At ASR we are committed to showcasing the full range of work produced by sociologists today. This includes papers that rely on primary and/or secondary historical data as their main (or only) source of empirical evidence. We realize that, for some readers, these papers can pose some challenges to evaluation. The potential danger is that reviewers might hold comparative historical work to inappropriate standards that are more applicable to quantitative papers. To that end, we are providing you with a set of optional guidelines that reflect the particular points to cover in your evaluation that would be most helpful for us in our job as editors.

1. **Significance**: Comparative historical sociology papers can make a claim to significance either with reference to existing (already well defined) areas of theoretical exploration in the discipline or to genuine historical puzzles of broad significance. For example, scholarship might examine such well-defined theoretical areas as the causes and/or mechanisms of a class of social phenomena such as revolutions, social movements, state formation, or historical transitions (e.g. from feudalism to capitalism, from socialism to capitalism, and the causes and consequences of financialization, neoliberalism or global warming). For genuine historical puzzles, meanwhile, significance might also be drawn from events of human significance that have not as yet been addressed by sociology as a discipline. Papers should make clear the significance of the particular question(s) or historical episode(s) analyzed.

2. **Case selection**: The problem of case selection is of key importance in comparative historical work. ASR papers should offer convincing answers to these questions: Why is a particular case (or set of cases) the most appropriate setting in which to explore the theoretical problem that the paper defines as its object? What universe of cases is possible, and how have these particular cases been drawn from that larger universe? If cases are indeed singular in some important ways (e.g. the Holocaust, the Conquest of America, the French Revolution), authors need to specify this uniqueness and to determine what, if any comparative lessons can nonetheless be garnered from analysis of them. If the research is comparative, one may ask what are the key dimensions of variation across cases, and how does this variation provide leverage on the problem that the paper seeks to explain? It should be noted that although comparative research seeks to leverage variation across cases in developing a theoretical understanding of the processes it explores, comparative work does not construct cases as "variables." Rather the goal, shared with more ethnographic methods of research, is to understand cases as wholes, and to unpack the complex configuration of social forces intersecting to produce a particular outcome or event. In all cases, authors need to make explicit the questions they are posing and the analytic assumptions of their analyses.

3. **Generalizability**: By the same token, the objective of comparative historical work is typically not to produce generalizable propositions that are fully transferable between contexts. Because comparative historical sociology is concerned with cases as complex wholes, attending to the particularities of cases is often more important than generalization per se. The constellation of factors that produce a singular historical event may not be found in any other cases, nor expected to be repeated at another time in the case under study. Rather than engaging in generalization, comparative historical work may seek to identify the particular set of circumstances that lead to a unique outcome,
and then specify scope conditions under which we might expect to see similar processes at work in other cases. Comparative historical research may also seek to extend its insights to other cases through the use of analogy: rather than identifying causal mechanisms that can be applied across cases independent of context, comparative historical researchers may draw analogies that specify assemblages of features sharing a "family resemblance." Finally, comparative historical sociology also seeks to extend its insights by fashioning novel concepts that may be of utility in exploring other cases, even though they represent a different configuration of conditions. Thus while comparative historical sociology does not always seek generalizability across causal models, it can seek to trace the effects of one or more causally efficacious causal mechanisms across different cases.

4. Use of single cases in theory building: Papers that address single cases can be sources of novel theoretical insights. As noted above, comparative historical research treats cases as complex wholes rather than as variables. To the extent that single cases present anomalies with respect to existing theories, a single deviation from what existing theory "predicts" or "expects" may be significant in building theory to the extent that it leads to a better specification of the limits of particular theories or a clearer understanding of the mechanisms that these theories posit. Much theorizing in comparative historical sociology proceeds in this vein.

5. Data quality and methods: Comparative historical sociology employs a variety of methods. Papers should be judged on whether the authors' chosen methods are appropriate for the problem they have set for themselves. Excellent historical sociology is qualitative or quantitative, reanalyzes secondary sources or primary documents, focuses on one or a few cases in depth or seeks to find patterns and differences across larger numbers of cases that therefore must be analyzed with less depth. This may involve original archival research or the re-interpretation of already existing historical analyses in light of novel theories or comparison cases. It may involve other kinds of source materials, including but not limited to oral histories and interviews, government reports, material artifacts, and other kinds of documentary evidence such as newspaper accounts and first-person narratives contained in memoirs and letters. Whatever the sources used in comparative historical research, the original interpretation of primary or secondary materials is a hallmark of the method.

6. Length: As a result of both the attention to the particularities of cases, understood in social and historical context, and reliance on primary sources, comparative historical papers will tend to be longer -- in some cases, significantly longer -- than papers written using other methods. This is not license to be undisciplined in writing; comparative historical research, like other methods, should attempt to include only data necessary to carry the argument, not every possible detail relevant to a particular historical event. But it is important to recognize that the compression that quantitative methods allow is not feasible -- nor desirable -- in the writing of comparative historical sociology.

7. What history means: The "history" in comparative historical sociology generally refers to an attentiveness to social processes that unfold through time, and not necessarily to events that occurred in any particular period (e.g., the French Revolution), at some
necessary remoteness from the present, or over any particular time span. An account of something that happened in the recent past over the course of one day (or even smaller time increments) may be "historical" research if the account is attentive to temporality, sequence, and contingency. That said, comparative and historical sociology is uniquely open to studies of remote pasts and cultures.