

## Symposium Politics in / of the Street

While there are real differences in social context and content of recent popular protests in the United States, Europe, and North Africa and the Middle East, these events collectively raise questions of interest to political sociologists. For instance, despite the differences in settings, these popular protests have diffused from initial locales to other places. Why and how do such protests diffuse and not diffuse? The immediate targets of initial protests varied (in part due to the contextual differences). Does targeting have significant effects on the nature and consequence of such protests? What do these activities bode for future regimes and prospects for social change? The contributions to this symposium address these questions by examining how state power and street politics intersect with (and transform) one another and also highlight the vibrant research possibilities related to these events.

### Section Officers

#### Chair

Robin Stryker

#### Past Chair

Ron Aminzade

#### Chair Elect

Judith Stepan-Norris

#### Secretary-Treasurer

Kenneth T. Andrews

#### Council

Sean O'Rian

Sarah Sobieraj

Mabel Berezin

Isaac William Martin

Kathleen M. Fallon

Edward T. Walker

#### Webmaster

Howard Lune

#### Newsletter Editor

Erik Larson

larsons@macalester.edu

## In this Issue

From the Editor 2

Announcements 9

Book Abstracts 12

Article Abstracts 13

Interview with Award  
Recipient: Chris Rhomberg 15

Journal Profile:  
*Politics & Society* 17

Teaching Political Sociology 19

## Not Fade Away: The Continued Importance of Social Movements Around the Globe

Andrew Martin  
Ohio State University

Recent events around the globe have made it clear that the streets remain an important political venue, underscoring Meyer and Tarrow's claim that we live in a "social movement society." The so-called Arab Spring has led to often violent clashes between citizens and state security forcethroughout the Middle East. *Continued on page 3.*

## Other Symposium Articles

- Mansoor Moaddel, "The Arab Spring and Reflection on Political Sociology" 4
- Christian Davenport & Will H. Moore, "The Next Generation: Making Sense of Contemporary Contentious Politics" 6

---

## From the Editor

---

# Call for Suggestions and Participation

Greetings, political sociologists! I will be serving as editor of *States, Power, and Societies* for the next two years. I have the unenviable task of following Kathleen Schwartzman's excellent tenure as editor. Fortunately, while I was taking over the editorship during the ASA meetings in Las Vegas, I had the opportunity to discuss with Kathleen and members of Section Council ideas about how to make the newsletter most useful to section members. Based on these conversations, there are a few new features and one significant change that will begin with this newsletter.

The three new features in *States, Power, and Societies* are:

**Interviews with Section Award Recipients.** Instead of simply reporting which books and articles received recognition from the Political Sociology Section, Council members suggested that including interviews with the authors of award-winning books and articles could be quite insightful for Section members. Raphi Rechitsky's interview with Chris Rhomberg on page 15 demonstrates that this idea was correct: Rechitsky and Rhomberg's brief conversation contains great insight and inspiration about the research and writing processes and concludes with a call for us to fulfill the promise of political sociology.

**Journal Profiles.** Since political sociology spans many related subfields, Section members may not always have information about potential publishing outlets. Whether graduate students just starting out or full professors advising junior colleagues, all of us might want to learn more about outlets for scholarship in political sociology. Accordingly, the newsletter will contain a profile of a specialty journal of interest to political sociologists in each issue. In addition to providing information about the focus and operations of the journals, each profile will also include sidebars that provide summaries of some noteworthy recent articles published in the journal. Chen-Yu Wu's profile of *Politics & Society* on page 17 nicely describes the appeal of this journal (and demonstrates the utility of these profiles).

**Teaching Political Sociology.** A few years back, David Brady, while editing *States, Power, and Societies*, had a sym-

posium on "Great Ideas for Teaching Political Sociology." Realizing that one can always use new ideas, it made sense to include a column for sharing these ideas on an ongoing basis. Since I am in the midst of teaching my advanced undergraduate seminar in political sociology, I took the initiative to kick off this feature on page 19.

The one significant change is that *States, Power, and Societies* will not include the "Graduate Horizons" column. This change reflects the discussion in Council that it would be more beneficial to have a single feature in the Summer issue that includes information about Section members who are on the job market. Since that issue will come out just prior to the ASA meetings, Council determined that brief profiles of graduate students on the market would increase visibility for a larger number of Section members and be of assistance to Section members whose departments were in the process of hiring. Look for further information about how to submit information for this feature in the Winter issue.

Finally, let me close with thanks and a call for your assistance in the newsletter. I want to thank all contributors to the newsletter and all of you who have shared ideas with me. Since this newsletter is designed to be of interest to Section members, I welcome any input. In particular, if you have:

- any suggestions for symposia topics (or contributors);
- suggestions for a journal profile; or
- ideas to share about teaching political sociology courses

please contact me. In addition, please send any abstracts of recently published works and announcements of opportunities of interest to Section members to me. Please direct all suggestions, comments, and submissions to **Erik Larson** ([larsone@macalester.edu](mailto:larsone@macalester.edu)).

*Thank you also to the following people who helped with this first issue. Joshua Rubin provided valuable editorial assistance and Hannah Johnson assisted with the layout. Special thanks to Evgenia Grinblo who designed the template for the newsletter and finalized the layout.*

---

## Not Fade Away: The Continued Importance of Social Movements Around the Globe *(continued from page 1)*

The recent riots in London and now the unfolding Occupy Wall Street movement are both driven by growing global inequality. All illustrate the collective element of political challenges.

In this essay I seek to link these events together in a way to help us think about the interaction between citizens acting collectively and state actors seeking to maintain their control of power. More specifically, do these events tell us anything new about the ways in which movements emerge to challenge the hegemony of state actors? Movement scholars and political sociologists have developed an impressive body of research on this topic; the question remains, are these research findings still applicable in light of the popular uprisings through the globe we have witnessed recently. I think the answer is mostly yes, but to ignore these new realities is to miss lessons we scholars can learn from a changing global political environment.

Like many observers, I watched with great interest as regime after regime in the Middle East fell target to mass uprisings by their citizens. Perhaps most surprising was simply the timing of the Arab Spring. Most of the regimes targeted were quite brutal, but had been for some time, so state repression was nothing new to many of these dissidents. More importantly, the primary “beacon” of democracy in the world, the United States, not only had little economic or military resources to support this upsurge, but had a severe credibility issue with the recent (and highly unpopular) wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. I think it remains an open question why these movements emerged at this particular point in history. The media has offered the narrative that social networking technologies are central in explaining this outpouring in the streets. Certainly it is hard to deny the utility of facebook, twitter, and other social networking tools as a method of organizing, but it remains an open question how much they were used. More importantly, it is hard to deny the potential role of “traditional” social movement explanations, such as the presence of preexisting organizational structures that serve as centers to build social movements.

I think perhaps a key explanation in all of this is the role of media in broadcasting the first challenges in Tunisia and Egypt to the rest of the world. The Civil Rights movement

in the United States gained traction in part because of the images broadcast on television to people around the country. Movements pressing for greater rights in the Middle East are naturally an important news story, and once it became clear that taking to the streets could actually be effective, it was not surprising that similar movements began cropping up around the region. What is perhaps more surprising is the relative lack of repression many of these dissidents faced. Certainly state crackdown in many countries (think Syria and Libya) has been severe, and even in the best situations repression has been high. Yet given direct challenges to state legitimacy, efforts to quell protest have not been as uniformly strong as we might expect. This then also becomes an interesting question with multiple explanations: are state actors worried about how they are perceived by the broader global community, or is the lack of response simply indicative of a weak and disorganized state? It is telling that two of the most repressive and strongest states in the regime, Saudi Arabia and Iran, have experienced little or no overt political unrest.

If the protests in the Middle East happened perhaps earlier than scholars might predict, then it is probably fair to say that the riots in London and Occupy Wall Street movement are a bit late on the scene. The financial crisis of 2008 and the continuing fallout of this has heightened our awareness of how much the world economy depends on this sector for continued economic “growth.” This has only been sharpened by recent partisan debates in the US regarding taxes on the wealthiest of Americans. Polls have tracked Americas displeasure with the financial sector, yet it took three years after the start of the crisis for Americans to begin mobilizing around these issues. Here too we may wonder about the particular timing of these protests. Certainly with the election of Barak Obama in 2008, many on the left believed that the financial sector and the spiraling wealth inequality it has bred would be reined in. Yet this has not been the case; new regulations have been relatively weak as Obama positions himself as an ally of American business (no doubt due in no small part to a desire to bring rampant joblessness under control).

If one question is to begin to understand how these movements came about, the next is to identify what effects, if any, they have on politics as usual. I think it is too early to tell

what the end result of the Arab Spring will be. Certainly the protesters have created a somewhat of a power vacuum that could be filled by more repressive elements in their society. Yet it would be hard to believe that the movement, which pressed for more openness, would not mobilize again in the face of renewed repression. Given the sheer breadth of this movement, we would expect that the media's focus will remain on the region, and the "whole world" will continue to watch.

The Occupy Wall Street movement is obviously in its earliest stages, yet I think the media narrative is certainly less

celebratory than the Arab Spring movement. While many media outlets welcomed sights of democracy in the Middle East, these same news sources are corporate owned and generate revenue from advertising, and thus are going to be more critical of direct challenges to financial capitalism in America. I think the onus is on the movement to generate a narrative that will resonate with the media, and by extension, the American public. If they are unable to, they run the risk of being dismissed by those on the right.

## The Arab Spring and Reflections on Political Sociology

Mansoor Moaddel

Eastern Michigan University / University of Michigan

The Arab Spring started on December 17, 2010, when Mohammed Bouazizi, a street vendor in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, set himself on fire in protest of the confiscation of his wares and the humiliation that he felt was inflicted upon him by the municipal agents. This act of self-immolation created such an uproar in Tunisia that it forced its president, Zein al-Abedin Ben Ali, to flee the country. Then, like a wildfire, popular protests spread from one country to the next until the Arab Spring engulfed almost the entire region. On January 14, 2011, protests broke out in Jordan's capital and other major cities, triggered by deteriorating economic conditions and inspired by events in Tunisia. On January 25, 2011, a computer-savvy Egyptian reached out to youths on Facebook to organize a protest rally in his country against police brutality, the state of emergency laws, lack of free elections and freedom of speech, and corruption in high places, leading to the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak. On February 15, 2011, thousands of Libyans protested after the Libyan government arrested human-rights attorney Fathi Terhii in Benghazi, Libya, leading to armed rebellion against Colonel Gadhafi, who was eventually captured and killed. On January 16, 2011, two days after the fall of Tunisian president Ben Ali, a 32-year-old mother of three in Yemen posted a message on Facebook, calling on the people to celebrate the Tunisian uprising. On February 14, 2011 inspired by the upheavals in Tunisia and Egypt, an anti-government rally was organized in Bahrain during which a protester was killed. And, on March 13, 2011

Syrian security forces opened fire on people who had gathered in Deraa's main mosque in southern Syria to deliberate about how to respond to the arrests of a few students who wrote anti-regime slogans on their school walls.

Astonished observers marveled at how quickly the dissatisfied individuals organized, mobilized resources, planned rallies, produced slogans that they chanted harmoniously, and overcame fear. It is, however, anomalous for the extant theories of political conflict, rebellion, and revolution to formulate a full account of the process of fruition of such remarkable sets of interrelated events. The organizational / political conflict / resource mobilization theorists might have been correct to stress the significance of organization in the success of the revolutionary movements. They were right to criticize mass-society and social-psychological theories and to point out that the isolated, dissatisfied, disoriented, or angry individuals by themselves would be unable to successfully challenge the state.

Nonetheless, one cannot avoid feeling unease in trying to explain what have transpired in the Arab world in the past several months in such terms as the "breakdown of the state in foreign wars," "failure to repress," "organization," "political opportunity structure," and "resources." During their long tenure in power, the authoritarian rulers were quite effective in either disorganizing almost every oppositional collectivity in civil societies or bringing it under effective and omnipresent police surveillance. They had control over either all of the national economy or the majority of it. Yet, some regimes were

toppled and others are still being challenged by revolutionary movements that in some cases did not have much organization, identifiable leadership, and vast resources in relation to the state.

In the absence of formal organizations, political conflict / organizational / resource mobilization theorists often emphasize how challengers can draw on other preexisting organizational sources, such as mobilization through religion or mobilization through traditional institutions. Again, in the case of the Arab Spring, these organizational resources appear to have played a secondary role in mobilizing support against the incumbent dictators. What is more, in contrast to the radical Islamism of the past several decades in the region, these movements have been predominantly non-ideological and pragmatic. We were blind-sided either by our fixation on the extremist acts of few Muslim activists and as a result failed to detect what was really happening in the region or by our own sociological perspective that in the absence of familiar resources and organizational formats, we concluded that Islamic extremism was the predominant oppositional platform.

Any analysis of these movements must thus try to answer at least three questions: Do these movements constitute a monolithic or pluralistic phenomenon? How did they happen? Why were they pragmatic and non-ideological? The way we answer these questions, the first in particular, may suggest the specific ramifications of the Arab Spring for the sociological theories of rebellion and revolutionary movements. To begin with, the Arab Spring cannot be adequately conceptualized as solely representing political protests against the incumbent regimes. It is rather a pluralistic phenomenon, indicating not only a series of political events but a broader shift in cultural and religious attitudes among the Arab publics and a new form of organized action that is anonymous and issue-based. Given this pluralism, a fuller explanation of the Arab Spring requires an interdisciplinary approach that includes knowledge derived from relevant field in political sociology, the sociology of religion, and the historical trajectory of the changes in religious and secular values.

My point of departure is a critique of the late Charles Tilly's critique of individualistic theories of revolution (Moaddel 1993: 3-8). Tilly criticized these theories for presuming that revolution "is an individual act intimately dependent on a certain attitude toward some or all authorities" (Tilly 1975: 487). If we seriously consider the empirical fact that the tragic death of Tunisian Bouazizi was narrated frequently by rela-

tively isolated individuals on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube or accept the fact that many of the techno-savvy Egyptians who organized protests against President Mubarak were anonymous to one another, then it would make sense to presume that these revolutions in fact were started by individuals with attitudes toward political authorities. Given this premise, then the next step is to assess how the specific context of communication and networking shapes the political and cultural attitudes of these individuals.

The dissatisfied individuals most often blamed political authorities for their undesirable situations. It may also be true that the political discourses of these individuals were formulated in opposition to the ideology of the ruling regime. Nonetheless, how these individuals established contact and communicated with one another may have had certain effects on their discourse and political orientations.

A homogeneous group of, say, peasants in a farm, workers in an industrial concentration, and religious activists in a neighborhood mosque may end up supporting radical leftist ideology or Islamic extremism because the homogeneity of the group structure may not be a favorable context for debates and discussions over diverse issues. The Internet, on the other hand, is a pluralistic context, and the people who use the Internet are more likely to be informed about diverse messages than those who do not. However, among the political activists in cyberspace, those who mobilize their target audiences by framing their messages in pragmatic and non-ideological terms are more successful than those who are extremists. Findings from values surveys in Iran and Lebanon, for example, have shown that Internet use has a negative association with fundamentalist beliefs and attitudes (Moaddel and Karabenick 2012).

Finally, major changes in the Muslim world, in general, and the Arab world, in particular, have transpired in the form of a series of closely-connected events compressed into major societal tides that have brought into relief a new historical pattern. The Arab Spring appears to be an instance of such events. Since the eighteenth century, the Muslim world has experienced a sequence of sacred-secular spirituality cycles. That is, beginning in the 1700s, when the three major Islamic empires of the Ottomans, Mughals, and Safavids were on the course of disintegration, there was the rise of reformist fundamentalist movements. The decline of these movements was followed by the rise of secular spirituality in which Muslim intellectual leaders expressed considerable interest in the European sciences and technological advances, hence the belief in progress and civilizational change. Beginning in the

second half of the twentieth century, secular spirituality gave way to once again sacred spirituality in the form of Islamic fundamentalism. In the last several years there has been a major shift in public attitudes among the Middle Eastern publics. The values surveys carried out in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia have shown a decline in favorable attitudes toward political Islam and the shari'a, and the rise of national territorial identity, support for gender equality, and social individualism. Within the broader historical context, and considering the findings from these values surveys, it seems that the Arab Spring may represent something much broader than a simple political move against the ruling despots: a major shift toward secular values. This secular shift, however, is quite different from the anti-religious secularism of the twentieth century. There may be a serious possibility for a more constructive synthesis between the modern values of equality of

all political voices and social individualism, on the one hand, and the normative values derived from the Islamic cultural traditions, on the other.

### References

- Moaddel, Mansoor. 1993. *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Moaddel, Mansoor. 2012. *Religious Fundamentalism in a Comparative Perspective*. Brill, forthcoming.
- Tilly, Charles. 1975. "Revolution and Collective Violence." Pp. 483-556 in *Handbook of Political Science*, ed. F.I. Greenstein and N.W. Polsby. Reading, MA.: Addison-Wesley.

## The Next Generation: Making Sense of Contemporary Contentious Politics

Christian Davenport & Will H. Moore  
University of Notre Dame

What the heck is going on out there? Is 2011 a rerun of 1967, and if it is, then what might we expect 2012 to hold in store? We refer, of course, to the dramatic rise across the globe of contentious politics: peoples' willingness to challenge state authority by gathering in public and making claims. The groups involved, claims advanced, and repertoires all vary widely: from the anti-tax protests of the USA's Tea Party, to occupation ("Occupy") movements in Spain, Chile, Egypt, Israel, and most recently the USA—and beyond, to riotous responses to police brutality in Greece, the UK, and US; to popular marches throughout the Middle East and North Africa, Iran, and elsewhere; to more fringe movements such as the Ukrainian feminist protest group Femen. Does the recession help us explain this global surge? Are youth bulges involved? Are the broad distribution of, and familiarity with, social networking software playing a critical role? Is it best understood as a contentious politics wave? Do political opportunity, mobilizing structures, cultural frames, and mechanisms shed any light or should we be looking elsewhere? Does each of these play some non-trivial role in explaining the peoples' willingness to engage in public contention? What is going on

out there and what can we do to understand it?

Popular accounts in the press and among politicians as well as pundits will make irresponsible, passionate assertions about each of the above and more. We turn to less immediate reflections and focus our attention upon three claims we can advance with confidence. First, we do not (currently) know the answers to these questions. Second, over the coming five years much (virtual) ink will be spilled in academic journals and presses seeking to explain this rise in public contention (some of which will focus on the global rise, much of which will focus on regional contention, and most of which will focus on specific cases of contention). Third, political sociologists (and social scientists, more broadly) can best contribute to the literature that will emerge by engaging existing theoretical perspectives exposing their shortcomings—and carefully evaluating the implications of the new theories using carefully collected and analyzed data. What might some such studies look like? We propose four.

First, we know remarkably little about the diffusion of tactics and the amount of contention, though it is difficult to imagine the two are disconnected (McAdam 1983, McAdam

& Rucht 1993, Soule 1997). If tactical innovation stimulates mobilization, then by what mechanisms and processes? The years 2008–2011 (and beyond?) provide a remarkable bounty of activity we can harness to evaluate theoretical answers to these questions. While experimental studies have made an important resurgence throughout the social sciences in the past five plus years, observational data will continue to be the primary oxygen upon which the study of contentious politics survives, and like meteorologists who study severe weather, we must make careful, concerted observations when and where the phenomena of interest present themselves.

Second, we know very little the success of movements. It is almost a cliché, but what have we learned since Obserchall (1975)? Are tactics important, and if so, are they important because they influence mobilization, or are they important in their own right (independent of their impact on mobilization)? Does state response to tactical innovation influence its impact upon mobilization or otherwise have an impact upon movement success? Certainly movement success cannot be independent of claims relative to status quo government policies, but we rarely see this issue made central in research, much less the analysis of spatial models that can help us theorize carefully about this (e.g., DeNardo 1985). Some newer work has moved in this area, providing important insights, and this provides the starting point for such an analysis (e.g., Giugni 1998; McCammon et al. 2001; McAdam and Su 2002; McVeigh et al. 2003; Soule and Olzak 2004; King and Soule 2007).

Is 2011 a rerun of 1967? At some level the question is a canard: the answer depends upon the dimensions across which one wishes to compare, and since the number of possible dimensions is effectively infinite, the question is empty without some specification of a couple of specific dimensions over which we might debate the comparisons. Whether the public contentious claims, patterns of (de)mobilization and coercion, etc. of 2012 resemble those of 1968 across interesting dimensions remains to be seen. Of this we can be nevertheless confident: whatever is going on out there, it provides a bumper crop of grist for theoretical and empirical work that can rapidly advance our understanding of contentious politics if researchers think carefully, engage existing theoretical work, and carefully collect and analyze relevant data. We hope this brief essay stimulates some to contribute to that effort.

Third, we need to stop studying popular contentious behavior for reform, change and freedom as distinct from state

behavior for stabilization, constraint, and elimination. Despite a significant amount of attention (e.g., Hibbs 1973; Lichbach 1987; Moore 1998; 2000; Davenport 2007; Pierskalla 2009) and some important insights (e.g., popular mobilization tends to almost always increase state repression whereas repressive action has every influence on popular mobilization [including no impact]), there is still much that we need to know. For example, what aspects of government repression do challengers pay attention to? Are they looking at all locales and tactics simultaneously and equivalently? What aspects of an emerging political challenge are authorities looking to? Existing research points us to claims-making and tactical selection (e.g., levels of violence) but what if a response to earlier persecution is for challengers to have no objective at all as in the case of the Occupy movement(s)? Is a movement for nothing (or alternatively everything) the outgrowth of earlier repressive persecution for having clearly articulated objectives/goals? Are government responses also constrained by the past? Earlier, governments were able to beat up, torture, imprison and execute political challengers but this is proving complicated in the world when every individual is capable of being a human rights observer. Research would lead us to believe that governments will not stop trying to influence challengers. Rather, they will do so more covertly and/or before/after overt manifestations of behavioral challenge manifest (Earl 2003). Just because one does not see the state does not mean that they have tolerated or accepted what was taking place. We need to remember this as we observe and evaluate state-disident interactions.

Finally, fourth: we know very little about the conditions that keep returning individuals into the streets. In a sense, this involves the three areas above but it seems worthwhile noting that researchers have seemingly forgotten about economic and political inequality or, at least, they pay attention to these sporadically. If, as Tilly suggests, many forms of inequality are not only persisting but worsening, then we need to be better at not only tracking the efforts to voice opinions about what is taking place but also how well efforts at reforming or transforming inequality have done/are doing. If individuals are out in the streets, mountains, and in their houses complaining about / agitating against / seeking relief from inequality and persecution, then we should not only be evaluating the events and waves of challenge but also the events and waves of inequality as well as persecution. When people are strong and brave enough to engage in contentious politics, that takes a

great deal to get to that point. When it happens, then we pay attention. What lies beneath these challenges however is the root of that complaint / claim / observation / objection and unfortunately those of us studying conflict and contentious politics—spread across different disciplines and sub-fields—have not been good at bringing all the factors together. In short, we need to bring inequality and persecution (in all of their forms) back into the study of contentious politics. We also need to obliterate the distinction between contentious politics, civil society, and mainstream politics lest we find ourselves in a few years from now in another wave of post-overt challenges wondering where the radicals, social movements, jobs, quality of life and discussions about police/army brutality went.

## References

- Davenport, Christian. 2007. "State Repression and Political Order." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10:1-23.
- DeNardo, James A. 1985. *Power in Numbers*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Earl, Jennifer. 2003. "Tanks, Tear Gas and Taxes: Toward a Theory of Movement Repression." *Sociological Theory* 21(1): 44-68.
- Giugni, Marco G. 1998. "Was It Worth the Effort? The Outcomes and Consequences of Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 371-393.
- Hibbs, Douglas. 1973. *Mass Political Violence: A Cross-National Causal Analysis*. New York: Wiley.
- King, Brayden and Sarah A. Soule. 2007. "Social Movements as Extra-Institutional Entrepreneurs: The Effect of Protest on Stock Price Returns." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 52(3): 413-442.
- McAdam, Doug. 1983. "Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency." *American Sociological Review* 48(6): 735-754.
- McAdam, Doug and Deiter Rucht. 1993. "The Cross-National Diffusion of Movement Ideas." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 528(1): 56-74.
- McAdam, Doug and Yang Su. 2002. "The War at Home: The Impact of Anti-War Protests, 1965-1973." *American Sociological Review* 67(5): 696-721.
- McCammon, Holly J., Karen E. Campbell, Ellen M. Granberg and Christine Mowery. 2001. "How Movements Win: Gendered Opportunity Structures and U.S. Women's Suffrage Movements, 1866 to 1919." *American Sociological Review* 66(1): 49-70.
- McVeigh, Rory, Michael R. Welch & Thoroddur Bjarnason. 2003. "Hate Crime Reporting as a Successful Social Movement Outcome." *American Sociological Review* 68(6): 843-867.
- Moore, Will. 1998. "Repression and Dissent: Substitution, Context, and Timing." *American Journal of Political Science* 42(3): 851-873.
- Moore, Will. 2000. "The Repression of Dissent: A Substitution Model of Government Coercion." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44(1):107-127.
- Oberschall, Anthony. 1975. *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Homewood: Dorsey Press.
- Pierskalla, Jan. 2009. "Protest, Deterrence and Escalation: The Strategic Calculus of Government Repression." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54(1): 117-145.
- Soule, Sarah A. 1997. "The Student Divestment Movement in the United States and Tactical Diffusion: The Shantytown Protest." *Social Forces* 75(3): 855-882.
- Soule, Sarah A. and Susan Olzak. 2004. "When Do Movements Matter? The Politics of Contingency and the Equal Rights Amendment." *American Sociological Review* 69(4): 473-497.



## Political Sociology Section Announcements

### 2011 Political Sociology Section Award Winners

#### Book Award

Recipient: James Mahoney, *Colonialism and Postcolonial Development: Spanish America in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

#### Article Award

Co-Recipient: Gregory Hooks and Brian McQueen, 2010. "American Exceptionalism Revisited: The Military-Industrial Complex, Racial Tension, and the Underdeveloped Welfare State" *American Sociological Review* 75(2) 185–204.

Co-Recipient: Chris Rhomberg, 2010. "A Signal Juncture: The Detroit Newspaper Strike and Post-Accord Labor Relations in the United States" *American Journal of Sociology* 115 (6) 1853–94

#### Graduate Student Paper Award

Recipient: Nicholas Hoover Wilson, U.C.-Berkeley, "From Reflection to Refraction: State Administration in British India, ca. 1770-1855." *The American Journal of Sociology* 116(5): 1437-77.

Honorable Mention: Min Zhou, Harvard University, "Signaling Commitments, Making Concessions: Democratization and State Ratification of International Human Rights Treaties, 1966-2006".

### Political Sociology Sessions for 2012 Annual Meeting

The Section will have six sessions at the 2012 Annual Meetings in Denver. One of these sessions is invited, but all of the others are open to submissions. All submissions should be made through the ASA's online system for the annual meeting.

#### Invited Session: Is There a Politics of Law or a Legality of Politics?

The ASA separates law from politics in two different sections. Arguably, a similar separation has occurred in the scholarship of those working in the two subfields. This will be an invited session, in which scholars who are primarily known as political sociologists and scholars who are primarily known as sociologists of law will engage in panel discussion about similarities and differences in the way political and legal sociologists conceive of "law," "the state" and the relationship between the two. Panelists will be asked to reflect on such questions as "What is law and is it (or how is it) different from public policy?" "What are/should be the most important research questions at the intersection of law and politics or the state?" "If you as a political/legal sociologist had to choose one insight mostly missing from the other sub-field, what would it be and why?" and "Is anything important lost or gained by separating law from political sociology?"

Session Organizers: **John Skrentny**, University of California-San Diego ([jskrentny@ucsd.edu](mailto:jskrentny@ucsd.edu)) and **Robin Stryker**, University of Arizona ([rstryker@email.arizona.edu](mailto:rstryker@email.arizona.edu))

#### Open Session: Civility and Incivility in American Politics

This session is inspired by the public outcry that emerged in the wake of the 2011 shootings in Tucson, Arizona that killed six bystanders and seriously wounded many others, including Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. Popular discourse routinely linked this violence to the amped up rhetoric found on talk radio, blogs, and televised news analysis programs. Papers that address civility and incivility in American political culture are welcome. Themes might include: incivility in mass media, in political campaigns, in Congress, the Executive Branch or the Courts, interpersonal incivility online, incivility in town hall meetings and other community gatherings, the relationship (or lack thereof) between incivility and political violence, the relationship between incivility and negative campaign advertising or between incivility and the role of emotion in political messaging, comparative examinations of incivility in US political culture or governance and that of other countries, incivility and democracy, whether anonymity increases incivility, incivility and political engagement, incivility in social movement organizations and other advocacy groups, the relationship between incivility and political polarization, and the history of civility/incivility in the United States or elsewhere.

Session Organizer: **Sarah Sobieraj**, Tufts University ([sarah.sobieraj@tufts.edu](mailto:sarah.sobieraj@tufts.edu))

## Political Sociology Section Announcements

### Open Session: The Politics of Global Human Rights (co-sponsored with Human Rights Section)

This session will focus on human rights in the global, regional, local, national, and/or transnational context. Papers may address any type of human right, whether civil and political (including, but not restricted to, human integrity rights), economic, social or cultural. Papers may address the rights of disadvantaged or marginalized populations world-wide (including within the United States). Among other topics, papers might address various types of political mobilization around human rights, human rights successes or failures, the mechanisms by which human rights norms are constructed and translated (or not translated) into practice, democracy and human rights, or neo-liberalism and human rights.

Session Organizer: **Christopher N. J. Roberts, University of Minnesota, (cjr@umn.edu)**

### Open Session: Beyond the Nation-State: Cosmopolitanism as a Real Utopia.

This session will complement the theme of the 2012 meetings by showcasing possibilities for a “real utopia” built around ideas of cosmopolitanism, world citizenship and world governance. Both theoretical and empirical papers are welcome. Paper themes might include, among others, the possibilities for and contours of transnational citizenship and/or identities, institution building for transnational and global decision-making and governance, rights, obligations and group representation in a more global polity and civil society, and the role of NGOs and transnational social movements in creating

world citizenship and world governance.

Session Organizer: **Thomas Janoski, University of Kentucky (tjanos@email.uky.edu)**

### Open Session: Electoral Politics

In honor of the fact that 2012 is a Presidential election year, this session will be devoted to electoral politics broadly speaking. Papers are encouraged that address any aspect of electoral politics as either “independent variable” or “dependent variable” and any level of electoral politics from local to state to national to supra-national. Historical and/or comparative treatments of electoral politics are welcome, as are papers on these topics among others: class, race, gender, age, and religion and electoral politics, the relationship among electoral system characteristics, policy making and governance, campaign financing and campaign finance reform, trends in political knowledge, partisanship, and participation, how digital media shape electoral politics, electoral politics and democracy, the legitimacy of electoral institutions, “clean” elections, the role of international bodies, courts, interest groups and/or NGOs in electoral politics, etc. Papers speaking specifically to the 2012 election are, of course, very welcome.

Session Organizer: **Nancy DiTomaso, Rutgers University, (ditomaso@business.rutgers.edu)**

### Open Refereed Roundtables

Session Organizer: **Judith Stepan-Norris, University of California-Irvine (jstepann@uci.edu)**

## Call for Nominations: Political Sociology Section Awards 2012

### Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship (Article or Book Chapter) Award

This award is offered annually for the outstanding recently published article or chapter in political sociology. To be eligible, submissions must have a 2011 publication date. The selection committee encourages either self-nominations or suggestions of work by others. (Please note that each author may have only one article nominated.) A brief nomination letter and a copy of the article or chapter should be sent to each selection committee member at the e-mail address below.

Please direct questions to Isaac Martin, committee chair, e-mail address below.

Chair: **Isaac Martin, University of California-San Diego (iwmartin@ucsd.edu)**

Additional Members:

**Mabel Berezin, Cornell University**  
mmb39@cornell.edu

**Celia Winkler, University of Montana**  
celia.winkler@mso.umt.edu

**Cheol-Sung Lee, University of Chicago**  
chslee@uchicago.edu

The deadline for nominations is:  
March 15, 2012

### Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship (Book) Award

This award is given annually to the outstanding recent book in political sociology. To be eligible, the book must have a 2011 publication date. The selection committee

## Political Sociology Section Announcements

encourages either self-nominations or suggestions of work by others. Nominations from publishers will not be accepted. To nominate a book for this award: 1) send a letter (via e-mail) explaining how the book makes a significant contribution to political sociology to each committee member below and 2) have a copy of the book sent to each committee member, at the address below:

Chair: **Sean O'Rian, National University of Ireland-Maynooth,**  
**sean.ORiain@nuim.ie**  
 Department of Sociology  
 National University of Ireland  
 Maynooth  
 Co. Kildare  
 Ireland

Additional Members:  
**Chris Rhomberg, Fordham University,**  
**rhomberg@fordham.edu**  
 Chris Rhomberg  
 383 Grand Street, #M-305  
 New York, NY 10002

**Bart Bonikowski, Harvard University,**  
**bonikowski@fas.harvard.edu**

Department of Sociology  
 Harvard University  
 363 William James Hall  
 33 Kirkland Street  
 Cambridge, MA 02138

**Jim Mahoney, Northwestern University,**  
**james-mahoney@northwestern.edu**

Department of Political Science  
 Scott Hall  
 601 University Place  
 Northwestern University  
 Evanston, IL 60208-1006

### Best Graduate Student Paper Award

This award is offered annually for the best graduate student paper in political sociology. Persons who are graduate students during this academic year are invited to submit published or unpublished papers for the award. To be eligible, papers must be singly authored and have been written while the author was a graduate student. They may not have been subse-

quently published as co-authored work. The selection committee encourages self nominations or suggestions of work by others. A brief nomination letter and a copy of the paper should be sent to each e-mail address below. Direct questions to Edward Walker, committee chair, email address below.

Chair: **Edward Walker, University of California-Los Angeles**  
 walker@soc.ucla.edu

Additional Members:  
**Kathleen Fallon, McGill**  
 University, kathleen.fallon@mcgill.ca

**Sarah Sobieraj, Tufts University**  
 sarah.sobieraj@tufts.edu

**Jason Beckfield, Harvard University**  
 beckfie@wjh.harvard.edu

The deadline for nominations is:  
 March 15, 2012.

### Call for Submissions: States, Power, and Societies Volume 17 #1.

Please continue to send abstracts of your recently published books, articles, announcements of meetings, or other opportunities that you think would be of interest to our section members.

We will publish this next issue shortly after the new year. Your input is welcome!

Please send your comments and submissions to Erik Larson at: [larsone@macalester.edu](mailto:larsone@macalester.edu)

## Abstracts

### BOOK ABSTRACTS

Armaline, William T., Davita Silfen Glasberg, and Bandana Purkayastha (ed.). 2011. *Human Rights in Our Own Backyard: Injustice and Resistance in the United States*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

A volume in the Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights series, *Human Rights in Our Own Backyard* focuses on the state of human rights and responses to human rights issues in the United States, drawing on sociological literature and perspectives to interrogate assumptions of American exceptionalism.

Clark, Terry Nichols (ed.). 2011. *The City as an Entertainment Machine*. Lexington Books.

This volume explores how consumption and entertainment change cities, but it reverses the “normal” causal process. That is, many chapters analyze how consumption and entertainment drive urban development, not vice versa. People both live and work in cities and where they choose to live shifts where and how they work. Amenities enter as enticements to bring new residents or tourists to a city and so amenities have thus become new public concerns for many cities in the U.S. and much of Northern Europe. Old ways of thinking, old paradigms -- such as “location, location, location” and “land, labor, capital, and management generate economic development” -- are too simple. So is “human capital drives development”. To these earlier questions we add, “How do amenities and related consumption attract talented people, who in turn drive the classic processes which make cities grow?” This new question is critical for policy makers, urban public officials, business, and non-profit leaders who are using culture, entertainment, and urban amenities to enhance their locations -- for present and future residents, tourists, conventioners, and shoppers. *The City as an Entertainment Machine* details the impacts of opera, used bookstores, brew pubs, bicycle events, Starbucks’ coffee shops, gay residents, and other factors on changes in jobs, population, inventions, and more. It is the first study to assemble and analyze such amenities for national samples of cities (and counties). It interprets these processes

by showing how they add new insights from economics, sociology, political science, public policy, and geography. Considerable evidence is presented about how consumption, amenities, and culture drive urban policy by encouraging people to move to or from different cities and regions.

Logan, Enid. 2011. *“At This Defining Moment”: Barack Obama’s Presidential Candidacy and the New Politics of Race*. New York: NYU Press.

In this new book, Enid Logan analyzes the politics of race in the 2008 presidential election. Despite widespread claims that Obama’s win proved the U.S. to be officially “colorblind,” she argues, race played a central role in the 2008 campaign. Obama’s ascent was widely said to herald the dawn of a “new politics of race.” As a “post-racial” black candidate, Obama could serve as the antidote to Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, grant whites absolution for the racial sins of the past, and redeem the nation itself, by demonstrating the U.S. to be again a shining beacon of democracy and progress. The book is based primarily on an analysis of some 1,500 articles, editorials, blog postings and other forms of public speech. The arguments presented in the book have wide applicability to the emergent politics of race in the 2012 presidential campaign as well as in the historic election of 2008.

Pinard, Maurice. 2011. *Motivational Dimensions in Social Movements and Contentious Collective Action*. McGill-Queen’s University Press.

Teo, Youyenn. 2011. *Neoliberal Morality in Singapore: How Family Policies Make State and Society*. London and New York: Routledge.

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415593977/>  
Using the case study of Singapore, the book examines the production of a set of institutionalized relationships and ethical meanings that link citizens to each other and the state. Drawing on what I argue are “failed” pro-natalist policies, I look at how questions of culture and morality are resolved when people are compelled to negotiate rules on public housing, baby bonuses, mandatory savings, etc.

## Abstracts

Family policies are a site where state-society relations are established that render paradoxes and inequalities acceptable. Singaporeans come to share values and practices that form the basis of a national political culture. These institutionalized relationships and shared meanings, I call “neoliberal morality.”

Warren, Mark R., Karen L. Mapp and the Community Organizing and School Reform Project. 2011. *A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

**www.matchondrygrass.com.** The persistent failure of public schooling in low-income communities constitutes one of our nation’s most pressing civil rights and social justice issues. Many school reformers recognize that poverty, racism, and a lack of power held by these communities undermine children’s education and development, but few know what to do about it. *A Match on Dry Grass* argues that community organizing represents a fresh and promising approach to school reform as part of a broader agenda to build power for low-income communities and address the profound social inequalities that affect the education of children. Based on a comprehensive national study, the book presents rich and compelling case studies of prominent organizing efforts in Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles, Denver, San Jose, and the Mississippi Delta. The authors show how organizing groups build the participation and leadership of parents and students so they can become powerful actors in school improvement efforts. They also identify promising ways to overcome divisions and create the collaborations between educators and community residents required for deep and sustainable school reform. Identifying the key processes that create strong connections between schools and communities, Warren, Mapp, and their collaborators show how community organizing builds powerful relationships that lead to the transformational change necessary to advance educational equity and a robust democracy.

## ARTICLE ABSTRACTS

Geva, Dorit. 2011. “Not Just Maternalism: Marriage and Fatherhood in American Welfare Politics.” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State, and Society* 18(1): 24-51.

The United States’ 1996 welfare reforms are often interpreted as a historical break in transitioning from supporting motherhood to commodifying women’s labor. However, this cannot account for welfare reform’s emphasis upon heterosexual marriage and fatherhood promotion. The paper traces continuities and shifts in over a century of familial regulation through American welfare policy, specifying the place of marriage promotion within welfare policy. Up until 1996, families were key sites of intervention through which the American welfare state was erected, especially through single women as mothers—not wives. However, as of the 1960s, concern with African American men’s “failed” familial commitments turned policymakers toward concern over marriage promotion for women and men. While marriage “disincentives” for aid recipients were lifted in the 1960s, the 1996 reforms structured a new form of nuclear family governance actively promoting marriage rooted in, but distinct from, the previous. Given the historical absence of welfare policies available to poor men, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families’ (TANF) marriage promotion policies have positioned poor women as nodes connecting the state to poor men, simultaneously structuring poor women as breadwinners, mothers, and wives. Recent welfare reform has also started to target poor men directly, especially in fatherhood and marriage promotion initiatives. The article highlights how, in addition to workfare policies, marriage promotion is a neoliberal policy shift—ing risk to the shoulders of the poor, aiming to produce “strong families” for the purposes of social security.

Geva, Dorit. 2011. “Where the State Feared to Tread: Conscription and Local Patriarchalism in Modern France.” *In The Power of Kinship: Patrimonial States in Global Perspective*, ed. by Julia Adams and Mounira Charrad. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 636: 111-128.

## Abstracts

---

This article places feminist state theorists in dialogue with the Weberian “bellicist” tradition, and argues that locating patriarchy within modern European states remains a worthwhile endeavor. By tracing conscription exemptions for fathers and husbands in France from the French Revolution’s *levée en masse* through to Napoleonic conscription and into the first half of the twentieth century, this article shows that consideration for male citizens’ patriarchal positions was a consistent feature of French conscription. This is significant given that conscription was an especially powerful and invasive institution of modern states and central to states’ survival within interstate competition. Yet even this intrusive institution did not undermine local patriarchy in the country many consider to be the cradle of modern mandatory conscription. An extractive state institution was built on crystallization of male familial authority at the level of on-the-ground citizens.

---

Geva, Dorit. 2011. “Different and Unequal?: Breadwinning, Dependency Deferments, and the Gendered Origins of the United States Selective Service System.” *Armed Forces & Society*

With establishment of the U.S. Selective Service System in 1917, selective draft rules placed consideration of registrants’ economic obligations to their dependents front and center. By observing the Canadian and British recruitment experiences, American policy makers opted against universal conscription since they believed it would be costly because of the need to offer family allowances and opted against a voluntary system since they believed that too many bachelors would fail to volunteer. Dependency deferments were designed to minimize

the social and economic costs of war. Local board members determined whether a man was a genuine breadwinner or not, and individual discretion on this matter contributed to the higher rates of African American draftees during WWI compared to white draftees, since African American men were less likely to be recognized as genuine breadwinners. Selective Service rules thus resulted in reproducing female citizens as economic dependents and yielded durable inequalities among registrants.

---

Jansen, Robert S. 2011. “Populist Mobilization: A New Theoretical Approach to Populism.” *Sociological Theory* 29(2): 75-96.

Sociology has long shied away from the problem of populism. This may be due to suspicion about the concept or uncertainty about how to fit populist cases into broader comparative matrices. Such caution is warranted: the existing interdisciplinary literature has been plagued by conceptual confusion and disagreement. But given the recent resurgence of populist politics in Latin America and elsewhere, sociology can no longer afford to sidestep such analytical challenges. This article moves toward a political sociology of populism by identifying past theoretical deficiencies and proposing a new, practice-based approach that is not beholden to pejorative common sense understandings. This approach conceptualizes populism as a mode of political practice—as populist mobilization. Its utility is demonstrated through an application to mid-twentieth-century Latin American politics. The article concludes by sketching an agenda for future research on populist mobilization in Latin America and beyond.

---

 Interview with Section Award Recipient
 

---

# Chris Rhomberg

Interviewed by Raphi Rechitsky  
University of Minnesota



Chris Rhomberg was a co-recipient of the Political Sociology Section's Article Award in 2011 for his article "A Signal Juncture: The Detroit Newspaper Strike and Post-Accord Labor Relations in the United States" (2010, *American Journal of Sociology* 115 (6)

1853-94).

*Your work has focused on issues of race, labor, and urban politics in American political development. What motivated you to tackle this project given your prior work? Why did you approach the project in the way that you did given the state of this subfield?*

CR: In my first book, *No There There: Race, Class, and Political Community in Oakland*, I wanted to overcome the particularism of much research both in social movements and in urban ethnography or community studies. It seemed to me that studies of social movements usually focused on a single movement, like the environmental movement, or a single time period, like the 1960s or

[M]uch of the new labor research in sociology is influenced by social movement theory ... My work now brings back a focus on the process of collective bargaining, the role of law and the state, and the problem of democratic workplace governance.

today. Similarly, the "community studies" tradition had moved away from the city-wide vision of classical works like the Middletown books to more

in-depth research on specific sub-cultures, in poor neighborhoods or ethnic communities, for instance. I wanted to bring back a historical perspective that looks at the interaction of multiple actors and institutions across time and across a city or metropolitan area as a whole.

This led to the place-based orientation of *No There There*, and the theoretical framework of tracing changes in the economy, state, and civil society. Rather than simply explaining the rise and fall of mobilization for each group, this allowed me to portray multiple strands of identity formation and relations between actors across the field of civil society. It also allowed me to avoid an old-fashioned Mill's method of comparing separate cases. If I had started by treating the movements or periods in Oakland as independent cases, I would have assumed away the central puzzle of the book, which was not their emergence but their discontinuity.

After I finished *No There There*, I was looking for a new book project. I had been in Michigan in 1996-1997, and was familiar with the newspaper strike. It was another rich, dense, narrative case study, and it seemed a good way to take the story of urban conflict and collective action in the U.S. into the 1990s, with the problem of widening class inequality, in the context of a racially divided area like Detroit. It also illustrated the loss of urban political autonomy, in that the conflict arose from the entry of a powerful national corporation, the Gannett company, into the local terrain of a union town like Detroit.

There were differences, of course. In *No There There*, socio-economic and political structures served largely as contextual variables for the processes of collective actor formation and mobilization in civil society. The newspaper strike was an unfair labor practices strike, which meant there was an extensive process of litigation in the case, and I had to give much more attention to the insti-

## Interview with Section Award Recipient

tutional arena. This turned out to be an advantage: much of the new labor research in sociology is influenced by social movement theory, and emphasizes mobilization. My work now brings back a focus on the process of collective bargaining, the role of law and the state, and the problem of democratic workplace governance.

*In your article, you coin the concept of “signal juncture” to point out the significance of a deviant case in a series of events in ongoing tensions, conflicts, and continuous trends. How did you come up with and develop this scholarly contribution?*

CR: The idea of the signal juncture came out of a special session at the 2007 ASA meetings in New York. My fellow historical sociologists John Walton and Jeffrey Haydu very kindly asked me to participate on a panel on the qualitative comparison of sequential cases, and we were later joined by Larry Isaac as our discussant. John and Jeff had already developed this approach in their work, and I had done something similar in my Oakland book. The problem I had was that in the Detroit project I had a single case, and how do you do comparative work with only one case? This forced me to think more precisely about how we locate cases, in the implicit or explicit comparison of before-and-after in their narrative timelines.

I had already engaged with path dependency theory in my earlier work, but I expanded on the notion of multiple institutional paths that intersect or collide with one another (the “juncture”). I also had the problem that the newspaper strike was by no means a typical or representative case, but it was not a critical juncture; it was much larger and longer than most strikes but it did not really alter the path of institutional anti-unionism that had been ascendant since the 1980s. I was able to resolve this by applying the logic of deviant case method to the framework of historical path dependency. So, a critical juncture is a transformative case that occurs between paths

or historical periods, but a signal juncture is a deviant case that captures conflicts that persist within periods, “signaling” the new terrain of struggle.

*You describe the AJS article as an essay. Can you provide some insights about the writing process?*

CR: In a scholarly article we write for an expert community of social scientists, and we necessarily use the technical language of our community as part of our analytic tool-kit. The danger is that this discourse can begin to write us, that we get carried along with the jargon of our respective sub-fields. I think it’s important as a scholar to maintain one’s own voice and sense of intellectual responsibility, to be self-aware in our use of social scientific discourse as a particular genre. When I am developing an argument, I try to remember to step back and ask myself, “Do I really think this? Can I imagine saying this as an intelligent person to a real live reader or listener?” Whichever audience we are aiming for, we should remember that we are scholars and experts but also members of a democratic public and human community.

**[W]e can address our audiences with a sense of respect for their judgment, but with a promise that if you follow me on where I’m going, I will take you somewhere that is worth your while. And then we have to deliver on that promise.**

I also think that we have resources to expand our voice beyond the technical discourses we must use, in a way that maintains analytical rigor. For example, the method of deviant case analysis is well-established in the discipline. But the rhetorical trope of the extreme moment, of episodes of natural disaster or extraordinary conflict or collective action, as moments when the veil of ordinary life is lifted and underlying forces are revealed, is also well-known beyond sociology. I think we can address our audiences with a sense of respect for their judgment, but with a promise that if you follow me on where I’m going, I will take you somewhere that is worth your while. And then we have to deliver on that promise.



## Journal Profiles

# Politics & Society

Chen-Yu Wu  
University of Minnesota

Politics & Society (P&S), a quarterly journal, was established in the late 1960s in response to social scientists' desire for a forum to express alternative critical views on questions about politics, theory, and policy. According to the journal's website, it is "committed to developing Marxist, post-Marxist, and other radical perspectives and to examining what Robert Lynd once called 'some outrageous hypotheses.'"

Although incorporating much work in political sociology, the scope of P&S stretches out from the sub-field. This is evidenced by the interdisciplinary composition of P&S's editorial board. The range of articles published by P&S spans across several disciplinary boundaries, as well as several methodological traditions.

Theoretically, the journal has published articles that made significant contributions to topics such as state formation, the evolution of democratic processes, comparative labor politics, and globalization. Over the past couple of years, articles have addressed themes that reflect prominent social issues and debates of the day, such as terrorism and counterinsurgency; political economy, organization, and processes; inequality; and immigration. Sociologists, political scientists, economists, historians, and social theorists alike would likely find the range of topics on the journal's Most-Cited Articles list interesting and appealing.

Given the distinctive nature of P&S, scholars wishing to submit articles to the journal may wonder what types of papers would be strong candidates for publication. Like any other journal, P&S seeks articles that are both interesting, original, rigorous, and well-written. However, understanding how P&S reviews submitted manuscripts may also be instructive.

One unique aspect of P&S's process for reviewing manuscripts is that this is done collectively by the journal's entire editorial board, rather than just one or two editors. The board consists of about 15 members who hail from political science, sociology, history, and economics. Submitted manuscripts are initially assigned to individual board members for a preliminary review. After this stage, the full P&S board meets once every four months to discuss the manuscripts that have passed the board members' initial review. During this meeting, these manuscripts are read by every board member, who then review their merits through a seminar discussion. Manuscripts that are either accepted for publication or given R&Rs are those that speak to the various academic backgrounds of the board's members. Consequently, comments and suggestions that are

provided by the board tend to provide suggestions to authors on how to tailor their work to appeal to a broad, interdisciplinary readership. Consequently, articles that are clearly interdisciplinary in nature - and can therefore speak to a broad academic audience - tend to fare better at P&S than those with a narrower focus.

Logistically, although the editorial review process is labor intensive, the journal's turnaround time for manuscripts is about the same as other journals. The longest time it takes the board to issue a decision is four months, which coincides with the frequency of the full board meetings.

The aim of the following short summaries is to provide readers with a better idea of the types of articles published by Politics & Society. These summarized articles were ranked on P&S's "Most Read" articles list as of October 2011.

### Findings and Ideas from *Politics & Society*

In their 2010 article ("Winner-Take-All Politics: Public Policy, Political Organization, and the Precipitous Rise of Top Incomes in the United States." 38(2): 152-204), Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson review existing economic and political science theories explaining rising economic inequality in the United States. They find that these theories suffer from three primary weaknesses: (1) they overlook the extreme concentration of income at the top of the U.S. economic ladder, a feature not shared by other Western countries; (2) they neglect the role government policies played in creating the unequal structures, opting instead for purely economic explanations; and (3) they fail to take into consideration changes in the American political landscape over time. In response to these shortcomings, Hacker and Pierson state that coming up with a comprehensive explanation requires a political-economy framework, as political and economic actors exert mutual influences: the government affects the economy through policies that shape and regulate markets; economic actors are able to leverage their ample financial resources to influence how the government exercises its political authority.

## Journal Profiles

Since the founding principles of the journal include developing progressive and critical perspectives on problems of political importance, papers which combine systematic theoretical argument with careful empirical analysis are looked upon most favorably for publication in P&S. However, prospective authors should note that although P&S values critical analyses of theory, exegeses of specific theories are usually not published unless it is used to advance original theoretical points.

Prospective authors may also find it helpful to know that P&S does not publish book reviews or review essays. Additionally, P&S does not impose any length restrictions on manuscripts, which makes the journal an attractive choice for scholars with lengthy and detailed papers.

If you are looking for - or writing - articles that can appeal to a broad base of readers, P&S is definitely a journal you should consider. Additionally, while P&S is ostensibly a specialty journal, the range of topics that its articles cover leads me to

characterize this publication oxymoronically as the political sociologist's "generalist" journal. Equally attractive about the journal is the variety of methods employed by the articles the journal publishes - that the journal does not enforce any page limits means that scholars can easily find exemplary work using a variety of methods, ranging from short mathematical modeling pieces to long and detailed ethnographic accounts. Last, but not least, we finish with a statement from Erik Olin Wright, a longtime member of the P&S editorial board: "At its best the journal has been one of the key places where new agendas have been developed - discussions of state theory in the 1970s, Analytical Marxism in the 1980s, comparative institutional political economy in the 1990s, deliberative democracy and participatory empowerment in the 2000s."

### Findings and Ideas from *Politics & Society*

Phillip A. Hough's 2011 article ("Guerrilla Insurgency as Organized Crime: Explaining the So-Called "Political Involution" of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia." 39(3): 379-414) on the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, more popularly known by their acronym FARC, employs a longitudinal data set to examine why the FARC used violence. Hough demonstrates that - contrary to conclusions made in previous scholarly work - FARC's use of violence against civilian populations did not begin as a result of its involvement in illicit economic activities (for instance, coca cultivation and drug running), but rather as a result of changing local conditions that taxed FARC's ability to obtain resources necessary for the continuation of its insurgent activities. Hough demonstrates how the Colombian government's deployment of military units into FARC-controlled regions, as well as its use of paramilitary units, diminished FARC's war-making resources, leading it to coerce these resources from the local civilian population. Since FARC drew most of its support initially from this same population, the forced extraction of resources led to a cycle in which FARC had to resort to increasingly harsher measures to extract resources as its legitimacy depleted among its former supporters.

### Findings and Ideas from *Politics & Society*

Robert H. Wade's 2011 article ("Emerging World Order? From Multipolarity to Multilateralism in the G20, the World Bank, and the IMF." 39(3): 347-78) examines major institutional changes (decisions regarding both the inclusion of additional member states and the reallocation of the number representatives member-states can send to these institutions) that occurred within the G20, the World Bank, and the IMF over the past decade, seeking to understand the reasons behind these changes. He finds that the bulk of these changes were largely driven by the increasing economic might of states other than North America, Europe, and Japan. These changes encompass both defensive moves from the U.S. and Europe (such as incorporating Canada and Australia into the G20) and attempts to obtain more influence by emerging economic powerhouses like Brazil, India, and China. These changes have led to an interesting sequence of events: scholars have noticed increases in both multipolarity (brought about by economic globalization) and multilateralism (brought about by political globalization). Wade notes that, as there is currently no body of theoretical work that provides predictions as to whether this gap will continue to increase in the future, there is an opportunity for new theoretical contributions to the discipline.

## Teaching Political Sociology

# Using South Sudan as a case study to foreground theoretical debates in political sociology

Erik Larson  
Macalester College

When I teach my upper-level undergraduate seminar in Political Sociology, I like to begin the semester by giving students an article about recent events to help them see the relevant questions that we will address during the semester. Because the course focuses mainly on comparative and international contexts and includes significant units on states as organizations, nationalism, citizenship, and ethnic politics, I look for globally significant political events from the past few months. This year, the choice of focusing on South Sudan was easy: the emergence of the world's newest nation-state raised a host of questions that could build student engagement with the range of questions we address in the course. Indeed, the class session was so successful that I intend to continue to use the material in future offerings of the course.

I found two articles by BBC News of particular use. While they differ in tone and focus, the articles highlight the different optics that political sociologists bring to bear when analyzing how nation-states and people subject to state authority relate.

"South Sudan: How do you set up a nation?" by Kathryn Westcott (July 8, 2011; available online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14014083>) offers a somewhat lighter tone by providing a list of activities that any new nation-state must complete. Some of these activities—deciding on a national anthem, printing currency—involve conscious decisions about how to invent the traditions of the nation. The experiences in South Sudan not only point out this fact, but also encourage students to consider the importance of these trappings of national identity inspiring the populace to feel a sense of belonging. Other activities, such as establishing a country-level internet domain and a postal service, depend on recognition of the new country by established international bodies, highlighting both the range of activities that are bound up with nation-states and the importance of

considering global influences on state organization. In contrast, James Copnall's "Forced to choose between Sudans" (July 19, 2011, available online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14204148>) presents a more somber tone about issues associated with citizenship, identity, and claims against a state for provision. Copnall profiles the choices—and constraints—that confront people with southern Sudanese heritage who live in Khartoum. The article discusses the potential for loss of Sudanese nationality and the collateral consequences that could result (such as forgoing pensions and being unable to own property). In addition, the situation of people with limited resources who have decided to migrate to South Sudan raises the question of whether either the government of Sudan (which is essentially expelling them) or the new government of South Sudan has any obligations to assist in resettlement.

During the class meeting, I have students read the articles and note items of interest. We then discuss the articles. This semester, the students highlighted all of the topics that I had planned to address—and a couple of additional ones. From these conversations, I was able either to reframe or draw out questions to set up the semester.

If you have an idea or resource for teaching a political sociology course, please consider sharing it with section members.

Email Erik Larson ([larsone@macalester.edu](mailto:larsone@macalester.edu)) with questions or contributions.