

# STATES, POWER, & SOCIETIES

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## *LETTER FROM THE CHAIR*

PAM PAXTON, UT AUSTIN

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Dear members of the Political Sociology section,

The ASA meeting in Philadelphia was a great success with our sessions, a great reception, and a set of outstanding awardees. I want to thank Tom Janoski for his leadership of the section and everyone who worked to make the ASA meeting and this past year a success. I also want to thank Maria Akchurin, Sara Compion, Nathan Katz, Julia Miller, and Joe Sterphone for editing our newsletter.

We are looking forward to our next meeting in 2019 in New York. We have a great line-up of regular sessions as well as a mini-conference on the Friday before the meeting. The call for papers for the mini-conference is included in this newsletter while our regular section sessions are listed on the next page. Be on the lookout for the ASA call for submissions in early November.

We will be sharing a joint reception with the Section on Comparative-Historical Sociology and the Section on Human Rights.

I look forward to working with everyone to advance our section this year. Political sociology is thriving and only increasing in relevance. I'm personally happy to have a home for my research on gender and politics, world society, and democracy. Connecting with others who share similar research interests has enriched and enlivened my work. If you ever have an idea to improve the political sociology section, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best,  
Pam

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# *ASA 2019 POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY SESSIONS*

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## **1. Old School vs. New School? Innovations in Political Sociology Invited Session, organized by Cedric de Leon**

Political sociology is undergoing a palpable shift. In the study of the state alone, political sociologists are contemplating its “many hands,” as well as its colonial, racial and carceral dimensions. Add to this the growing attention to populism, political parties, neoliberalism, the politics of expertise and mounting class inequality and we have the makings of a full scale departure from previous objects of inquiry. This invited panel takes stock of the present ferment and puts it in conversation with the so-called “cultural” and “historical” turns among other past developmental shifts in political sociology.

## **2. Sociological Approaches to Corruption, organized by Marco Garrido and Nicholas Wilson**

In recent years, there has been a broad return to the subject of corruption in history, political science, economics, and policy analysis. Yet intellectual approaches tend to be split between those that emphasize corruption as a behavior limited to economic and social exchange and those that stress the uniqueness and particularity of individual manifestations of corruption. This panel aims to stake the sociological terrain of corruption by emphasizing (1) the embedding of corruption and anti-

corruption in the meaningful worldviews of concrete social actors and (2) the tense, moralized relationship corruption has with sociopolitical structures and political economy at the local, national, and global scales.

## **3. Race, Sexuality and Gender in Politics, organized by Melanie Hughes**

(no description)

## **4. Old Problems and New Methods: The Resurgence of Political Parties in Political Sociology, organized by Adam Slez**

Over the past several years, there has been a growing interest in the study of political parties within political sociology, as evidenced by the pending appearance of both article- and book-length reviews of the field. Such efforts have given rise to several distinct strands of scholarship, all of which promise to make parties a central focus. Not only is there a renewed interest in the role of parties in classical sociology; a significant amount of work has gone in to redefining our theoretical understanding of the interplay between states, parties, and society. These theoretical advances have also been complimented by methodological innovations characterized by, among other things, the use of various forms of network analysis, all of which are designed to capture the relational foundations of political behavior. One of the primary reasons why these lines of work have been so exciting is that they are based on the study of a wide range of cases including the United States, Latin America, Italy, India, and Turkey. The purpose of this panel is to bring together scholars working in this emerging area of inquiry.

## **5. Political Sociology Open Topics, organized by Wade Cole**

(no description)

# Meet the New Council Members

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## *RICHARD LACHMANN*

SECTION CHAIR-ELECT //  
PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY,  
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY,  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEW YORK

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My research, for the first 20 years of my career, focused on the origins of capitalism and state formation in early modern Europe, culminating in *Capitalists In Spite of Themselves: Elite Conflict and Economic Transitions in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 2000), which received the 2003 American Sociological Association's Distinguished Scholarly Publication Award. More recently I published two

synthetic works, *States and Power* (Polity 2010) and *What Is Historical Sociology?* (Polity 2013).

Over the past decade I have focused on trying to explain the decline of dominant economic and military powers in early modern Europe and the contemporary United States. The results of that work, a book entitled *First Class Passengers on a Sinking Ship: Elite Politics and the Decline of Great Powers*, is forthcoming from Verso.

I now am researching media coverage of war deaths in the United States from the 1960s to the present. I find that Americans' attitudes toward military deaths have been transformed since the Vietnam War.

My goal is to describe that change, identify its specific American and more general 'Western' and global causes, and explore the implications of aversion to American though not non-American casualties for US geopolitical interests. I build my argument through analysis of primary documents including newspaper articles, Medal of Honor citations, high school social studies textbooks, and instruction manuals produced by the Department of Defense, as well as secondary sources and cultural expressions such as photographs, films, novels, and television shows.

My goals as 2019-20 section chair:

I see the job of Political Sociology section chair as one that should be focused on facilitating section members' efforts to present their research to each other and to the broader community of ASA members and beyond. I will try to increase section membership (so that we can get more sessions at the annual meeting), expand the scope of the newsletter so that we can present more symposiums and other interactions among section members, and work toward holding a pre-conference with the 2019 annual meeting. All these efforts need to be collaborative, and I will welcome the ideas and efforts of my fellow Political Sociology section members.



## *STEPHANIE MUDGE*

SECRETARY-TREASURER //  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF  
SOCIOLOGY, UC-DAVIS &  
VISITING SCHOLAR,  
MAXPO/SCIENCES PO,  
PARIS

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I have several projects underway. One is on the European Central Bank (ECB): an effort to track its genesis; locate it historically with respect to economics professions, financial institutions (other central banks, international financial institutions, private banks), and European institutions; and trace how it uses its statutory independence to navigate both internal and external contestation. I am collaborating with my longtime coauthor, Antoine Vauchez (Univ. Paris-1/CNRS), on the ECB project.

A second project focuses on how parties in the US (and possibly other countries, too) have used varying techniques over time to assess and represent publics and public interests, to what effect.

A third project focuses on the evolution of the public role of trade union economists in Germany. There are a few others, but I will stop there!

I look forward to helping the political sociology council cultivate excellent work, a thriving membership, and strong scholarly networks.



## *RACHEL KAHN BEST*

NEW COUNCIL MEMBER //  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF  
SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF  
MICHIGAN

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I study political responses to social problems, focusing on inequalities created by advocacy and culture. I'm

currently finishing a book arguing that when Americans come together to fight social problems, we focus our largest efforts on diseases. Drawing on a century of data on disease campaigns, I ask why they are the wars Americans can agree to fight, why some diseases attract more attention than others, and how fighting one disease at a time changes how we distribute charitable dollars, make health policies, and promote health. Disease campaigns funnel vast sums of money and attention to a few particular diseases, neglecting others. And they focus predominantly on awareness campaigns and research funding, paying much less attention to preventing disease and ensuring access to health care.

It's easy to imagine more efficient ways to promote our collective well-being. Yet the same forces that limit the potential of individual disease campaigns to improve our health also stimulate the vast outpouring of resources. Instead of drawing resources away from other problems, they build up our capacity to come together to address them.

In another current project, my coauthors and I are researching how social, organizational, and medical constructions of disability shape legal and corporate interpretations of disability law.

As a council member, I'm looking forward to learning more about section members' research when reading recent work for the prize committees and helping plan ASA sessions that reflect the theoretical, empirical, and methodological diversity of members' approaches.



## *DAVID BRADY*

NEW COUNCIL MEMBER //  
PROFESSOR AND  
DIRECTOR OF THE BLUM  
INITIATIVE ON GLOBAL AND  
REGIONAL POVERTY  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY  
UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

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Presently, I am studying: (a) the measurement and causes of poverty, (b) how rising racial/ethnic heterogeneity and immigration influence politics - and especially the politics of social policy and economic egalitarianism, and (c) how very long-term

economic resources drive racial and health inequalities.

Within the first, I've long tried to contribute to the power resources theory tradition, which started in political sociology. Generally, I am interested in how the political mobilization of disadvantaged classes can cause the development and expansion of generous social policies. Generous social policies then make the amount of poverty and inequality in a society a political decision (rather than an inevitability of individual behavior or labor markets).

Within the second area is where I am most connected to political sociology these days. My interest partly originates with the pervasive claim that racial/ethnic heterogeneity is incompatible with economic egalitarianism. Many argue that "fractionalization" and immigration fuel divisiveness and weaken people's sense of solidarity with others, and this undermines interests and collective mobilizations for generous social policies. We are testing these sorts of claims by studying how rising immigration (e.g. in Europe in late 1990s and early 2000s) does or does not alter people's preferences about social policy. We are also

examining the relationship between ethnic, linguistic, and religious heterogeneity and preferences for social policy in recent decades in Latin America.

In the future, I hope to study changes over time across U.S. states. Overall, while claims of a heterogeneity-redistribution tradeoff have been very popular in development economics and political science, I hope to provide some critical scrutiny to these arguments.

I am looking forward to being involved in helping select award-winners amongst the great quantity of excellent research going on in the section. I'm also looking to contribute to active and engaged sessions and section activities at the ASA meetings.

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### **SECTION OFFICERS, 2018-19**

*Chair:* Pamela M. Paxton, University of Texas, Austin

*Chair-Elect:* Richard Lachmann, State University of New York, Albany

*Past Chair:* Thomas Janoski, University of Kentucky

*Secretary-Treasurer:* Stephanie Mudge, University of California, Davis

*Council:* Jennifer YJ Hsu, University of Alberta 2019; G. Cristina Mora, University of California, Berkeley 2019; Hana Brown, Wake Forest University 2020; Cybelle Fox, UC Berkeley 2020; Rachel Best, University of Michigan 2021; David Brady, University of California, Riverside 2021.



# SYMPOSIUM:

## The rise of Jair Bolsonaro and right-wing populism in Brazil

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### *Why the Far Right Won in Brazil*

MARISA VON BÜLOW,  
UNIVERSIDADE DE BRASÍLIA

A couple of years ago few (if any) scholars would have predicted the victory of the far right in the 2018 Presidential elections in Brazil. Many did point to the dangers of the moral and political crisis of the governing coalition, which, coupled with an economic crisis, created a context that was ripe for authoritarian and populist turns. However, no one really believed that Jair Bolsonaro, a former Army captain best known for his outrageous comments about torture and women than for his charisma, would be able to reap the benefits of this crisis in such a momentous way.

Much of what has been discussed about the causes of this upheaval has emphasized the role of factors such as the rising levels of crime and unemployment, or have pointed to what other political forces did or did not do, such as the corruption scandals of the left or the inability of more moderate forces to channel dissatisfaction.

While these are all relevant, in this op-ed I wish to change the focus of the discussion, by highlighting a less explored but central dimension: the effectiveness of the strategies of the far right. Three factors are particularly important to explain why the far right – and not a more moderate opposition – was able to win the Presidential race.

The first factor is the successful building of a broad conservative coalition. The so-called “bullet, beef and Bible” sectors of Congress have long been allies, bringing together the traditional power of farm owners with representatives of the security community (former military officers and policemen) and conservative religious actors, mostly from neo-Pentecostal churches.

In the past five years, this coalition has gradually broadened, to include new actors and organizations. Mimicking the bridging movement of “fusionism” that brought together traditionalist and libertarian strands of conservatism in the United States in the 1960s (Edwards, 2007), the new conservative actors of the 2010s have built bridges with the more traditional actors in Brazilian politics. Among these new actors are youth-based groups that took root in the student movement in the 2000s, and that have since created a network of civil society organizations and think tanks dedicated to promoting neoliberal economic ideas and criticizing the left (Gobbi, 2016).

These tech-savvy groups became more visible during the campaign for the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, when they helped organize massive street protests with the help of social media (Dias, 2017). At that time, however, these groups were not among the supporters of Bolsonaro. They came onboard in 2017 and in 2018, as the far right candidate rose in the polls and consolidated his favoritism (von Bülow, 2018).

They are strange bedfellows to the extent that these groups sponsor very different views about trade and the role of the State in the economy. However, this Brazilian-style fusionism has become feasible by focusing on broad agreements around three issues: the fight against corruption (and the demand for tougher laws against crime in general), the defense of moral values (in opposition to LGBT and feminists' agendas), and pro-business economic policies (in detriment, for instance, of environmental protection).

The second factor that helps explain the success of Jair Bolsonaro in the elections is the highly strategic and effective use of social media in general and of the messenger app WhatsApp in particular. Again, this was not done overnight. The online network of Bolsonaro supporters was already very influential during the impeachment of President Rousseff. In 2018, the mapping of the presence of political actors and civil society organizations on social media platforms shows that there is a large and unwavering difference according to ideology. To illustrate, I will mention only one fact: a week before the second round of the Presidential elections, Bolsonaro's Facebook page had over seven million followers, while Fernando Haddad's (the other candidate, of the leftist Workers' Party) had less than one million.

While it is undoubtedly true that the use of digital media in this election has been characterized by false news and misinformation, as many have argued, it is also important to recognize that much of Bolsonaro's impressive ability to mobilize online has been based on the organic actions of a well-oiled machinery that learned, from previous protest cycles and campaigns, how to best produce and disseminate content. Of key importance in this machinery have been WhatsApp groups. In Brazil – and in other countries such as India – this messaging app is

extremely popular. Around one hundred million Brazilians use WhatsApp groups to quickly disseminate messages, creating an arena that is inscrutable both for researchers and for electoral authorities.

Finally, the third factor is the ability of Jair Bolsonaro to be reborn as a charismatic leader. A former army captain, Bolsonaro had been elected, seven times in a row, as a congressman from Rio de Janeiro. Until recently, however, he was not well known at the national level. He was not even well known among his colleagues in Congress. As early as February 2017, he launched a bid to become the Speaker of the House, and was mocked among his peers after getting only four votes (the winner received 293 votes). He was the “enfant terrible” in Congress, always eager to defend the military dictatorship and to pick fights with women, gays, or human rights defenders.

It is precisely this outspoken characteristic that has been successfully flipped, from bullying behavior into a political asset. While it still entails many negative reactions – public opinion polls before the second round showed that around 40% of the electorate argued they would never vote for Bolsonaro, a very high rejection rate – many began to see in him a welcome candid approach to politics. His supporters believe that whereas all politicians are corrupt and lie, Bolsonaro says what he is really thinking.

“Mito” Bolsonaro – “the Legend,” as his most fervent followers call him – was thus born. One whose potential was highly underestimated by all the other political forces and by scholars alike.

Other factors of course also had an impact, be they more structural ones (such as the seemingly unending economic and political crisis mentioned above), or more contextual ones, such as the knife attack suffered by Bolsonaro before the first

round. This attack helped in consolidating a narrative of Bolsonaro as a victim fighting a corrupt system. It was also instrumental in allowing the candidate to withhold from any public debates, while maintaining a large coverage in mainstream media.

It is also important to acknowledge that the process of far-right empowerment is not a national one. In fact, many of the strategies that led to this successful outcome in the elections were lessons learned from far-right leaders and conservative movements in other countries, such as the United States. It remains to be seen, of course, whether these strategies, so successful for winning the election, will be sustainable during Bolsonaro's Presidency. We are treading new territory in Brazilian politics, and the future is highly uncertain.

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## *Bolsonaro and the Future of Democracy in Brazil*

CARLOS DE LA TORRE,  
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Jair Bolsonaro is not your regular Latin American populist, at least until now. Contrary to leftwing populists like Hugo Chávez, he did not promise to deepen democracy and to abandon neoliberalism. His platform is law and order, and the restriction of civil, socio-economic, gender, and LGBTQ rights. Bolsonaro is not the first rightwing populist to get elected either. In the 1990s Alberto Fujimori in Perú, like Bolsonaro, combined challenges to the political establishment with neoliberal policies. Yet differently from Bolsonaro, he did not use open racism to win elections. Nor is Bolsonaro just another rightwing winner like Iván Duque in Colombia or Sebastián Piñera in Chile.

Bolsonaro is a new brand of Latin American populist because he uses nostalgia of the military dictatorship of the 1960s and 1970s to imagine a time of law and order, free of crime. His populism is a reaction to the corruption of the political establishment, especially of the leftist Worker's Party (PT). It is also a protest to the inability of politicians to deal with a long and deep economic crisis. When the prices of commodities were high, Brazil under the PT experienced an economic bonanza, drastic reductions of poverty, and a new middle class moved out of poverty. The economic crisis, which was not well managed by the PT, threatened the status of a new and fragile middle class. Bolsonaro's election is a white reaction to the policies of affirmative action that incorporated Afro-Brazilians to universities. It is also a conservative and



fundamentalist Christian response to women's rights and their visibility in the public sphere, and to the recognition of LGBTQ rights. He pledged to put neoliberal economists in charge to reverse the redistributive policies of the PT. He promised to open up protected areas of the Amazon rainforest to capitalist exploitation, and to get rid of conservationists and indigenous people who are resisting natural resources extraction.

As other rightwing populists, Bolsonaro is a threat to democracy, civility, and to basic values of modernity such as free and open public spheres and plural civil societies. Similarly to Trump, he promises to restore a patriarchal, heterosexual, and white-dominated past when minorities occupied subordinate roles, yet in addition he has nostalgia for dictatorship. Like Rodrigo Duterte, he wants to give impunity to the police and to vigilantes to get rid of crime. Similarly to other rightwing populists, Bolsonaro moves on a thin line between fascism and populism. Contrary to fascists that disregarded elections, populists' claims to legitimacy lie in winning elections. Populists belong to the democratic family, yet once in power often act against pluralism, use laws instrumentally to punish critics, and restrict fundamental rights of the individual. Fascists use paramilitary and state violence to physically eliminate enemies, while populist attacks against enemies remain at the discursive and symbolic levels.

Yet Bolsonaro's followers during the election beat up opponents, and like Trump, he opened up spaces for neo-fascists and alt-right groups. Contrary to U.S. rightwing populists, until Bolsonaro's election, Latin American populists did not use openly racist tropes. When populists politicize race and racism, there is always a threat that it could become fascism.

It is unlikely that Bolsonaro will attempt a coup d'état. It is more likely that Brazil will experience processes of democratic erosion to restrict freedoms of expression, association, and privacy. Bolsonaro will attempt to concentrate power, and like Trump and other populists will transform political adversaries into enemies. State and paramilitary violence against indigenous people in the Amazonia, and poor and dark-skinned Brazilians in the favelas, will increase. Confrontations between his followers and the resistance to his autocratic government will further polarize a divided nation. Bolsonaro won the vote of whiter and more affluent voters in the south. Darker skinned and poor people in the northeast remained faithful to the PT. Bolsonaro got more votes from males than from women who took to the streets to protest his misogyny (Llaneras 2018).

The Brazilian election illustrates the diffusion of rightwing populism. As historian of populism and fascism Federico Finchelstein put it, Washington, DC is becoming the new center of populist diffusion. In the recent

**“Nowadays democracies do not face sudden deaths. The main challenge to democracy comes from populists in power that incrementally restrict rights, concentrate power, and use laws instrumentally.”**

past, an openly autocratic candidate like Bolsonaro would have met with warnings from the U.S. embassy. Things are different under Trump. He admires macho autocrats, and he will probably bless Bolsonaro without making him accountable for human rights violations. Bolsonaro's new brand of populism unfortunately might not be confined to Brazil. Would-be Bolsonaros could emerge in other nations to fight against crime and insecurity.

Fundamentalists are ready to rise up to reverse women's and LGBTQ rights. Where Bolsonaro imitators pop up, hopefully supporters of democracy will learn from the mistakes of Brazilians. Luis Ignacio da Silva, the founder of the PT that is serving time in jail for corruption, tried to run for the presidency while incarcerated and only a few months before the election named Fernando Haddad as his candidate. The non-PT political establishment reluctantly endorsed Haddad who was unable to stop Bolsonaro.

It is worth remembering that the wave of brutal military dictatorships of the 1970s started with the 1964 coup in Brazil. Nowadays democracies do not face sudden deaths. The main challenge to democracy comes from populists in power that incrementally restrict rights, concentrate power, and use laws instrumentally. Some, as Nadia Urbinati argues, disfigure democracy, while others push fragile democracies towards autocracy.

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## *Bolsonaro Marks a Xenophobic Turn for Brazil*

KATHERINE JENSEN,  
TULANE UNIVERSITY

Commentators have rightfully underscored varied elements of Bolsonaro's depravity. They have detailed his misogynist, racist, and homophobic record. Others have focused on his praise of the former military dictatorship, which he believes should have killed 30,000 more. He sees state and vigilante violence as fair avenues for imposing a conservative and oppressive societal order. Many have called him the "Trump of the Tropics." He embraces the comparison. Others see him as the next Duterte.

His xenophobia has received less attention. Bolsonaro's stances on immigration further clarify the severity of Bolsonaro's profound departure from politics as usual in Brazil.

"The scum of the world is arriving in Brazil," Bolsonaro bemoaned in 2015. He has pointedly named this "scum" as the "Senegalese, Haitians, Iranians, Bolivians... and now Syrians" in Brazil, and the "bad natured" people coming from North Africa. He believes Haitians are bringing diseases. Bolsonaro claims Brazil needs more armed forces in the streets to handle these immigrant and refugee communities. "We cannot put our society at the mercy of this minority, scum, who will join the other scum that's in Brazil...to inflict terror here among us." He declared: "We cannot allow this!"

Such statements mark a new era in Brazilian politics. Under former President Dilma Rousseff, Brazil began an open-arms migratory policy for Syrians. Since 2014, any Syrian can acquire a visa to come and

obtain refugee status in Brazil. Consequently, Syrians are now the largest refugee community in the country. Brazil is the third largest recipient of Syrian refugees in the Americas, after the US and Canada. As Wael, a Syrian refugee in Rio de Janeiro, told me, “We have the freedom to work, to study, really to do what we want, because we have rights to everything.” Wael believes it is like “no other place in the world.”

Brazil has one of the fairest and most democratic asylum processes in the world, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. In 2014, 93% of asylum seekers had their refugee status claims approved. In 2017, Brazil passed a new Migration Law, finally replacing the Foreigner Statute instituted during the military dictatorship.

These formal processes have seen recent cracks from above and below. In August 2018, a judge ordered the suspension of entry of Venezuelans through the bordering state Roraima. In March, the National Committee for Refugees instituted a resolution whereby asylum seekers who have obtained residency status can have their asylum claims closed. And Brazil is no immigrant paradise. Venezuelans seeking refuge in Roraima have been terrorized by locals, their belongings set aflame. Syrian refugees have been accused of being suicide bombers. While seeking medical treatment, Hadi, another Syrian refugee living in Rio, was asked by his nurse to lift up his shirt to make sure he wasn't carrying any bombs.

But Bolsonaro's election marks the concretization and intensification of a new national political moment of xenophobia. Prior to Bolsonaro, Brazilian political conservatism had not been aligned with immigrant hatred in the ways with which we are familiar in the United States. Bolsonaro marks a radical departure even amongst conservative politicians in Brazil. In September 2016, then president Michel Temer spoke at a UN General Assembly meeting on migrants and refugees. Temer argued for increasing global measures to provide safe haven for immigrants. He boasted of Brazil's welcoming of refugees. He spoke with pride as he declared at the UN that Brazil had received more than 95,000 refugees. The true number was 8,800. Temer inflated the number of refugees in Brazil by more than tenfold. Through such bombastic claims, Temer, a staunchly conservative president, sought to have Brazil stand out for its openness to immigrants, not its closures. Temer sought to position Brazil as distinct from global restrictive trends and called for other countries to be as accommodating as Brazil.

Bolsonaro marks a grave departure from the political status quo on immigration in Brazil. And he wields xenophobia as part and parcel of his broader political agenda. It provides for the co-produced denigration of “the other scum” in Brazil—“the marginals” of the Landless Workers' Movement, for example—whom Bolsonaro decries as having immigrants in their midst. It also signals the global diffusion of a particular Islamophobic current, so ubiquitous in the United States but relatively new to and spotty in

**“Prior to Bolsonaro, Brazilian political conservatism had not been aligned with immigrant hatred in the ways with which we are familiar in the United States.”**

Brazil and which, frighteningly, is also an avenue for resurrecting the rhetorics of national security and domestic terrorism used by the military dictatorship to justify violent repression.

Poor, black, indigenous, and LGBTQ communities will suffer tremendously under a Bolsonaro presidency. So too will women and leftists. We should also be attuned to the threat Bolsonaro brings for the immigrant and refugee communities struggling to construct their lives anew in Brazil.

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# Interview with Theda Skocpol

SARA COMPION,  
KEAN UNIVERSITY

The Political Sociology section bestowed its first “Distinguished Career Award in Political Sociology” at this year’s ASA meeting in Philadelphia to Dr. Theda Skocpol, the Victor S. Thomas Professor of Government and Sociology at Harvard University. The awards committee, led by Thomas Janoski, chose to honor Theda Skocpol for her dedicated service, far-sighted political theory, visionary empiricism, and scholarly activism that has advanced the study of politics and political life. Theda Skocpol is the author of eleven books, ten edited volumes, and countless journal articles and book chapters. She also engages with non-scholars through an array of on-point commentaries written for public audiences. Her contribution to political scholarship has earned her more than twenty special awards and honors, including the prestigious Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science (2007). In 2008, she was elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences. In addition, she has generously served the community of scholars as the 2002-03 President of the American Political Science Association. We spoke with Dr. Skocpol about her career, research and ongoing work.

**SC: You’ve had a remarkable career. What has most influenced your overall research agenda? What do you see as the core questions motivating your research going forward?**

TS: I have always been interested in understanding political change, as it plays out at the interstices of government and party organizations, on the one hand, and social formations and trends (in class, gender, race, and place-based relationships) on the other hand. My research agendas are always question driven: I ask about a type of change – revolution, reform movements, policy shifts, shifts in civic activity – that matter to public discussion as well as to fellow scholars. Then I use over time analysis and comparisons to explore hypotheses.

**SC: How has the field of political sociology changed throughout your career, and how do you see it evolving in the future? Alternatively, what can political sociology contribute to current academic and public debates?**

TS: My work is interdisciplinary. When I started out as a political sociologist, comparative



historical work was rare – practiced in isolation by some grand old men. Now it is an established subfield. In political science, the same is true for historical institutional research. With colleagues, I got involved in building these subfields in both disciplines.

**SC: You are a prolific publisher of books and academic articles. Looking back, how would you describe your writing process? Did publishing your first book change your process of writing?**

TS: I have to take broad stretches to do rough drafts alone, with no interruptions on writing days. When I started, I tried to set aside some days of the week for that work. Later, I became better at using mornings only. I can also draft chapters much faster now. But the best part for me is revising drafts. That is when I sharpen them up and often realize what my argument actually is. This is now much easier due to word processing. When I wrote my first book it was before word processing made revision easy; drafts had to be retyped or typed after done first in handwriting.

My first book, *States and Social Revolutions*, was greatly revised in content and presentation from the PhD dissertation. For example, I compared all three revolutions in particular chapters instead of doing separate chapters on each revolution. Also, my PhD dissertation was late, and I was already in a faculty position I would lose if I did not finish. So I cut off the parts about revolutionary outcomes. Those developed a lot more for the book. Over time, I try to write for general educated audiences nowadays, avoiding academic jargon.



**SC: You also speak regularly to community groups, write for blogs, and produce content for public-interest magazines like *The New Republic*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*. Why is it important for you to share your thoughts and work in this manner? And what can other scholars learn from your practice?**

TS: My work in recent years has been about unfolding developments in American politics, so I want to share findings and insights with fellow citizens and reporters. I still try to make clear distinctions between scholarly research write ups, even for general audiences, and my opinion pieces. The former are objective; the latter from my citizen perspective as a New Deal Democrat.

**SC: What's your favorite under-appreciated scholarly work?**

TS: Overall, I recommend looking to works from the past, old unpublished PhD dissertations, for example, because they have insights and data that offer fresh takes in the present. More generally, I read history for that purpose. When doing *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, I got the core idea about Civil War pensions from a 1913 book on Social Insurance by Isaac Max Rubinow. He said the USA was ahead in old age pensions, and I was surprised. So I looked into his evidence and found a whole new world of public spending, overlooked by current welfare state scholars.

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Theda Skocpol's visionary work gained prominence with arguably her most impactful book, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of Social Revolutions in Russia, France and China* (1979), which popularized the use of a comparative and historical framework to best explain the structural causes of social revolutions. Following this, *Bringing the State back In* (1985) helped define a new "polity-centered theory" that shaped an emerging field of research for new generations of political sociologists. More recently, she wrote *The Tea Party and Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (with Vanessa Williamson). Her ongoing work remains relevant and impactful, and for this reason she is most deserving of this award. Congratulations to Professor Theda Skocpol for a lifetime of scholarly contributions to the field, and for being an intellectual inspiration to political sociologists.



## *Interview with Paul Frymer*

NATHAN KATZ,  
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

The Political Sociology's Book Awards committee were most impressed with Paul Frymer's book *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion*. The committee, led by Dr. Jennifer Hsu, received twenty-two excellent entries, covering the full range of topics from civic engagement in China to the welfare state in Iran. The breadth of submissions demonstrate the dynamism of our section and also the field of political sociology.

In deciding on a winner, the committee considered a number of questions, including: Is the book a (potential) field changer? Does it open up new frontiers for research? Does the book contribute to larger theoretical debates? Is the methodology convincing/plausible? What is the relevance of the book for our understanding of political sociology?

The committee felt Paul Frymer's book pushed boundaries in all directions. *Building an American Empire* analyzes a variety of state practices that shaped the pace and extent of Westward expansion in the United States. Frymer argues that the US government used federal land policy to direct the process of expansion, motivated by two concerns: first, security and incorporation, and second, maintaining a predominantly white population in the face of confrontations with diverse groups and peoples, especially at the nation's peripheries. The book is impressive in its historical and geographic approach to the issue of expansion. The committee



congratulates Paul Frymer for his thought-provoking book.

**NK: How did you start working on Building an American Empire? How did the project evolve over time?**

PF: My research prior to this book focused on the institutional mechanisms, particularly as part of the history of American state formation, that both establish and maintain racial hierarchies and inequalities. I have also long been interested in micro forms of imperialism, which led to my focus in this book on land policy as an act of empire.

In the 2000s, during the Bush Administration and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the topic of American empire dominated the news. As a scholar of historical development, and as one particularly interested in race, I noticed that the way scholars typically talk about American empire was as a 20th and 21st century phenomenon and as one almost exclusively about lands that continue to lie outside of national borders. I started with the nation's beginnings where the aspiration of empire was widespread, read a lot from a multi-disciplinary literature that has grown on frontier and western politics, as well as a renewed interest in Native American politics and history, and the project flowed from there.

But a major thematic of the project changed over time: I came to realize in the process of doing the research that when Americans in the 18th and 19th century spoke of 'empire,' what they really meant was the establishment of an expansionist "settler nation." It was a settler nation that legally and explicitly privileged white immigrants from western and northern Europe well into the twentieth century and this profoundly shaped the formation of the nation's geography, demography, and identity. By the time I was finishing the book manuscript, the United States had long left the Bush Administration and were on the verge of the Trump Administration, which only served to further accentuate the characteristics of the nation as one that imagined itself as built by white settlers.

**NK: How has the book influenced your overall research agenda? What do you see as the core questions motivating your research going forward?**

PF: The core questions that I have always focused on—inequality in its many different



manifestations, particularly with regards to race and class, the specific role of governing institutions and policies in enabling and entrenching such inequalities—will likely remain at the center of my research.

Methodologically and theoretically, I'm pretty consistent with my research even though I change historical eras (from the late 20th century in previous work to the 19th century here) and substantive policy projects (labor and partisan politics previously, land policy and expansion here). Each project I've worked on has been motivated by the events of the moment in which I was writing, even though I tend to turn to history to answer them. I am very grateful to have the luxury of tenure at this stage in my career, and one of the things it affords is that I can take some time in thinking about my next book. In so doing, it allows me to step back a bit from the last project, read widely, reflect, and hopefully come up with something that is of interest.

**NK: Where do you see the political sociology subfield heading? What do you think are some of the key ways that political sociology can contribute to current academic and public debates?**

PF: The subfield has long been at the center of profoundly important work that fundamentally scrutinizes the mechanisms of political and societal power, frequently intersecting along the way with questions of race, class, gender, inequality, nationalism, and democracy. These works so often rely on the temporal development of political institutions to illuminate rich and complicated engines of forces fighting for equality.

Our current era demands an understanding of historical and institutional context, and we seem to also increasingly be at a crossroads with opportunities to both new interventions and the re-examination of popular theories of politics and societies from many decades past. At a time when much of social science moves further toward models of causal inference, political sociologists have a unique opportunity to keep expanding the boundaries of our understanding with greater complexity and theoretical context.



## *Interview with Nicholas Pedriana and Robin Stryker*

MARIA AKCHURIN,  
TULANE UNIVERSITY

The political sociology section awarded the 2018 Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Award for an Article or Book Chapter to Nicholas Pedriana and Robin Stryker for their article "From Legal Doctrine to Social Transformation? Comparing U.S. Voting Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Fair Housing Legislation," published in the *American Journal of Sociology*.

The article uses comparative-historical methods to develop an important and compelling explanation of why some U.S. civil rights legislation was more successful in practice than others. Bridging political sociology with the sociology of law, it argues that policies grounded in "group-centered effects"—that is, that focus on systemic disadvantage and substantive group results, rather than individual harm and individual justice—are, *ceteris paribus*, easier to enforce and more effective.

The awards committee—chaired by Elizabeth Popp Berman joined by Paul Chang, Dana Fisher, Dave Jacobs, and Joe Harris—found that Pedriana and Stryker's explanation not only substantially improves our understanding of the impact of past policies, but gives us new conceptual tools for thinking about current challenges to civil rights and future efforts to ensure them.

We spoke with Nick Pedriana and Robin Stryker about their research and collaborative process.

**MA:** How did you start working on the research project that led to the article "From Legal Doctrine to Social Transformation," recently published in *AJS*? How did the project evolve over time?

NP & RS: From the time Pedriana was a graduate student with Stryker at the University of Iowa, we had worked and published together on employment discrimination law and politics. We really enjoy working together and think our collaborative publications are among our best work. More recently, we both had wanted to branch out from research on employment discrimination. In talking, we discovered that independently, we were developing some similar, more general ideas about how variability in legal doctrine might help shape the egalitarian effectiveness of civil rights laws. Pedriana applied for and received a National Science Foundation grant to do a comparative study of US voting rights, equal employment, and fair housing policy that would involve archival research at the National Archives. He asked Stryker if she wanted to work on the project with him. She was delighted to accept and their most recent collaboration was off and running.

Between the two of us, we already had a great deal of data on voting and equal employment, so most of the archival research focused on fair housing policy. While Pedriana did archival research on the inner workings of HUD during the early years of fair housing, Stryker researched the technicalities of legal doctrine characterizing housing, comparing it to legal doctrine in voting and EEO. Pedriana wrote up an initial, partial draft of the article, at which point he sent it to Stryker for revision and completion of the draft. We sent drafts back and forth as we always do—editing and refining each other's work through multiple iterations. The end result of the two of us working together led to an analytically thorough and compelling (at least we thought so!) first draft. We submitted the paper to the *AJS*, and began presenting it at domestic and

international conferences to get helpful feedback. Once we had received the “revise and resubmit” notice, we held a couple of long brainstorming sessions solidifying our strategy for revision. Then we repeated our back and forth process, with each of us taking the lead on some sections, and the other chiming in with further edits, revisions and clarification. We continued iterating through the article—including a second set of revisions that we needed to do for the article to be accepted—until both we and the AJS were satisfied. And we still like each other!

**MA: How have the findings you outline in this article influenced your overall research agenda? What do you see as the core questions motivating your research going forward?**

NP & RS: Our three case comparative design allowed us to conceptualize and build an explanatory theory of “civil rights policy success” focused on what we called a Group Centered Effects (GCE) framework. We think that our theory is persuasive in explaining the hierarchy of policy success in the United States in voting rights, equal employment opportunity and fair housing policies.

Our next project extends our theory and analysis to US education policy. We also would like to explore applications of our theory beyond the US. Although the elements of an explanation offered by our GCE framework are grounded in US-based data and analyses, we think that they are readily adaptable to legal doctrine and legal systems beyond the US, and to rights laws benefitting the disadvantaged more generally, so long as these laws are enforced in substantial part through litigation.

**MA: Where do you see the political sociology subfield heading? What do you think are some of the key ways that political sociology can contribute to current academic and public debates?**

NP & RS: Both of us are strong believers in the usefulness of macro-structural and cultural analyses—and in case-oriented comparative research—for political sociology. We both are delighted that political sociologists increasingly are taking law—and especially the politics of implementing and enforcing law—seriously. We hope to see more legally informed political sociology in future. Political sociology also is beginning to benefit from a panoply of big data

and computational techniques. These tools open new vistas for building and testing theories about for example, political contagions, political networks, social movements, and media, information, knowledge, and politics.

At the same time, we both think that political sociology could benefit a great deal from taking seriously exciting research in moral and political psychology as it applies to current political life—including especially to political polarization, belief in conspiracy thinking, susceptibility to misinformation and fake news—in the U.S. and elsewhere. We need to enter into ongoing interdisciplinary scholarly and practical discussions about how competing moral frameworks, moral intuitions and emotions influence debate and disagreement about all the topics we traditionally study, including but not restricted to health care, the environment, class, gender, race, class, gender and other inequalities, social movements, state building, and economic and social policies. Integrating insights from the cognitive and affective revolutions in psychology and cognitive science with political sociology’s ongoing interest in the institutionalization and distribution of political power in society could yield exciting and fruitful new research agendas.

## *Interview with Katrina Quisumbing King*

JOSEPH LOE-STERPHONE,  
UC SANTA BARBARA

Katrina Quisumbing King received the Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Graduate Student Paper Award for her excellent paper, “The Sources and Political Uses of Ambiguity in Statecraft.” According to the award committee, headed by Cybelle Fox, Katrina’s paper advances a theory of institutionalized ambiguity to explain modern state formation. Drawing on a case study of U.S. imperial rule and decolonization of the Philippines, she argues that along with legibility projects, states use institutionalized ambiguity in order to consolidate state rule and state capacity. She shows that U.S. state actors used ambiguity to define membership and territory in seemingly contradictory ways that allowed the United States to exclude Filipinos from citizenship and social rights while at the same time maintaining U.S. territorial sovereignty over the archipelago even after formal independence. Institutionalized ambiguity, she argues, is a



particularly useful tool of domination for empire states that would prefer to think of themselves as nation states. The paper is theoretically sophisticated, well written, and deals with central questions in the study of political sociology (e.g. statecraft) while bringing new empirical data and foci (e.g. race, empire, and colonialism) to bear on these traditional questions.

**JLS: How did you start working on the project that resulted in "The Sources and Political Uses of Ambiguity in Statecraft"? How did the project evolve over time?**

KQK: This paper emerges from and distills the central argument of my dissertation. Before I wrote the dissertation proposal I conducted preliminary data collection to decide on my topic. I was particularly interested in cases of contested naturalization and racial classification.

In the National Archives at San Bruno, CA. I came across the petitions of 68 Filipino veterans of World War II (1975). According to these veterans, they were eligible for naturalization in exchange for their military service. The 1946 Rescission Act, however, reclassified over 200,000 Filipino veterans as not having been in active duty, thus making them ineligible for benefits or an expedited path naturalization that is typically associated with military service. As I investigated how and why Congress passed the Rescission Act, I discovered that state actors defined Filipinos (who were colonial subjects of the United States) in ambiguous ways—as not part of the U.S. military, but serving it. I kept seeing these kind of equivocal classifications in U.S. treatment of the Philippines and Filipinos.

And I began to wonder where did this institutionalized ambiguity come from? And what purpose did it serve for the state?

**JLS: How has this project, and your findings, influenced your research agenda as you move forward? What do you see as the core questions motivating your future research?**

KQK: Broadly, I think about the ways that state actors conceive of and make decisions about race and citizenship. I consider these kinds of decisions to be part of a project of nation making, which is itself, of course, a major activity of the state. And yet, the colonies and the fact of U.S. empire are an often-forgotten part of national (imperial) history. I see my research agenda as entering here. Studying the treatment of colonized populations and territories can not only shed new light on these populations and techniques of race-making but also on how the United States came to be the United States.

A specific question that emerged in this project that I plan to explore more in the next is the relationship between ambiguity and legibility. Whereas this paper and my book project address how U.S. state actors institutionalized ambiguity and used it to manage the tensions of empire, the next project will explore how state actors make decisions about the naturalizations of anomalous racial subjects with ambiguous legal-political statuses (like that of national). I expect to how ambiguous classifications transform into clear and legible ones (like that of citizen).

**JLS: Where do you see the political sociology subfield heading? What do you think are some of the key ways that political sociology can contribute to current academic and public debates?**

KQK: I am excited both by the growing attention to empire and the increasing number of scholars who look for international explanations to domestic policy outcomes. I think the study of empire—which helps move us beyond the analytic confines of states as nations—is one entry point through which we can reconsider the politics of race, immigration, citizenship, exclusion, containment, populism, and resistance, all topics of great consequence today. I see many ways that political sociology can contribute to current public debates, but I tend toward studying contemporary problems (like racial exclusion and immigration) from a historical perspective. I think a strength of both historical and political sociology is that they enable us to take stock of the technologies of state management as



well as strategies of popular contestation and resistance. When confronting current political issues—like the Muslim ban or DACA—we can draw on our inventory and ask if we've been here before, and how the pathways leading to a certain policy or outcome today are similar to or differ from what happened in the past.

## *Theories, Trends, Trifles and Trump's Election*

ALEXANDER HICKS,  
EMORY UNIVERSITY

A Review of Alan Abramowitz's *The Great Alignment: Race, Party Transformation, and the Rise of Donald Trump*, Yale University Press, 2018 and John Campbell's *American Discontent: The Rise of Donald Trump and Decline of the Golden Age*, Oxford University Press, 2018.

"In affairs of magnitude, I have learned, everything invariably turns upon a trifle." - Napoleon Bonaparte (quoted in Benko, 2011)

This past spring brought us the two ambitious and instructive analyses of the 2016 election reviewed here. Both reflect a long tradition of election studies that seek to understand nationwide individual voter choices as outcomes of voter attitudes and demographics. They proceed on the assumption that such explanations generally override details like those thrown up by likes of the Electoral College.

Abramowitz's *Great Alignment* falls within this tradition, although it is enriched by more attention to the historical development of electoral preferences than the tradition typically provides. Abramowitz shows how a strong partisan alignment comprehending nearly all voters arose out of the breakup of the old New Deal coalition. Importantly, he finds that the white vote, the white working class vote more especially, was key to 2016 Republican presidential voting.

John Campbell's *American Discontent* posits that "only long-term trends" in the American economy, race relations, ideology and politics stretching back to the 1970s can explain Trump's rise to power" (p. 11, Chap. 3). He argues that anxieties about the possibilities for upward mobility linked to racial competition mattered more than simple working-class economic discontent for Trump's

advance to the White House—anxieties complemented by ones about inner-city crime and radical Islamic terror and that often turned out to be unsupported by the facts (p.77). *Discontent* is richly instructive about how aspects of national demography (e.g., income inequality, declining upward mobility, and poverty (pp. 34-63)) and public opinion (e.g., institutional trust, ideological and partisan orientations and polarization (pp.74-121)) bear on Trump's ascendance. The book is also attentive to the corrosive forces of deindustrialization. Campbell's principal focus and major contribution consists of his tracing of those long-term trends, but the account is perhaps not long-term enough.

For Campbell, the 1970s are the start to the strongly conservative, if not reactionary, strands of his trends and to the boosts given these by Nixon's Southern strategy and aspects of the McGovern campaign that "undermined the Democratic coalition that had supported progressive social policy and labor interests in Congress since World War II" (p. 44). Yet he does not extend back far enough. Campbell writes as if his highlighted 1970s events created a conservative upsurge *de novo* rather than simply modifying one "conservative coalition" of Republicans and Southern Democrats into a Republican block. This "conservative coalition" begins to coalesce into the racist, anti-welfare, broadly inegalitarian coalition it would become in reaction to the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act. With the emergence of this coalition such major post-New Deal reforms as the Voting Rights and Medicare/Medicaid amendments to the Social Security Act had to await the Congressional non-Southern Democratic majorities of the early LBJ years.

Campbell bypasses reference to political scientists' "three-party system" system of roughly 1938-1984 during which progressive welfare, labor market and racial legislation regularly – excepting a few liberal Democratic surges like that of 1964-1965 – faced majority opposition from an alliance of Republicans and Southern Democrats (Poole and Rosenstein 2006). In short, Campbell is silent on the continuities linking the pre-President Nixon decades of the "conservative coalition" the Republican Southern conservatism plotted by Nixon's Southern strategy and its realization in the 1980-1984 transformation of most White Southern voters and Congressional seats into formally conservative Republican ones, a development that continued on more grounds than Nixon's 1969-1974 dog whistling.

Campbell's 2016 focus on national aggregate political preference and choice runs up against Hillary

Clinton's 2016 popular vote victory. Mistakenly, this national aggregate casts little light on the pivotal role of Trump-GOP successes in three Midwestern states--Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin--that had voted for Democratic Presidential candidates since 1988.

Despite some historical deepening, Abramowitz focuses far more than Campbell on voter attitudes closer to voting time. He particularly emphasizes the vote framing role of "negative partisanship" and the more proximate motivating forces of economic and racial anxiety (pp. 5-8). "Negative partisanship" is a mode of partisanship marked by less enthusiasm for one's favored party than greater animosity toward its opposing party. It dampens the electoral impact of candidate differences on local issues and nationalizes elections as well as polarizes electorates. Abramowitz also sharply focuses on economic and, above all, racial anxiety and makes a strong analytical case for a greater impact of racial/ethnic resentment than economic anxiety on voting. On his core White voting factor, Abramowitz finds that White racial/ethnic resentment exceeds White economic anxieties as a force at the polls, that it is key, alongside one's Republicanism, to Trump primary and general election voting (pp. 139, 158); and he finds that racial/ethnic resentment and misogyny are principal differentiators of especially pro-Trump non-college White voters from college-graduate White voters (p. 157). He also explicitly focuses on a post-1970s White working-class vote shift toward, Trump as "what gave Trump his narrow victories in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin" (p. 152). However, like Campbell, he does not much focus on how more idiosyncratic factors may have operated to determine the surprise 2016 swings in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Two such idiosyncrasies may explain the crucial swings in question, the Jill Stein and Gary Johnson vote and the October 28 Comey letter to Congress.

A Clinton loss of liberal votes to "third-party" candidates Jill Stein and Gary Johnson, especially the former, offers a potent account how Trump's snatched victories in Michigan and Wisconsin, if not Pennsylvania; and in Michigan, Trump defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton by only 10,704 votes, far less than the 51,463 votes garnered by Stein alone. In Wisconsin, Trump's margin over Clinton was 22,177 in contrast with Stein's 31,006 votes. However, in Pennsylvania, Trump's victory margin of 67,46 votes exceeded Stein's 49,485 votes

(Bump, 2016). A second "catch" confronting a "third-party" answer to the election is uncertainty about just what share of Stein and Johnson votes actually did cut into Clinton's net support. Here, Nate Silver fortunately offers a seemingly judicious estimate: Stein and Johnson voters, given a two-party, would have voted about 35% for Clinton and 10% for Trump (or stayed home), yielding a 25% bonus for Clinton relative Trump. Using a 0.25 adjustment to factor the Stein-Plus-Johnson vote into the Trump-Clinton race duplicates the bottom line offered by a simple allocation of all Stein votes to a Clinton in in Michigan and Wisconsin, though not Pennsylvania.

As for the Comey letter of October 28 that briefly reopened the investigation into Clinton's emails, there is good reason to believe that its impact may have cut deeply enough into Clinton support from "late deciders" to have swung the election in all three Midwestern swing states, Pennsylvania included (Blake, 2016).

Overall, it seems most unlikely that the combination of Stein-Johnson and Comey did not suffice to turn the race. This does not imply that states other than the ones stressed here did not matter. However, among states Trump won, only Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are ones that Democrats have consistently won since Reagan's pretty consistently durable 1984 reddening of the South and most of the non-Pacific west. These three rust-belt swing states aside, there is nothing about the 2016 election that Cowboy and Dixification accounts of the post-Carter GOP cannot explain. On the other hand, theories of the 2016 presidential election articulated in terms of citizen preferences and choices and their national aggregation, especially ones centered on racial anxiety, may serve well as accounts of Trump's 2016 GOP nomination and portend a future extension of the GOP into Blue territory. Although local and historical specificity may sometimes generate such large as Napoleon attributed to trifles, a rising tide will tend to raise whatever it supports.

On other notes, voter suppression also may have been decisive at the margins in swing states (Wine, 2017). Although it remains somewhat speculative as of this summer of 2018, there have been noteworthy indications that "fake news" of Russia-linked origin was especially heavy in Pennsylvania and Michigan (Denise Clifton, 2017). I write "somewhat speculative" because of the early fall publication of K. H. Jamieson's masterful *Cyber-War*.



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## *Fall Announcements: New Articles, Books, & Awards*

### NEW ARTICLES

Almeida, Paul D. 2018. "The Role of Threat in Collective Action." Pp. 43-62 in *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, edited by D. Snow, S. Soule, H. Kriesi, and H. McCammon. Oxford: Blackwell. 2nd Ed.

Almeida, Paul D. and Christopher Chase-Dunn. 2018. "Globalization and Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 44:189-211.

Beck, Colin J. 2018. "The Structure of Comparison in the Study of Revolution." *Sociological Theory* 36(2): 134-161.

Bloemraad, I. 2018. "Theorizing Citizenship as Claims-Making." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44(1): 4-26.

Burstein, Paul. "The Determinants of Public Policy: What Matters and How Much." *Policy Studies Journal* (Forthcoming, available online)

Dawson, Andrew. 2017. "The Belief in State Legitimacy and Homicide: A Cross-National Analysis." *The Sociological Quarterly* 58 (4): 552-575.

Heerwig, Jennifer and Joshua Murray. "The Political Strategies and Unity of the American Corporate Inner Circle: Evidence from Political Donations, 1982-2000," *Social Problems*. (Forthcoming, available online).

Joesse, Paul. "Countering Trump: Toward a Theory of Charismatic Counter-roles." *Social Forces*. (Forthcoming, available online).

Joesse, Paul. 2018. "Expanding Moral Panic Theory to Include the Agency of Charismatic Entrepreneurs: The Case of Donald Trump." *British Journal of Criminology*. 58(4): 993-1012.

Kadivar, Mohammad Ali. 2018. "Mass Mobilization and the Durability of New Democracies." *American Sociological Review* 83(2):390-417.

Kadivar, Mohammad Ali and Neil Ketchley. 2018. "Sticks, Stones, and Molotov Cocktails: Unarmed Collective Violence and Democratization." *Socius* 4:1-16.

Mijs, Jonathan J.B. 2018. "Inequality is a Problem of Inference: How People Solve the Social Puzzle of Unequal Outcomes" *Societies* 8(3): 64.

Mora, Maria de Jesus, Rodolfo Rodriguez, Alejandro Zermeño, and Paul Almeida. 2018. "Immigrant Rights and Social Movements." *Sociology Compass* 12(8):1-20.

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Young, Kevin A., Tarun Banerjee, and Michael Schwartz. 2018. "Capital Strikes as a Corporate Political Strategy: The Structural Power of Business in the Obama Era," *Politics & Society* 46(1):3-26.

### NEW BOOKS

Blain, Michael and Angeline Kearns Blain. 2018. *Progressive Violence: Theorizing the War on Terror*. NY, New York: Routledge.

David, Roman. 2018. *Communists and Their Victims: The Quest for Justice in the Czech Republic*. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Foweraker, Joe and Dolores Trevizo (Eds.). 2016. *Democracy and Its Discontents in Latin America*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Hart-Brinson, Peter. 2018. *The Gay Marriage Generation: How the LGBTQ Movement Transformed American Culture*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Johnson, Dale L. 2017. *Social Inequality, Economic Decline, and Plutocracy: An American Crisis*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Trevizo, Dolores and Mary Lopez. *Neighborhood Poverty and Segregation in the (Re-)Production of Disadvantage: Mexican Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Los Angeles*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tsutsui, Kiyoteru. 2018. *Rights Make Might: Global Human Rights and Minority Social Movements in Japan*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

## *Call for Papers: 2019 Political Sociology Mini-Conference*

STATES OF EXCEPTION?  
POLITICAL CONFLICT, CULTURE &  
POPULISM IN THE TRUMP ERA

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 2019

The ASA Political Sociology section is pleased to announce a mini-conference. The **morning sessions** will examine the politics of Donald Trump, Brexit populists (Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson), Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico, and many other populists. The **afternoon sessions** are open and will focus on a number of current topics depending on the papers that people submit. The mini-conference will take place on Aug. 9, 2019 before the ASA conference opens in New York City.

The **morning sessions** will focus on the rise of populist leaders, and how they have transformed the political landscape. The panels will be

comparative and consider examples from many areas of the world. They will also be historical in terms of looking at political upheavals from the past. The rise of populist leaders reveals not only the dynamics of the populist era, but also brings insights into the pre-populist era and how much of it was official and how much was informal norms. Was the post-war period up to 1980, a golden age of the welfare state but one that could not be sustained, but now neoliberalism and populism abound? Might voter suppression and denaturalization of citizens be on the rise? Many other questions suggest themselves in comparing the pre-populist and populist eras, especially in the historical and comparative context. The plenary will examine where political parties, institutions, the media, and political sociology may go on from here on.

The **afternoon sessions** will have a number of panels depending on submissions. We welcome papers on topics related to the historical rise of labor, political parties, gender and/or race politics, immigration issues, the media in politics, social movements, and other issues related to the current political situation. We similarly welcome papers that take a comparative and/or historical perspective, or are on other countries going through challenging political processes.

In order for the organizers to read the abstracts and shape the sessions for the conference, please send your abstracts to us by **February 1st, 2019**.

**PANEL SESSIONS:** Please submit your abstracts to the panel organizer who fits your paper topic.

**PANEL 1:** "What is Trump's base and will it hold in the long term?" Delia Baldassarri, Organizer, delia.b@nyu.edu

**PANEL 2:** "The Politics of Fear and Resentment: Nationalist Appeals in the Trump Era," Bart Bonikowski, Organizer, bonikowski@fas.harvard.edu

**PANEL 3:** "The Trump style of populism, and how it compares to populists in Europe, Latin America and elsewhere," Carlos de la Torre, Organizer, c.delatorre@uky.edu

**PANEL 4:** "Trump and the European Populists: Authoritarians, Just Showy Neo-Liberals, or Both?" Richard Lachmann, Organizer, rlachmann@albany.edu

**OPEN SUBMISSIONS:** The afternoon panels will be organized by the themes that emerge from the submissions. Please submit your abstracts to Thomas Janoski, Organizer, tjanos@uky.edu

Conference participants and attendees will be asked to contribute a participation fee of \$25 for faculty and \$15 for students to cover incidentals and a small lunch.

# political sociology bookshelf



The newsletter editors invite you to submit your entries to "political sociology bookshelf," a new feature which aims to highlight the breadth of scholarly traditions covered by political sociology in a short format. Please send in a 250-word comment responding to either of the following: 1) *What's a book that drew you into or got you excited about political sociology? What was the context in which you came across it and why did you find it powerful?* or 2) *What book have you read or reread recently that has inspired you, or changed the way you approach a topic in political sociology? What did you learn?*

We welcome submissions by scholars at any stage and look forward to hearing about more well known books as well as answers that will make us learn something new. Please send all submissions to polsocnews@gmail.com.

## *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*

G. CRISTINA MORA, UC BERKELEY

I remember reading *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Gloria Anzaldua and Cherrie Moraga, as an undergraduate at UC Berkeley. The text was pretty much a "must have" among Chicanx/Latinx students and most of us had worn copies that had been handed down to us by women that had already graduated.

Although I never read it for a class, the book allowed me to connect to sociological concepts in profound ways. The text is about intersectionality and its poems and essays touch on issues of color and class, sex and gender, inequality and social change, and shame and anger. Its writings on culture and ideas of fair-skinned beauty, generational divides within immigrant communities, and racialized power dynamics in everyday settings still speak to me in powerful ways. In effect, the book provided a way for me to understand just how the personal was political and how oppression and domination operated.

I remember hearing Anzaldua speak on campus before I graduated in 2003. The lecture hall was packed and she began by first asking the audience, most of whom were women of color, to close their eyes and imagine that their voice carried with it the strength and spirit of their female ancestors. We did, and for that brief moment we felt like we could really create a space for ourselves in the academy.

## *Reconsidering Nicos Poulantzas*

JASON MUELLER, UC IRVINE

One book that has reinvigorated my interest in political sociology is *State, Power, Socialism*, by Nicos Poulantzas. SPS was the last book that Poulantzas published before his death and is the least explored in US political-sociological theorizing. As a graduate student looking to connect state theories to international political economy and development, I was drawn to the great state debates of the 1960s and 1970s. Upon reading the critiques of Weberian and (neo)Marxist theories of the state—including Skocpol, Wallerstein, Miliband, Poulantzas, and many others— I was struck by two

# political sociology bookshelf



things: 1) critiques of Poulantzas were largely based on his writings from the late 1960s and early 1970s, as opposed to his later work, 2) with rare exceptions, Poulantzas's legacy has seemingly been forgotten in state-theoretical discussions in US sociology.

After reading through Poulantzas's earlier works in tandem with SPS, I developed an appreciation for the relational approach to theorizing the state in capitalist social formations that he developed later in life. Inspired by Poulantzas's treatment of the *state as a social relation*, I explored contemporary scholarship, largely occurring in Europe, that has built upon this approach, offering fresh perspectives to studying structures, conjunctures, agency, [inter/supra] national politics, and the dynamics of capitalism (see, *inter alia*, Alexander Gallas, Christoph Görg, Bob Jessop, and Markus Wissen). I've found a (re)reading of Poulantzas to be a wonderful way to reconsider the 'big questions' of political sociology, and perhaps others will, too.

## *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict In Modern Southeast Asia*

HANISAH BINTE ABDULLAH SANI,  
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Over the summer, I read *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict In Modern Southeast Asia* (2017) by Michael Vatikiotis. Vatikiotis is a seasoned journalist and writer, and was editor of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

*Blood and Silk* is quite simply one of the best pieces of recent writing I have encountered on Southeast Asia, as it kept me engaged from start to end, much of this due to its wonderfully written prose. *Blood and Silk* brings readers on a journey across Southeast Asia, artfully weaving the analysis of the rich and colorful histories of the region into a beautiful tapestry, one which too often heaves under the weight of conflict and violence.

In his effort to understand the interplay of power and politics, Vatikiotis singles out the centrality of elite politics, a motif I myself am exploring in my dissertation. Vatikiotis warns scholars of the paucity of explanation without deep historical understanding. A wonderful quote that had stuck for me was his observation, "one of the things I have learned about the part of Asia I have called home for the past 30 years is to be wary of explanations. To get too comfortable with explaining a certain trend or phenomena is to forget the exception lurking around the corner, to mistake change for continuity, and to assume that something discovered is a new phenomenon" (p.11).

This made me reflect on ways that we as political sociologists can improve our work, by digging deeper and to embrace a more historically-oriented approach to the enduring puzzles we seek answers for.