Originally Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World in this classic text is a comparative survey of some of what Barrington Moore considers the major and most indicative world economies as they evolved out of pre-modern political
systems into industrialism. But Moore is not ultimately concerned with explaining economic development so much as exploring why modes of
development produced different political forms that managed the transition to industrialism and modernization.

Why did one society modernize into a "relatively free," democratic society by which Moore means England? Why did others metamorphose into
fascist or communist states?

His core thesis is that in each country, the relationship between the landlord class and the peasants was a primary influence on the ultimate form of
government the society arrived at upon arrival in its modern age.

This book will influence a whole generation of young American historians and lead them to problems of the greatest significance. Only when it was
pointed out to me that Moore was a doctrinaire Marxist did it lose its luster. The book still This classic work of comparative history explores why
some countries have developed as democracies and others as fascist or communist dictatorships Originally published in this classic text is a
comparative survey of some of what Barrington Moore considers the major and most indicative world economies as they evolved out of pre-
modern political systems into industrialism.

Edward Friedman

Social origins of dictatorship and democracy: lord and peasant in the making of the
morden world

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Edward Friedman Foreword by. Get A Copy. Paperbackpages. Published September 1st by Beacon Press first published More Details Original Title.

A lot of reviewers here complain about the meandering character of the argument, but Moore actually does a great job of summarizing his
arguments at the beginning and ends of chapters, and he gives you a summary of the whole argument in Part III of the book The basic version of
the argument is that the structure of agricultural production in a Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the
Modern World determines how it modernizes.

If the aristocracy turns to commercial agriculture, as in Britain and France, and peasant society disappears, you will have a revolution that leads to
the emergence of democracy. If the aristocracy turns to commercial agriculture but fails to destroy peasant society, such as in Eastern Europe,
Germany, and Japan, you get fascism.

If there is no turn to commercial agriculture at all, you get this huge peasant mass that lingers into the 20th century and becomes a reservoir for
peasant revolution as in Russia and China.

The turn to commercial agriculture requires both the opportunity and desire to commercialize. The opportunity comes from the relative rigidity of
feudal law--the weaker feudalism is, the easier it is to commercialize. The desire comes from the growth of towns and royal taxation, both of which
increase the desire of the aristocracy for cash.

For example, commercialization happened in England through the enclosure movement because aristocrats wanted land to raise sheep for wool
and kicked the peasants off the land. But in France and Germany, the two dominant agricultural products--wine and grain--were both labor-
intensive to grow requiring the aristocrats to keep peasants on the land. The status of peasants also matters, not just the aristocrats. Peasants were
generally freer in France and England than in Eastern Europe and had relatively more power over feudal lords.

This made labor-repressive agriculture more difficult in England and France. In Germany, feudal elites were able to crushed multiple peasant
revolts including in the famous Bauernkrieg of Peasants were especially weak in Prussia, which allowed the Prussian Junkers to re-ensnare the
peasants. Even though the aristocracy and peasantry are decisively important, the emergence of a strong bourgeoisie is a necessary condition for
the emergence of democracy "no bourgeoisie, no democracy".

In the French case, no alliance between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy emerged that was sufficiently strong to repress the peasantry before the
Revolution, and the French Revolution successfully destroyed enough of the ancien regime to prevent a bourgeoisie-aristocratic coalition from
emerging. However, in the case of Prussia, Bismarck's infamous "iron and rye" coalition held together through labor and agricultural repression as

well as militant nationalism. The German bourgeoisie was not strong enough to pursue an alliance with the peasantry or workers against the
Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World
By Barrington Moore, Jr.
Boston: The Beacon Press

Most users should sign in with their email address. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World is in the interest of each and every member of that group to support the policy. Moore's focus on class interests is a feature of structural explanations as well as the scope of the outcome to be explained.

Failure of either of these conditions prevents democracy from emerging. Excessive power in either the aristocracy or the monarchy leads to static and unresponsive political institutions in the modern period that are replaced through peasant revolutions. Moore anticipates much future work with this point such as the "reversal of fortune" hypothesis of Acemoglu and others--regimes that are very successful in one historical period or under one set of economic institutions tend to be unsuccessful at adapting to new economic conditions.

This is because, again to anticipate a lot of future work on institutional development, institutions are path-dependent and tend to resist internal reform. Concerning the other condition, an aristocratic-bourgeois alliance against peasants and workers prevents a revolution from below and the expansion of political participation. Moore's class-based explanation of comparative pathways to modernization is apt to be criticized for its equivocation between class interests and individual interests.

As Olson famously pointed out, if some policy is in the interest of some group, it does not follow that Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World is in the interest of each and every member of that group to support the policy. Moore's focus on class interests is a feature of structural explanations as well as the scope of the outcome to be explained.

Even if Moore's class-based explanation relying on the structure of agricultural production seems simplistic, it is worth observing that efforts to put the theory of democratization a sounder analytical foundation e. Aug 09, Ryan Milbrath rated it it was amazing. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy to me was one of the books that comes along that stands as the pinnacle of comparative history and discussions of the political economy. One of the top five most important books I have read in my life.

One review does not due justice to the amount of research and theoretical comparisons Moore accomplished in this book. Those who reduce the book's thesis to merely, if a bourgeois class does not exist, than a democratic-capitalist country will not exist Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy to me was one of the books that comes along that stands as the pinnacle of comparative history and discussions of the political economy.

Those who reduce the book's thesis to merely, if a bourgeois class does not exist, than a democratic-capitalist country will not exist fail to see the complexities of Moore's thesis. Many will say this book is boring, I think it's genius.

Oct 02, Tate Strickland rated it did not like it Recommends it for: people who like ugly book jackets. This book made a really good doorstop.

Sep 07, Noel rated it really liked it Shelves: comparative-politics. When reading this book, it is important to keep in mind the order in which it should be read. I believe the most likely primary goal of a reader is to read the theory formulated by Moore. This theory is the last three chapters of the book.

Hence reading the prologue and the last three chapters first, and then reading relevant countries is probably the best way to go. If linearly read, the grouping of countries is obscure and so is their relevance to formulating the theory. For example India is g When reading this book, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy to me was one of the books that comes along that stands as the pinnacle of comparative history and discussions of the political economy.

For example India is grouped with other Asian countries but its relevance to Moore's theory comes forth when discussing the emergence of modern democracy England, America, France. The case of India is well chosen as it helps to refute many existing theories of peasant revolution, as well as emergence of modern democracy. May 19, Mark Desrosiers rated it really liked it Shelves: history. It's like you're getting twisted and pressed into Barrington Moore's densely packed brainfolds: so much knowledge, such a broad vision.

I like these macrohistorians, they got balls. And it's harder to figure out their mistakes. Possibly the best course-assigned text I've ever read. Aug 27, John rated it liked it Shelves: maybe-sometime. I only got through the first half of this before other, more pressing books forced it back to the library, but I will definitely return to it. I wouldn't recommend sitting down with it and reading cover to cover, but if you ever want some questions answered about why different countries end up with different systems of government, this is great.

How did England and France both end up with democracy, when their approaches to it were so different? Why did China and Russia end up communist, while I I only got through the first half of this before other, more pressing books forced it back to the library, but I will definitely return to it.

Why did China and Russia end up communist, while India did not? Really interesting ideas to ponder here.

By Barrington Moore, Jr. Boston: The Beacon Press, Most users should sign in with their email address. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World you originally registered with a username please use that to sign in. Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide.
