

*Eisenstadt, S. N. Paradoxes of Democracy: Fragility, Continuity and Change* Johns Hopkins University Press 1999 120 pp. £23 (hardcover)

The introduction to this book, as well as the first few pages of just about every subsequent chapter, advertise several tantalizing ideas. Unfortunately, none is ever pursued systematically enough to reveal its full potential. This is a shame. By dint of his wide-ranging research background, S. N. Eisenstadt, emeritus professor of sociology from Hebrew University in Jerusalem, should have well positioned to produce a stimulating account of the most important idea contained within his book: the relative capacity of political systems to incorporate 'protest movements'. This question is only one component of the author's larger thesis on the contradictory nature of democratic regimes – a not-very-original piece of theorizing that tells us little new about the functioning of constitutional democracies – but is nevertheless the core of his analysis of why and how democracies manage to promote continuity and remain adaptable.

The main problem with Eisenstadt's approach to analysing whether and how protest movements are incorporated into the 'political process' is that his conception of each of these notions is so unconvincing. One need not actually reach Chapter Eight ('The Challenge of Incorporating Protest: The Non-Zero-Sum Game Conception of Politics and the Structuring of Trust in Modern Societies') to conclude that his handling of the incorporation issue is bound to be flawed. This becomes apparent in Chapter Seven ('Social Movements in Modern Constitutional Regimes').

Eisenstadt introduces a distinction between patterns of social-movement formation in, on the one hand, Japan and (most of) Europe, and on the other, the USA, Israel and India. In the former countries, he argues, 'citizenship and representation . . . constituted a major focus of struggle' (p. 51), while in the latter these civic privileges were 'granted immediately with the establishment of the state' (p. 52). The cases of African Americans and women 'throughout the world' were merely

important 'exceptions'. But clearly they are more than this, particularly as both the form and content of citizenship have been redefined by the entry of these and other groups into formal political processes. The struggle for quotas in government employment and in legislatures for members of what Indian political parlance terms 'other backward castes' has been as important to the evolution of Indian politics as the rise of working-class protests were to the development of west European politics, a phenomenon on which Eisenstadt justifiably places a great deal of emphasis. Moreover, just as women's movements challenged legally and politically sanctioned divisions between public and private spheres, movements in many parts of India have fundamentally reimagined such critical state-related concepts as the nature of secularism and the proper role of the active participant in public political life.

The author's take on these countries is not without insight at times. The contrast between Japan and Israel is explored sensitively, for instance. But on the whole the overwhelming reaction of this reader was one of frustration. Asserting, without so much as a passing reference to any evidence, or even a footnote, that in India 'Socialist movements were not important movements of protest' is just plain irritating. It is an arguable point. But Eisenstadt provides no argument.

The prose and editing are substantially below the standards expected of a major American university press. In many cases, Eisenstadt can be held only partly responsible for the less readable portions of the text; the editorial process should have weeded these out. Other passages reveal prose which it is beyond the powers of any publishing-industry intervention to tame. For instance

In Japan . . . unlike in many absolutist or totalitarian systems, the absence of such [representative] institutions was not connected with a strong symbolic distinction of the center, or the state, or with strong efforts by the center not only to control but also to restructure and mobilize the periphery – according to a new vision destructive of the values

hitherto prevalent in the periphery. Thus no social, economic, or political sectors could easily develop a principled autonomy or autonomous claim to access the center, although it was very difficult for autonomous public spaces not confronting the center cult to develop (p. 58).

This is not particularly taken out of context, either. Like a great wide river, the text rolls on and on like this, with little hope of ever correcting its course. The word 'hitherto' is used a lot, even when it is probably gramatically wrong – for instance, when referring to 'a hitherto unique occurrence in the history of mankind.' (p. 58)

Perhaps as a book to scan through for stray kernels of interesting ideas there is more merit in this work than this review acknowledges. But as a book to read in pursuit of a sustained, convincing analysis of these alluring conceptual headlines, it is a disappointment.

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*Gilbert, Nigel and Troitzsch, Klaus G. Simulation for the Social Scientist* Open University Press 1999 273 pp. £15.99 (paperback)

How does one become a social simulationist? With the publication of this book, which is both an overview of the area and a gentle introduction to many of its methods, the answer is 'rather more easily than before'. Social simulation, or computational social modelling, is a resurgent field, driven by hardware developments over the past decade or so, and by profound developments in computer science and areas such as artificial intelligence. But though it has great potential for addressing key sociological issues, e.g., the relationship between situated individual action and the emergence of supra-individual structure, it has – by virtue of the skills required – remained largely marginal to sociology as a discipline.

This book pulls together the main paradigms in simulation as it relates to social science, with chapters on system dynamics,

policy-oriented micro-analytical simulation models (e.g., tax-benefit models), discrete-event or queuing models, multi-level simulation models, cellular automata, multi-agent or distributed-AI models and learning and evolutionary/genetic-algorithm models. In doing so the authors are drawing on their deep involvement in the social simulation world as conference organizers and proceedings editors, as well as their own research experience. It is thus a good reflection of current activity.

The presentation of the various techniques is extremely accessible, and it is valuable to have overviews of disparate and non-communicating paradigms in one place, with dispassionate evaluations of their usefulness. Even if the reader has no intention of doing simulation, the book organizes and renders comprehensible a range of exciting research. For the reader who is tempted to get his/her hands dirty, there is sufficient information to get started, with information on software (much of it freely distributed) and worked examples (many in Lisp, specifically Tierney's freely-available Lisp-Stat, exceptionally well suited to simulation). All the examples can be downloaded from <http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/research/simsoc>.

This is an ideal text for a course on social simulation – the only difficulty would be finding students! Where it is more likely to find an audience is among researchers who want to understand, and perhaps participate in, this burgeoning area. What the book doesn't do is go into the consequences of simulation for sociology, and is thus not a typical sociological methodology text, but rather a handbook of the state of the art.

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**The Changing Transition to Adulthood: Leaving and Returning Home** Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage 1999 272 pp. £32.00 (hardback) £15.99 (paperback)

Young people leave the parental home at different ages and on different routes –