The way we use historical evidence to carry out controlled comparisons must of course make sense in terms of the research question and the theoretical structure of the concepts we are employing (Goertz 2006). One might therefore be tempted to include a clause similar to that which follows, and qualifies, George Orwell's ([1946]1962, pp. 2241–42) first five rules for writing proper English: "Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous". However, concept-measure consistency can often be secured at a prior phase: via the way we model our theoretical concepts. To make historical generalizations viable, it is crucial to isolate the core factor which, based on theory, has consequences that the comparison serves to analyze. To the extent that this factor can be conceived in a way which is amenable to scoring based on the works of historians, generalizability and cumulativity is enhanced and the validity of conclusions based on the logic of comparative control increases. I return to this point at the end of the paper.

The merits of the advice proffered can be underscored by relating it directly to the family resemblance logic. Recall from Table 1 that cases exhibiting different combinations of attributes all count as instances of the same concept when using the family resemblance logic. In the context of the discussion above, it was pointed out that the danger of an invalid establishment of similarities between historical cases—what is referred to as a false historical analogy in this paper—decreases when the Aristotelean logic is substituted for the family resemblance logic. But we can also question the profitability of the family resemblance logic for controlled comparisons in a more general sense. If such concepts are to meaningfully enter an explanatory analysis premised on the logic of comparative control, these different combinations must be functionally equivalent with respect to their causes and/or consequences. In other words, hypothesized effects on, say, regime change, should be similar whether or not we find all attributes present or only some of them present (above the family resemblance requirement). While this is not inconceivable, such theorizing is likely to be

vulnerable to the objection that the different combinations of attributes are in fact not functionally equivalent and that we instead need to theorize the effects of each combination on its own (more on this below).

Finally, the choices we make about conceptualization also have consequences for the size of the population from which comparisons can be drawn when applying the logic of control. Recall that we can always score cases with respect to the degree to which they exhibit certain defining attributes but that a resort to controlled comparisons requires crisp distinctions about presence and absence of defining attributes. The former category is more directly relevant than the latter when the objective is to control. The remaining cases of course still enter comparisons as negative cases but they do not serve to control for the factor we are interested in, e.g. feudalism.

Suppose a situation where we do not make false historical analogies but solely identify cases as similar based on valid measurement and an Aristotelean logic of aggregation. In this scenario,⁸ the thinner we make our concepts, the more cases will fall into the category where they are in fact instances of or part of the set of the concept (Sartori 1970). For instance, one of the main criticisms directed against Skocpol's (1979) seminal analysis of the causes of social revolution is that her definition is so thick that very few instances—indeed, only three—can be identified. By implication, the use of thin concepts enlarges the set of cases that can be used to control for a particular factor, as illustrated in Figure 1 (see also Roehner and Syme 2002).

[Figure 1 about here]

⁸ As we have already seen, this inverse relationship between a concept's intension and its extension (Sartori 1970) breaks down when using a family resemblance logic. The stylized example therefore presupposes that the warning against using this form of conceptualization when employing a comparative logic of control is first heeded.

CONTROLLING FOR FEUDALISM

In what follows, I illustrate these points by reviewing the way feudalism enters the classical controlled comparisons of Hintze ([1931]1975) and P. Anderson (1974a), followed by a more detailed discussion of Hui's (2005) recent analysis.

To set the stage for these exercises, it is necessary to briefly review the way the concept of feudalism has been treated in social science. The concept of 'feudalism' is contested. First, scholars in the Marxist tradition have construed feudalism as a universal mode of production which all societies had to pass through on their way to capitalism (cf. Lattimore 1957, p. 55; e.g. Wickham 1984, p. 6). This understanding of feudalism has interchangeably been termed manorial system, landlordism, *seigneurie*, and *Grundherrschaft*. Second, Max Weber promoted an alternative definition that construed feudalism as a '*phenomenon of the political sphere*'—more particularly as a method or form of government—rather than a question of 'economic structures' (Poggi 1991, emphasis in the original; e.g. Stephenson 1941, 1942; Strayer and Coulborn 1956; Strayer 1975, [1965]1987; Creel 1970; cf. Finer 1997, pp. 864–75). Third, scholars such as Marc Bloch (Bloch [1939]1971b, p. 446) and Otto Hintze ([1929]1962, pp. 89–94) have proposed a broader definition which subsumes the economic/Marxist definition and the political/Weberian definition, and sometimes adds extra attributes. This take on the concept is anchored in the notion of a "feudal society" (Bloch [1939]1971b) and the consequent definitions are extremely thick as they incorporate a huge number of defining attributes spanning the political, legal, economic, and social realm.

[Table 2 about here]

The distinction between the family resemblance and the Aristotelean logic is also important for understanding these different conceptualizations. The authors invoking the more narrow Weberian definition see “[f]eudalism is a specific kind of decentralized government that prevailed in western Europe from the ninth century into the thirteenth (Cantor [1963]1993, p. 196).⁹ Against this background, it is somewhat surprising to note that the authors adhering to the broader notion of feudalism as a form of society finds that, besides characterizing medieval Europe, feudalism “has existed at various times in non-western European parts of the world, such as Japan, Byzantium, and Russia” (Cantor ([1963]1993, p. 196; see Bloch [1939]1971b, pp. 444–45; Hintze [1929]1962, p. 99, [1931]1975, pp. 306–7). This seemingly clashes, head-on, with what has been termed the “golden rule” of Aristotelian logics: that there is an inverse relationship between intension and extension (Sartori 1970; Mair 2008). This inverse relationship – illustrated in Figure 1 above – entails that scholars such as Bloch and Hintze, by augmenting the Weberian or political definition with additional defining attributes, would arrive at a more restricted extension of the concept. If it takes more to be feudal, we would expect fewer instances of feudalism.

So, why do scholars such as Bloch and Hintze identify feudalism beyond the area characterized by the political attributes included in their composite definitions? Basically, they do so because their empirical treatment (or scoring) is premised on some kind of family resemblance logic. Herlihy (1970, p. xix) pertinently notes that Bloch’s “large and loose definition” can be understood as an attempt to avoid “the implication that one factor ... necessarily determined all others”. The upshot is that societies which are characterized by some (but not necessarily all) of the defining attributes are treated as instances.

⁹ The Marxist definition has a much broader extension as “the exploitation of an agricultural population by a ruling group” is something we find in many different historical contexts (Strayer (1965)1987, p. 13; see also P. Anderson 1974b, p. 402).

This comes out most clearly in Bloch's and Hintze's discussions of Japan. For instance, after noting that "reciprocity in unequal obligations ... was the really distinctive feature of European vassalage", Bloch adds that this distinguished it from "the forms of free dependence known to other civilizations, like that of Japan". Hintze ([1929]1962, [1931]1975, pp. 332–33), although he accepts Japan as an instance of feudalism, likewise stresses the contractual relationship based on reciprocity as a distinctive trait of Western feudalism.

The Preconditions of Representative Government in the Context of World History

Hintze deals with feudalism in a series of rightly famous essays ([1929]1962, [1930]1962, [1931]1975). In the first two, he ([1929]1962) conceptualizes and empirically maps the extension of feudalism, in the second he ([1930]1962) conceptualizes and maps the extension of the *Ständestaat*¹⁰ (polity of estates), and in the third essay—which has been translated into English—he ([1931]1975) proceeds to make the case for feudalism as one of the explanatory factors bringing about the *Ständestaat*.

According to Hintze ([1931]1975, p. 308), not one but two factors caused the ascendancy of the *Ständestaat*: "feudalism and the Christian Church, specifically in the form of the Roman Catholic hierocracy". However, Hintze not only treats feudalism and the Roman Catholic Church as separate explanatory factors; he goes on to argue that the latter beats the former in explanatory importance. The main reason that Hintze is able to assign explanatory priority to the Roman Catholic Church is that feudalism is not unique to Latin Christendom: "there existed in the East feudal systems that could not *by their nature* develop into an Estates system" ([1931]1975, pp. 344–45; my emphasis; see also Hintze [1929]1962). Coupled with the fact that the *Ständestaat* arose in Poland and Hungary—which were not

¹⁰ According to Hintze, the advent of the *Ständestaat* set the Western world on an idiosyncratic route to modern democracy and the rule of law.

feudal—this means that the Roman Catholic Church emerges as the crucial cause (Hintze [1931]1975, pp. 344–45).

Hintze expressly uses a logic of control—borrowed from Max Weber (Gerhard 1970, p. 35)—in his analysis. It is the identification of non-European instances of feudalism which makes Hintze reject that this factor, in and of itself, produced the *Ständestaat*. This is a vivid example of how a thick and loose conceptualization of feudalism affects the empirical results that come out of controlled comparisons. Recall from above that Hintze uses a composite conceptualization of feudalism. More particularly, his definition brings together the dimensions military organization (*Kriegsverfassung*), social and economic organization (*Wirtschafts- und Sozialverfassung*), and political organization (*Staatsverfassung*) (Hintze [1929]1962, pp. 89–94). He then uses a family resemblance aggregation to establish that such feudalism did occur outside of Latin Christendom, even where some of the sub-components of the defining elements were missing.

One can easily object that this creates a false historical analogy between medieval Europe and non-European cases where the *Ständestaat* did not emerge. This is underscored by the part of the quote italicized above (“*by their nature*”). This seems to indicate that Hintze recognizes that the differences between the instances of feudalism, which follow from using a thick and loose conceptualization, matter for their correlates. In any case, the control for feudalism—and the consequent privileging of the explanatory power of the Catholic Church—is unconvincing. It falls prey to the main criticism of this paper: that the use of composite and loose concepts undermines a stringent application of the logic of comparative control.

Passages from Feudalism

P. Anderson's (1974a, 1974b) treatment of feudalism is based on the premise that all pre-capitalist modes of production rest on non-economic exploitation. On this basis, Anderson defines feudalism as the combination of the economic basis and the political superstructure, that is, he combines the Marxist and the Weberian definition. Anderson traces (this) feudalism back to the 'Romano-Germanic fusion' and is thereby able to show that Western Europe counts as a perfect instance of the concept, whereas Eastern Europe only counts imperfectly. This he terms "the uneven development of feudalism within Europe" (1974a, p. 214), a disjunction that ultimately serves to determine the way Absolutism made its entry and came to differ across the continent.

Anderson clearly stretches his own concept when including Eastern Europe as an instance of feudalism (more on this below). But, as just emphasized, this is really part of his explanation of the variation within Europe. More interesting for our purposes, he also identifies Japan as an instance of feudalism. Japan, however, never obtained the Absolutist state. Anderson seeks to explain this with the absence of the heritage of the 'Roman-German fusion'. Nonetheless, the mere presence of a feudal legacy meant that Japan (as the only non-Western country) was subsequently able to imitate the (post-Absolutist) Western leap to capitalism. More straightforwardly, Anderson ends up concluding that Japan had something like Western feudalism, but not quite the real stuff. As in the case of Hintze and Bloch, it is the contractualism and legalism of the political superstructure that according to Anderson (1974b, p. 414) were missing in Japan.

Anderson claims to eschew a simple logic of control in his analysis in favor of an approach where a series of cases illustrate the purchase of the formulated theory (Anderson 1974b, p. 7; cf. Skocpol and Somers 1980, pp. 187–89). However, the logic of control enters Anderson's analysis in at least two ways. First, Anderson compares Western Europe with Eastern Europe to explain why the character of absolutism was fundamentally different in

these two ‘cases’. As mentioned, he finds the explanation in the uneven development of feudalism, while controlling for other factors which are general to all of Europe, such as Christianity. Second, Anderson (1974b, pp. 435–61) compares Europe *tout court* with Japan to understand why capitalism arose in both settings. As we have seen, it is on the basis of this comparison he concludes that the presence of feudalism in both areas paved the way for either an endogenous development of capitalism (in Europe) or an adoption of capitalist practices borrowed from Europe (in Japan).

Adcock and Collier (2001, p. 542) note that Anderson uses ‘construct validity’ to establish Japan’s status as a case of feudalism. Anderson claims that capitalism is ultimately a correlate of feudalism, and the fact that Japan was able to follow in the footsteps of the capitalist West thus corroborates that it, too, had feudalism. What can we, on the basis of the arguments about false historical analogies and the logic of control, say to this argument? First things first, this procedure clearly increases the danger of making false historical analogies because it supports classifying Japan as an instance of feudalism even though some of the defining attributes of feudalism were missing. Second, the construct validity is no stronger than Anderson’s theory. Adcock and Collier (2001) do not consider that such a thick and loose scoring of feudalism undermines the use of Anderson’s controlled comparisons. In a nutshell, the control for feudalism is no stronger than the theory about its consequences. Based on the objections about composite and loose concepts, Anderson’s attempt to use comparisons to bring out the consequences of feudalism is, at best, questionable.

War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe

The two first examples featured analyses where feudalism has entered controlled comparisons premised on very composite definitions. The third example—Victoria Tin-bor Hui’s

fascinating comparison of the relatively similar multistate systems that existed in China in the period 656–221 B.C. and in Europe in the period 1495–1815 (Hui 2004, pp. 175–205, 2005, see also Hui 2001, pp. 272–403)—serves to demonstrate that similar problems with false historical analogies and a dubious use of the logic of control can be identified even when the more narrow political conception of feudalism is employed. Like Anderson, Hui (2005, pp. 7–8) expressly eschews the logic of control when describing her methodological approach. However, in the case of feudalism the logic sneaks in as Hui simply eliminates it as a potential explanatory factor by emphasizing its presence in both empirical settings.

Hui (2004, 2005) sets out to answer two distinct research questions: Why did European political systems become characterized by ‘checks and balances’ when absolutism won the day in China? Why were Chinese rulers able to transform a multistate system based on “external balancing” into a situation of “universal domination” (the first Chinese Empire)? More particularly, Hui seeks to understand why the consequences of warfare were opposite in ancient China and early modern Europe.

It is in this context that Hui (2005, pp. 195–96) raises the potential objection that internal checks and balances could already have been in place in medieval Europe but not in ancient China when geopolitical competition intensified. This would plausibly explain why warfare produced domination in one setting and balancing in the other. However, Hui dismisses this objection by pointing out that the two historical ‘cases’ were characterized by almost uncannily similar state-society relations when geopolitical competition intensified. The ‘Zhou feudalism’ of ancient China is thus very similar to medieval European feudalism (Hui 2005, pp. 195–205, 2001, pp. 396–401). More particularly, on the basis of the work of some of the authors listed above, Hui argues that, in both settings, feudalism brought about an embryonic set of constitutional checks on rulers (see e.g. Stephenson 1942; Strayer and Coulborn 1956; Strayer [1965]1987; Poggi 1991, p. 80).

Hui first and foremost bases her identification of Zhou China as being a case of political feudalism on Creel (1970). Creel explicitly employs the definition of feudalism as a form of government and uncompromisingly asserts that Zhou China belongs to the class (1970, p. 196, fn. 143, 32, fn. 10, 319–20). He thereby echoes the conclusion arrived at in the ambitious attempt to map the extension of political feudalism carried out by Rushton Coulborn and a group of collaborators, including Joseph Strayer, in the 1950s. In the general discussion of their findings, Coulborn (1956) first concludes that only two proven cases exist: Western Europe and Japan. But, just as Bloch and Hintze, he nevertheless goes on to construe feudalism as a repetitive phenomenon in history and, in the process, indicates that there were probably other instances, such as Zhou China and Mesopotamia after Hammurabi, though this is still unproven.¹¹ In fact, the country chapter on China—by Derk Bodde (1956, pp. 54–55, 57)—insists that Zhou feudalism *was* an instance of feudalism as a form of government.

Reading the work of Creel and Bodde, one is struck by the absence of some of the main defining attributes of the political definition of feudalism, e.g. legal contractualism and immunities, in ancient China. More generally, Creel and Bodde identify no evidence of reciprocity in unequal obligations extending to the lowest level of a feudal pyramid—only the Zhou kings’ use of investitures when establishing regional Zhou states is mentioned (see also Shaughnessy 1999, p. 326). Creel (1970, p. 370) in fact argues that the Zhou kings were normally so powerful that they did not need to rely on the (inefficient) use of contracts.¹²

However, the bigger problem is that these works are seriously outdated. Creel’s work was peerless when it was published, but he worked in a particular period when Western scholars had very limited access to China (Loewe and Shaughnessy 1999, p. 5; von

¹¹ For the definition of feudalism in the Coulborn-volume, see Strayer and Coulborn (1956, pp. 4–5, 6) and Coulborn (1956, pp. 185, 383).

¹² One is here tempted to quote Anderson’s (1974b, p. 412, fn. 26) acid remark that the essays of the Coulborn-volume “discover feudalism where they seek for it”.

Falkenhausen 2006, p. 18). Since the opening of China in the 1980s, our knowledge about China's past has grown dramatically, not least based on archaeological excavations. Over the past decades, scholars have therefore overturned much of the scholarship that Hui based her empirical analysis on.

When invoking such new work we need to tread carefully. As Ian Lustick (1996) has pointed out, political scientists who use the work of historians face a danger of selection bias. All too often, they often show a propensity to emphasize the historical works (or aspects of the historical works) which fit their interpretation better—and thereby ignore the often rampant disagreements which characterize historical debates. Lustick argues that this can be avoided by attempting to adjudicate the historical debates before scoring concepts and variables, that is, by describing the general patterns within historiography in the first place.

It is still not uncommon that scholars, without reflecting on the definition of the concept, refer to 'feudalism' during Western Zhou (e.g. Hsu 1999). That said, modern scholarship addressing this issue explicitly has been extremely critical of scoring Zhou China as feudal on the basis of the political ('Weberian') definition. Li Feng (2003, 2006, 2008) has persuasively argued that such a view cannot be sustained on the basis of the most recent evidence. Li Feng engages both Creel's and Bodde's accounts to show that the regional Zhou states were not in any meaningful sense feudal fiefs, that the Zhou kings' stationary army was much more important than the vassals supplying additional troops, and that there is no evidence of contractualism between vassals and liege lords in ancient China (Li 2003, fn 2, pp. 123, 128, 138, 2006, pp. 110–16, 2008, pp. 277–78, 288–90). The only aspect of prior scholarship on the issue which Li Feng (2008, pp. 111–12, 280–81) definitely endorses is that kinship structures rather than contractualism pervaded the Zhou system. More particularly, Li Feng dismisses the traditional notion that that the concept of "Fengjian" is similar to that of

fief: instead, it denotes the establishment of regional states ruled by scions of the Zhou royal lineage (see also Cook 1997, pp. 253–94, 253–55, 282–84).¹³

Returning to Lustick’s argument about selection bias, we can—on this basis¹⁴—note a general development within the historiography dealing with ancient China. The older works, written up until the opening of China in the 1980s and 1990s, broadly tend to describe Zhou China as an instance of feudalism whether or not the scholars in question premise this on a formal definition. More recent works, written after the new access to Chinese source material, also contain numerous examples of scholars designating ancient China as feudal. However, the subset of scholars who actually premise this on a more technical definition tend to reject this status.

[Table 3 about here]

Based on the arguments about the higher historical validity of the newer works, a function of increased access to China and new archaeological excavations since the 1980s, this speaks against scoring ancient China as feudal. Once more, we have thus encountered an example of the use of what seems to be a dubious control for the effect of feudalism, based on creating a false historical analogy between ancient China and medieval Europe.

THE ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTUAL STRATEGY

¹³ Note that Li Feng bases his case on Susan Reynolds’ (1994) narrow definition of feudalism as ‘feudo-vassalic institutions’, arguing that Creel’s political definition is too broad. But insofar as Western Zhou China fails to pass this bar, it—*a fortiori*—also fails to qualify as an instance of the broader concept of feudalism as a political regime form.

¹⁴ Table 3 is not an exhaustive attempt to map the historiography on ancient China. But it brings out broad patterns based on my sifting of this literature.

To summarize: Using composite and loose concepts in comparative historical analysis with the aim of identifying causal relationships based on a logic of comparative control might easily lead us astray. False historical analogies are likely to flow from such conceptual practices, and this, in turn, undermines the use of controlled comparisons in comparative historical analysis.

Bearing this in mind, let us return to the advice proffered: to diminish these problems by thinning and specifying thick and loose concepts. Rather than employing bundled concepts in comparative historical analysis, it is pertinent to tease out the attributes of theoretical interest and use these to understand the relevant similarities and differences between the cases. More particularly, to the extent possible the core theoretical attribute which can be linked to the *explanandum* should be isolated and scored independently of the other attributes of the more composite concept.

This advice broadly corresponds to King, Keohane, and Verba's (1994, pp. 109–12) call to “maximize concreteness” when constructing causal theories. King, Keohane, and Verba recognize that abstract, unobserved concepts have an important role to play in theory formulation. But they point out that such concepts can often be a hindrance to the empirical evaluation of theories because it will be difficult to measure them—and that the use of proxies is beset with problems regarding validity. King, Keohane, and Verba therefore propose that insofar as it is possible, our theories should be modelled based on specific and concrete concepts, which are easier to observe empirically.

This paper has mainly focused on the way such concepts facilitate a valid use of comparative control in historical analysis. But as King, Keohane, and Verba point out there is an added value of scoping down from composite and loose concepts. When combining several different attributes into one overarching concept, we cannot analyze whether the different attributes might have causal effects on each other, whether they might have different effects

on the *explanandum* or whether they might—as *explanandum*—be caused by different causal factors (Ertman 1997; Mazzuca 2010). Finally, as forcefully pointed out by Roehner & Syme (2002) – and as illustrated in Figure 1 above – by decomposing complicated phenomena we get more observations that can enter our comparisons.

These points can be illustrated by returning to Hui’s analysis. In a comparison of ancient China and medieval and early modern Europe, it probably makes more sense to simply dismiss squeezing Zhou China into the concept of feudalism and instead look for the more particular differences between the Chinese and European cases, which are clouded by the use of strained historical analogies. Mann puts it well (1986, p. 526):

Categories like “feudalism” or “empires” (of varying adjectival forms) may be of limited help. True, there may be a certain common dynamic quality to lord-vassal relationships in feudal societies, or emperor-noble relationships in empires, across eons of world history. But the terms cannot be used as designations of the *overall* structure or dynamics of societies such as these.

Hui does in fact identify a more specific difference in initial state-society relations, namely the European “existence of three—instead of one—social orders that were highly autonomous from kings and princes” (Hui 2005, pp. 202–3). She concedes that this multiplicity of privileged estate groups means that the logic of balancing was inherently stronger in Europe. However, she goes on to argue that “when European kings embarked on ancient-Chinese-style self-strengthening reforms, the logic of domination so unleashed was able to counteract even the much stronger logic of balancing”. This might or might not be correct. In either case, it would be easier both to theorize the consequences of more specific attributes such as

multiple, autonomous groups and to score historical cases such as ancient China and medieval Europe on the basis of such attributes (see Møller 2015).

Some Recent Examples

There are some indications that scholars doing comparative historical analysis are presently moving in this direction. Take, for instance, the way the key concepts of state and regime have recently been handled in this literature (cf. Mazzuca 2010). Ertman (1997, pp. 10–19) correctly criticizes earlier research on state-formation in medieval and early modern Europe for conflating these two concepts, e.g. via the notion of the bureaucratic-absolutist state, which is contrasted with a constitutionalist regime which is not bureaucratic. As Ertman argues, this distinction is empirically problematic because we find both absolutist and constitutionalist regimes that were bureaucratic. Similarly, we find both constitutionalist and absolutist regimes that were non-bureaucratic (patrimonial) (Ertman 1997, p. 10). Prior scholarship has therefore created a false historical analogy between instances of absolutism, irrespective of their fundamental differences with respect to the character of the state infrastructure (Ertman 1997, pp. 5, 15–16). This false analogy either follows from inadequate measurement or, more plausibly, rests on an implicit use of the family resemblance logic described above.

Ertman underlines that these problems have not only compromised descriptive inference. The use of multi-dimensional concepts, comprising both aspects pertaining to the state and the regime, in itself rule out attempts to theorize and analyze how variation in the state infrastructure affected variation in regime change—and *vice versa*. Based on a set of controlled comparisons, Ertman (1997, pp. 19–33) shows that especially the effect of the regime form on the state infrastructure is important in the European universe. This finding presupposes the conceptual advice about thinning thick concepts.

Ertman's chief conceptual contribution lies in teasing out the state infrastructure from definitions of regime types and—invoking Max Weber (Ertman 1997, pp. 7–9)—disaggregating it into the two categories of bureaucratic and patrimonial. With respect to the regime, his distinctions are somewhat cruder as he simply contrasts absolutism with constitutionalism. However, Ertman (1997, p. 19) does, *en passant*, indicate that the core aspect of constitutionalism is the presence of a parliament that is co-legislator (with the ruler). A hugely influential recent line of research has made a convincing call for conceptualizing and measuring this core attribute—the occurrence of representative institutions— independently of other aspects of the regime when dealing with medieval and early modern Europe (e.g. Stasavage 2010, 2011; van Zanden et al. 2012).

This work can be seen as a way of moving beyond more composite and loose notions such as “medieval constitutionalism” (Downing 1992; Sabetti 2004) and “institutions of constraints” (Acemoglu et al. 2001, 2002, 2008) to capture key distinctions about medieval and early modern European regime forms, an endeavour that has the added value of making the concept measurable on the basis of works of historians (see Stasavage 2011; van Zanden et al. 2012). Also, it has paved the way for theorizing about and testing causes and consequences of representative institutions (Blaydes and Chaney 2013; Stasavage 2011). Stasavage (2010) even goes so far as to further disaggregate the instances of representative institutions. This enables him to analyse whether geographical size affected not only the occurrence of representative institutions but their frequency and prerogatives. This is of course a more particular example of how one might avoid making a false historical analogy (in this instance by equating representative institutions which were in fact quite different).

CONCLUSIONS

It has often been observed that more efforts have been devoted to selecting and using the proper methods of data analysis than to assessing the validity of the data which these methods are used to interrogate (e.g. Gerring 2012). To quote Mair (1996, p. 327),

the analysis of the relationship between variables is assumed to be more important than the quality and reliability of the variables themselves, a problem which has become even more acute as increased priority has been accorded to various institutional and political factors, and their operational indicators.

This paper has attempted to shed light on a more particular instance of this problem, namely the way historical analogies are used to hold causal conditions constant in comparative historical analysis. My point of departure was simple: in comparisons of cases situated across large stretches of historical time and/or space and based on what is often quite limited historical data material, there is a persistent danger of dubiously claiming to control for relevant theoretical factors. I have argued that this danger increases when composite and loose concepts are used. On this basis, I have argued that it is often advisable to substitute thin and specified concepts for such thick and loose concepts, thereby making it easier to validly marshal the evidence of historians to carry out controlled comparisons. By resorting to this strategy, historical comparisons become much less vulnerable to the problems exposed by Mann (1986) and Sewell (1996).

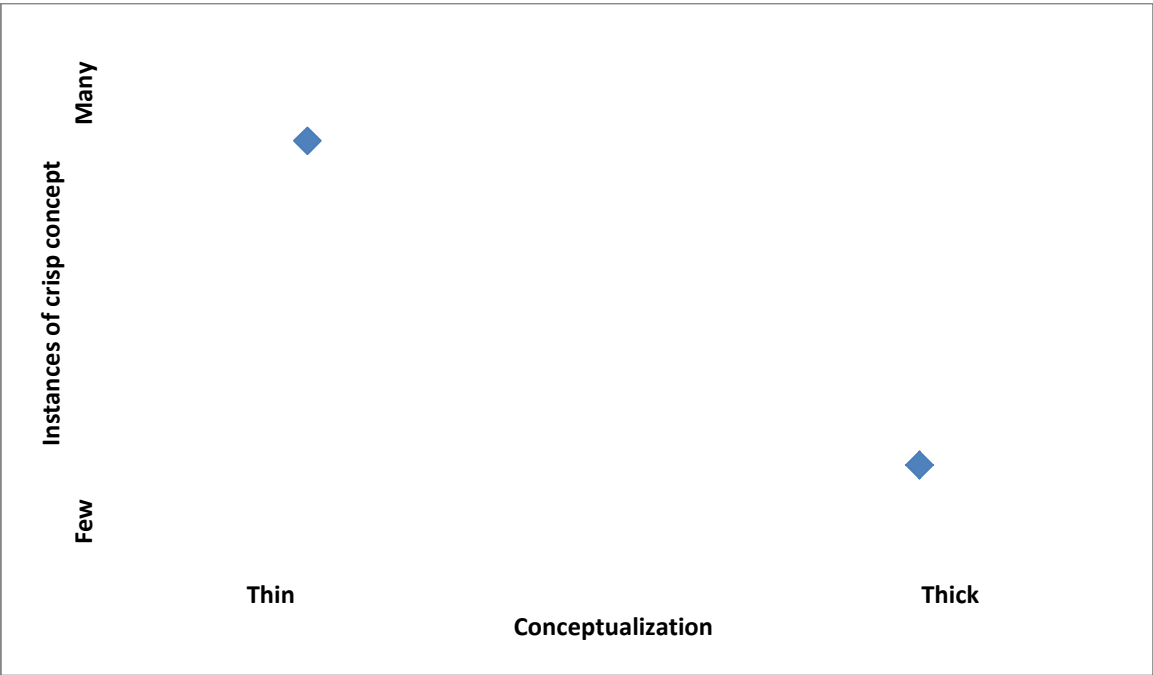
To illustrate the purchase of these arguments, I analyzed how a particular concept—feudalism—has entered comparative historical analysis. Both classic and some contemporary scholars have employed this concept as a potential explanatory factor for the idiosyncratic Western development of institutions of constraints and/or capitalism. I have argued that authors—from Hintze via Anderson to Hui—have been too quick when claiming

to have identified feudalism outside of Europe, and thus to control for it in historical comparisons.

This can be seen as an intervention in the debate about complexity versus parsimony in historical analysis (see Western 2001; Roehner and Syme 2002). A corollary of my argument is that the attempt to tackle historical specificity need not be purchased at the expense of theory or generalizations. Advocates of historical contextualization normally favor thicker, time-bound concepts. I have virtually made the opposite endorsement: to make historical generalizations viable we should be sensitive to the way we model our theoretical concepts. Historical societies differ, but we need not drown in this sea of complexity as long as we navigate it in a theoretically and methodologically self-conscious way.

Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Positive instances of dichotomous concept as a function of conceptualization



Note: Based on Sartori (1970).

Table 1: Historical analogies as a function of differences in conceptualization

Cases	True distribution of attributes	Positive instances of crisp family resemblance concept	Positive instances of crisp Aristotelean concept
A	1 2 3	+	+
B	1 2 3	+	+
C	1 2	+	-
D	1 3	+	-
E	2 3	+	-
F	1	+/-	-
G	2	+/-	-
H	3	+/-	-
I		-	-

Note: Adapted from Collier & Mahon (1993)

Table 2: Definitions of feudalism in the literature

	Mode of production	Form of government	Additional attributes*
Marxist definition	+		
Weberian definition		+	
Feudal society	+	+	+

* E.g. military organization.

Table 3: Cross-temporal developments in patterns of historiography on ancient China

	Scholars designating ancient China as 'feudal' without specifying the definition	Scholars designating ancient China as 'feudal' premised on specified definition
Before opening of China	Yes	Yes
After opening of China	Yes	No

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to Gerry Munck, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Kim Sass Mikkelsen, and two anonymous reviewers at *Sociological Methods & Research* for critical comments. All errors are mine.

REFERENCES

- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *American Economic Review* 91.
- . 2002. "Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117:231–94.
- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, James Robinson, and Pierre Yared. 2008. "Income and Democracy." *American Economic Review* 98.
- Abbott, Andrew. 1991. "History and Sociology: The Lost Synthesis." *Social Science History* 15:201–38.
- Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95:529–46.
- Alvarez, Mike, José Antonio Cheibub, Fernando Limongi, and Adam Przeworski. 1996. "Classifying Political Regimes." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 31:529–46.
- Anderson, Perry. 1974a. *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*. London: Verso.
- . 1974b. *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. London: Verso.
- Bartolini, Stefano. 1993. "On Time and Comparative Research." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 5:131–67.

- Blaydes, Lisa, and Eric Chaney. 2013. "The Feudal Revolution and Europe's Rise: Political Divergence of the Christian West and the Muslim World before 1500 CE." *American Political Science Review* 107:16–34.
- Bloch, Marc. (1939) 1971a. *Feudal Society, Volume I. The Growth of Ties of Dependence* (transl. from French by L.A. Manyon). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- . (1939) 1971b. *Feudal Society, Volume II. Social Classes and Political Organization* (transl. from French by L.A. Manyon). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Bodde, Derk. 1956. "Feudalism in China." In *Feudalism in History*, edited by Rushton Coulborn. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Boix, Carles. 2011. "Democracy, Development, and the International System." *International Political Science Review* 105:809–28.
- Cantor, Norman. (1963) 1993. *The Civilization of the Middle Ages*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Capoccia, Giovanni, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2010. "The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies: A New Research Agenda for Europe and Beyond." *Comparative Political Studies* 43:931–68.
- Carbone, Giovanni. 2009. "The Consequences of Democratization." *Journal of Democracy* 20:123–37.
- Cheibub, Jose A., Jennifer Gandhi, and James Vreeland. 2010. "Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited." *Public Choice* 143:67–101.
- Collier, David, and James E. Mahon. 1993. "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis." *American Political Science Review* 87:845–55.
- Cook, Constance A. 1997. "Wealth and the Western Zhou." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 60:253–94.

- Coppedge, Michael. 1999. "Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories." *Comparative Politics*, 31:465–76.
- . 2012. *Democratization and Research Methods*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Coulborn, Rushton (ed.). 1956. *Feudalism in History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Creel, Herrlee. 1970. *The Origins of Statecraft in China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Di Cosmo, Nicola. 2006. "Review Article: A Comparative Model of War and State Formation." *The International History Review* 28:794–97.
- Doorenspleet, Renske. 2000. "Reassessing the Three Waves of Democratization." *World Politics* 52:384–406.
- Downing, Brian M. 1992. *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ertman, Thomas. 1997. *Birth of the Leviathan. Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Finer, Samuel. 1997. *The History of Government II. The Intermediate Ages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ganshof, Francois-Louis. (1944) 1952. *Feudalism* (transl. by Grierson, P.). London: Longmans.
- Gerhard, Dietrich. 1970. "Otto Hintze: His Work and His Significance in Historiography." *Central European History* 3:17–48.
- Gerring, John. 2012. "Mere Description". *British Journal of Political Science* 42:721-746.
- Goertz, Gary. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Hadenius, Axel, and Jan Teorell. 2007. "Pathways from Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 18:143–56.
- Herlihy, David. 1970. *The History of Feudalism*. New Jersey: Humanities Press.
- Hintze, Otto. (1929) 1962. "Wesen und Verbreitung des Feudalismus" in Otto Hintze. *Staat und Verfassung, vol. I*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht.
- . (1930) 1962. "Typologie der ständischen Verfassungen des Abenlandes" in Otto Hintze. *Staat und Verfassung vol. I*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht.
- . (1931) 1975. "The Preconditions of Representative Government in the Context of World History" in *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hsu Cho-yun. 1999. "The Spring and Autumn Period." Pp. 545–86 in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, edited by Michael Loewe, and Edward L. Shaughnessy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hui, Victoria Tin-bor. 2001. "The Emergence and Demise of Nascent Constitutional Rights: Comparing Ancient China and Early Modern Europe." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 9:272–403.
- . 2004. "Toward a Dynamic Theory of International Politics: Insights from Comparing the Ancient Chinese and Early Modern European Systems." *International Organization* 58:175–205.
- . 2005. *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Kornprobst, M. 2008. "Comparing Apples and Oranges? Leading and Misleading Uses of Historical Analogies." *Millennium—Journal of International Studies* 36:29–49.
- Lattimore, Owen. 1957. "Feudalism in History by Rushton Coulborn." *Past and Present* 12:47–57.
- Li Feng. 2003. "'Feudalism' and Western Zhou China: A Criticism." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic* 63:115–44.
- . 2006. *Landscape and Power in Early: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045–771 BC*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2008. *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65:682–93.
- Loewe, Michael, and Edward L. Shaughnessy. 1999. "Introduction." Pp. 1–18 in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, edited by Michael Loewe, and Edward L. Shaughnessy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lustick, Ian S. 1996. "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review* 93:605–18.
- Mahoney, James. 2000. "Path dependence in historical sociology." *Theory and Society* 29:507–48.
- . 2003. "Strategies of Causal Assessment in Comparative Historical Analysis." Pp. 337–72 in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, edited by J. Mahoney, and D. Rueschemeyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Mair, Peter 1996. "Comparative Politics: an overview". Pp. 309-35 in Goodin, R.E. & Klingemann, H.-D. (red.), *A New Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2008. "Concepts and Concept Formation." Pp. 177–97 in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences*, edited by Michael Keating, and Donatella Della Porta. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mann, Michael. 1986. *The Sources of Social Power: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mazzuca, Sebastián L. 2010. "Access to Power versus Exercise of Power: Reconceptualizing the Quality of Democracy in Latin America." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 45:334–57.
- Moore, Barrington (1966) 1991. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. London: Penguin.
- Møller, Jørgen. 2015. "Why Europe Avoided Hegemony. A Historical Perspective on the Balance of Power." *International Studies Quarterly* 59 (forthcoming).
- Munck, Gerardo L. 2001. "The Regime Question: Theory Building in Democracy Studies." *World Politics* 54:119–44.
- . 2009. *Measuring Democracy: A Bridge between Scholarship and Politics*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Orwell, George (1946) 1962. "Politics and the English Language." In *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. London.
- Poggi, Gianfranco. 1978. *The Development of the Modern State: A Sociological Introduction*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 1991. "Max Weber's Conceptual Portrait of Feudalism." Pp. 79–93 in *Max Weber: Critical Assessments I, vol. III*, edited by Peter Hamilton. London and New York: Routledge.

- Przeworski, Adam, and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York, London, Toronto, and Sydney: Wiley-Interscience.
- Reynolds, Susan. 1994. *Fiefs and Vassals*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Roehner, Bertrand M., and Tonny Syme. 2002. *Pattern & Repetition in History*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
- Sabetti, Filippo. 2004. "Local Roots of Constitutionalism." *Perspectives on Political Science* 33.
- Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64:1033–53.
- . 1991. "Comparing and Miscomparing." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 3:243–57.
- Sewell, William H. 1967. "Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History." *History and Theory* 6:208–18.
- . 1996. "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology." Pp. 245–80 in *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*, edited by Terence J. McDonald. USA: The University of Michigan Press.
- Shaughnessy, Edward L. 1999. "Western Zhou History." Pp. 292–351 in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, edited by Michael Loewe, and Edward L. Shaughnessy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1984. "Sociology's Historical Imagination." Pp. 1–21 in *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, edited by Theda Skocpol. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skocpol, Theda, and Margaret Somers. 1980. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22:174–97.

- Slater, Dan, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2013. "The Enduring indispensability of the controlled comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46:1301-1327.
- Stasavage, David. 2010. "When Distance Mattered: Geographic Scale and the Development of European Representative Assemblies." *American Political Science Review* 104:625–43.
- . 2011. *States of Credit: Size, Power, and the Development of European Polities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Stephenson, Carl. 1941. "The Origin and Significance of Feudalism." *The American Historical Review* 46:788–812.
- . 1942. *Medieval Feudalism*. New York: Ithaca.
- Strayer, Joseph R. 1975. "Feudalism in Western Europe." In Fredric L. Cheyette. *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe. Selected Readings*. New York: Huntington.
- . (1965) 1987. *Feudalism*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.
- Strayer, Joseph R., and Rushton Coulborn. 1956. "The Idea of Feudalism." In *Feudalism in History*, edited by Rushton Coulborn. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Thelen, Kathleen. 1999. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2:369–404.
- Tilly, Charles. 1984. *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- . 1990. *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990–1990*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.
- van Zanden, Jan Luiten, Eltjo Buringh, and Marten Bosker. 2012. "The Rise and Decline of European Parliaments, 1188–1789." *The Economic History Review* 65:835–61.
- von Falkenhausen, Lothar. 2006. *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*. Los Angeles: University of California.

Western, Bruce. 2001. "Bayesian Thinking about Macrosociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 107:353–78.

Wickham, Chris. 1984. "The Other Transition: From the Ancient World to Feudalism." *Past & Present* 103:3–36.