

## Symposium: Assessing the Millennium Development Goals

Twelve years have passed since the United Nations declared an ambitious set of goals in the Millennium Development Resolution sought. The MDGs in part: to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, live in extreme poverty, and who do not have access to safe drinking water; to ensure that boys and girls equally access and complete primary education; to reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters and under-five child mortality by two thirds; and to begin to reduce disease prevalence, particularly for HIV/AIDS and malaria. As we approach the target date for many of these goals, progress has been mixed. The contributions to this symposium examine the political and social processes of forming and implementing the MDGs to assess the possibilities for further progress on governance and improving peoples' lives.

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## The MDGs and the UN's Comparative Advantage in Goal-Setting

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Ideas and concepts are the main driving force in human progress; they are arguably the most important contribution by the United Nations. That conclusion emerges from a decade of research by the UN Intellectual History Project (UNIHP), and is summarized by the directors (Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij, and this author) in *UN Ideas That Changed the World* (Indiana University Press, 2009).

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### *The MDGs and the UN's Comparative Advantage in Goal-Setting, continued from page 1*

A noteworthy recent effort at idea mongering was the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The universal United Nations plays an exceptional role in seeking consensus about norms governing the planet and legitimating those with a potential worldwide application. The cases for establishing standards for reducing acid rain, impeding money laundering, halting pandemics, or condemning terrorism is as clear as the case for setting development goals. The MDGs represent a consensus on development policies and targets, even in the absence of a common understanding of what constitutes development or agreement on the best strategies. In that sense, they are a quintessentially UN achievement by setting aside disagreements on contested concepts in favor of an accord about shared goals and milestones.

At the same time, the UN is a maddening place to do business. Dissent by powerful states or foot-dragging by large coalitions of less powerful ones means pursuing the lowest-common-193-member-state-denominator. Disagreements continue, although many hope that the campaign surrounding the MDGs marks the start of a more imaginative yet realistic development system. Formulated originally in 2000 by heads of state and government at the Millennium Summit and revisited every five years, the eight development goals and eighteen related targets guide policies and help assess progress toward poverty reduction and sustainable human development. The MDG process represents a larger strategic vision for mobilizing the international community of states. At the 2005 World Summit, heads of state and government reviewed the MDGs and endeavored to agree on reforms to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of the world organization. The 2015 expiration date also leads to further discussion of "what's next?"

In spite of its warts, the UN's convening power helps pull together the international public policy community at important junctures when progress appears plausible. Alternative global public policies in the shape of the MDGs will be adjusted in light of experience, analysis, and views from the 26-member high-level panel named by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to advise on the post-2015 development agenda. Co-chaired by UK prime minister David Cameron, Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,

and Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the panel will make recommendations about building on the MDGs with a view to ending poverty while promoting economic growth, social equality, and environmental sustainability. The panel is expected to work closely with an intergovernmental group on the sustainable development goals, as agreed at the June 2012 Rio+20 Conference.

Rhetoric is not reality, of course; therefore, it is worth parsing three key functions to better appreciate the limits of UN mechanisms. First, the MDGs not only articulate accelerated human development as one of the international community of states' most fundamental and basic commitments, but they also contain suggested ways to assess policies. As such they constitute a normative mandate that validates many of the operational agendas pursued by bilateral, multilateral, and nongovernmental organizations. Second, the MDGs provide an agreed country framework for planning and template for measuring any country's development progress against agreed benchmarks and for informing policy dialogues within a variety of development agencies—the UN Development Programme, World Bank, IMF, regional banks, and bilateral donors. Third, they define and validate the terms of the relationship between industrialized and developing countries, setting forth the policy of reciprocal rights and obligations.

Advocates view the MDGs as the minimum to give practical expression to the call for a sustainable world free of fear and want, or at least with less of both. Yet extrapolations of performance to 2015 suggest that many of the world's poorest countries and peoples will fall short. The overall picture is blurred somewhat by substantial growth in China and India, which together account for a third of the world's total and half of developing countries' populations. It is worth examining in greater detail what has transpired.

The ten-year review in 2010 documented progress as well as major shortfalls in meeting the MDGs. For instance, poverty-reduction targets were on track for the world as a whole by 2015 but not for all regions. Progress was more visible in many areas, including literacy, gender equality, child mortality, and health. Yet half of the people in developing countries lacked access to basic sanitation, over half a million women continued to die every year of preventable and treatable complications in pregnancy and childbirth, the proportion of underweight children had

not been reduced significantly, and the number of people dying of AIDS had gone up from 2.2 million in 2001 to 2.9 million in 2006. At their Gleneagles, Scotland summit in 2005, the G-8 pledged to double aid to Africa, ground zero for these problems and poor numbers, yet total official aid actually declined by some 5% in the year following that supposed pledge and over 8% the next year.

The UN's consensual achievements are backed by monitoring as a step toward improving accountability and ultimately compliance by those states that do not live up to their commitments. Embarrassment is one of the few international weapons to elicit greater voluntary compliance, and thus monitoring is an essential activity because information activates the weapon. The MDGs illustrate a quintessential UN shortcoming: besides trying to shame a country that fails to provide education to girls or increase development assistance, little else can be done. Certainly OECD countries are not cowering as a result of monitoring.

Nonetheless, the record is more encouraging than commonly thought for such goal-setting and monitoring exercises as the MDGs. Another UNIHP volume, *UN Contributions to Development Thinking and Practice* (Indiana University Press, 2004), reviewed fifty or so earlier goals covering a wide range of efforts at global economic governance including faster growth, higher life expectancy, lower child and maternal mortality, better health, broader access to safe water and sanitation, greater access to education, less hunger and malnutrition, sustainable development, and financial support.

International targets are often scorned as empty vessels, but achievements have been more noteworthy than skeptics believe. Success with the economic growth goal in the First Development Decade led to a higher goal of 6% per year in the 1970s for the Second Development Decade. This goal was achieved by thirty-five countries, and the average growth was 5.6%, a bit higher than in the 1960s. After 1980, economic performance deteriorated, except for China and, in the 1990s, India. Though the UN continued to set goals for economic growth, it averaged only 4% in developing countries in the 1980s and 4.7% in the 1990s, in both cases pulled up (or distorted) by the exceptional performance of the two state-directed economic giants, China and India.

Compliance with many objectives for human devel-

opment appears better than for purely economic development. In 1980, the goal was set that life expectancy should reach 60 years at a minimum—a goal achieved in 124 of 173 developing countries at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Similarly, the goal for reducing infant mortality by 2000 was set at 120 per 1,000 live births in the poorest countries and 50 in all others—after acceleration of immunization and other child survival measures; 138 developing countries succeeded. Progress in other areas also has been registered. Reductions in malnutrition, iron deficiency anemia, and vitamin A deficiency accelerated over the 1990s. During the 1980s, access was more than doubled by the expansion of water and sanitation facilities.

In short, voluntary compliance with UN policy targets for human development is more impressive than most people think. The results have, of course, fallen short of full achievement, especially following the 2008 financial and economic meltdown; but they have rarely been total failures. The embarrassment factor is not trivial, but the story of contemporary global economic governance still remains unsatisfactory for those seeking not only better compliance with targets but also more carrots and sticks for non-compliers and ultimately a fairer distribution of global wealth.

Another way of considering the impact of UN ideas is to imagine where the world might be without a world organization and its targets, or with one solely set up to act as a forum, with no capacity for generating ideas of its own. It would thus be a markedly different United Nations, with a minimum of staff, presumably ex-diplomats confined merely to bringing together groups with differences but passively sitting back and taking no initiatives. It would be a strange form of international organization—albeit not very different from the one that extreme critics and many Beltway flat-earthers put forward as the ideal world body. Such a stripped-down UN would be more limited even than the League of Nations, which itself had staff members in a number of specialist areas, including those who led the way on nutrition and food security as well as on economics, which has almost always been hailed as some of the best things that the League, weak in more political areas, achieved.

In this world of the counterfactual, what might have happened to the ideas, including the MDGs, that the UN has nurtured? In the economic arena, the need for rules

and regulations to facilitate international trade and other economic transactions of the global market would have generated a more limited range of institutions, not so different from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and many regional economic organizations. Even to write this sentence suggests that if the world organization did not exist, it would have been invented—if not in 1945 then about 1960, with the ending of colonies, or in the 1970s, with the floating of the dollar and the surge of oil prices. A series of *ad hoc* meetings to cope with wide-ranging issues of such vital economic importance to the wealthier countries would rapidly have been viewed as inadequate, and something universal and more permanent would have been created.

Hence, one can imagine a United Nations and a world without its goals and values. However, it would be a much poorer world and, at its core, much less human and humane than the one to which the present world organization aspires, and at its best advances and sometimes even realizes.

Among the UN's achievements have been its pioneering role in the world of ideas and goal-setting. Many have achieved remarkably quick impact, but even those that

have been rejected, sidelined, or adopted only rhetorically after long periods of time have emerged and often been ahead of the curve. Politically unacceptable to many countries at first, they often later became part of mainstream international discourse. Readers, for example, should recall everything from climate change to gender equality, from special measures for least developed countries to putting people at the center of development, from human security to removing the license to kill from the attributes of sovereign states.

The United Nations could have been smothered by caution, controlled by secretaries-general who allowed little scope for creativity and lacked vision. Instead, the world body has managed to attract the participation and commitment of many individuals with intellectual and leadership gifts. The UN could have gone the way of the League of Nations. It did not. It would be foolish to overlook many obvious shortcomings and genuine failures—my own pet peeves are in *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It* (Polity, 2012). At the same time, it would be equally myopic to ignore the UN's singular intellectual work and comparative advantage in goal-setting.

## Deficits in the Global Partnership: Strengthening Accountability through Human Rights

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The Millennium Development Goal “Gap Task Force” was launched in 2007 in order to monitor and support international commitments to the MDGs. Though at first, moderate advances were evident, the most recent report warned that progress had stalled since the onset of the global financial crisis, and indeed was reversing (MDG Gap Task Force 2012, p. xi). Without a substantial re-commitment to the principles of the “global partnership for development” outlined in MDG 8, the report cautioned, the rest of the goals would remain unfulfilled by the looming deadline of 2015.

Given the long-term intransigence of global inequality, poverty, and related deprivations, it is perhaps surprising that the MDGs have been able to achieve as

much as they have. Extreme poverty—defined as living on \$1.25 a day or less—fell by half in the decade following the Millennium Declaration (United Nations 2012). During the same time period, the proportion of people without sustainable access to drinking water was cut in half, and 100 million slum dwellers gained access to improved water, sanitation, and housing facilities. Undoubtedly, these gains “represent a tremendous reduction in human suffering” (*ibid*, p. 3), and are a testament to what can be achieved when multilateral efforts are brought to bear in solving difficult social problems.

But with more than half a billion people still lacking access to safe water and twice that number living on \$1.25 a day or less, as well as continued and severe

deprivations in the areas of education, health care, and gender equality, it is worth asking how effective the MDG model really is. If it is indeed bringing about social change, what are the contours of that transformation? What mechanisms does it offer for the amelioration of human suffering? How can the strengths of the MDGs be leveraged or enhanced and the weaknesses minimized?

In “Test of Our Progress: The Translation of Economic and Social Rights Norms into Practices” (Haglund and Aggarwal 2011), my co-author and I explore the MDGs as a model for the realization of economic and social rights, assessing how and to what extent they transform existing global conditions of deprivation. We start with a basic analytic framework for how norms are adopted and translated into practices, which may or may not cumulate to deep structural change. Breaking down the process of norm realization into distinct analytic components allows us to evaluate with greater precision the contribution of various legal, institutional, and political mechanisms that shape, constrain, or enable action, as well as discern which actors utilize them in relation to which targets, and by what spatial and temporal pathways.

The MDGs are unique in that they specify concrete global commitments to address structural impediments to the realization of basic human needs, leaving specific policies to be devised on a case-by-case basis. In this essay, I want to focus on the global commitments and impediments, highlighting the extent to which the MDGs shape the orientation of global actors, foster the translation of promises into action, and ultimately result (or not) in meaningful social change. Goal 8 specifically called for a “global partnership” obliging wealthy countries to promote fair trade rules, debt relief, direct aid, access to medicines, and technology transfer, as well as to commit resources in service to these objectives. All 193 U.N. member states, as well as dozens of international organizations including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, agreed to these objectives, and vowed to expend efforts to help developing countries achieve the MDGs by the 2015 deadline.

Arguably, the very existence of a global partnership of this breadth shifts the orientation of developed

countries by forcing them to acknowledge and address thorny conflicts between prevailing global economic practices and the needs of the world’s poor. The voluntary commitment to mobilize financial resources and transfer them to poor country governments serves a potentially transformative role in addressing poor countries’ resource constraints. Yet, as political sociologists might expect, profound shifts in the status quo require more than a rhetorical or voluntaristic commitment; accountability is a key factor.

Accountability mechanisms within countries—both horizontal (among branches of government) and vertical (between citizens and the state) (O’Donnell 1999)—provide some channels for compelling states to act in favor of their own poor populations. Global commitments such as those embodied in the MDGs, however, require *international* accountability mechanisms to shift behavior away from the historical exploitation and neglect of the world’s vulnerable populations. Our analysis attributes the mixed results in achieving the MDGs in part to the character of accountability relations linking duty holders to the poor populations they have pledged to assist.

The creation of mechanisms such as national needs assessments, time-bound sectoral strategies, and yearly reports monitoring progress (OHCHR 2008) has provided some impetus for both developed and developing countries to act on their commitments to the MDGs (Nelson 2007; Steerwith et al. 2010; Sumner and Melamed 2010). As these mechanisms are implemented in increasingly sophisticated ways, they can lead to changes in policies, institutions, and resource allocation. Reports and monitoring processes also offer discursive and practical leverage for citizens and movements pressuring governments to provide access to basic services.

While these new mechanisms are important for compelling actors to honor commitments, they evidence two accountability flaws: they are not backed by strong horizontal enforcement capabilities, and there are no formal mechanisms of democratic participation or redress for the populations they purportedly serve. Strategies by which existing mechanisms can be utilized, such as appeals to “soft law” or “naming and shaming” are ultimately weak, especially when invoked during a global recession, and there are no spaces for priorities to be set

by those who suffer deprivations. These gaps leave no real way to hold rich countries accountable for their financial commitments or poor countries to their obligations to act in earnest.

Even the Integrated Implementation Framework, created in 2012 to improve transparency and accountability in relation to Goal 8 by tracking international and national compliance, has no disciplinary capacity when a country fails to comply with its commitments. This framework is in stark contrast to the strong horizontal accountability governing commercial or security relations between states. The lack of achievement even of the moderate targets comprising Goal 8 is thus predictable: declining aid (despite a globally agreed target of 0.7% of national income for overseas development assistance); lack of any comprehensive mechanism for reducing the chronic and crippling debt facing poor countries; continuing inequity in multilateral trade and financial arrangements; inadequate access to medicines for some of the most needy populations; and a substantial access gap in communications technologies (MDG Gap Task Force 2012).

Based on this analysis, it is tempting to conclude that the global partnership at the core of the MDG model “singularly lacks vision, bark and bite” (Saith 2006). However, a shift toward a human rights paradigm and away from a traditional “development” approach could reorient the MDGs in such a way as to maintain its strengths and moderate its weaknesses (Alston 2005; Nelson 2007; OHCHR 2008). Legal, institutional, and political mechanisms that define, facilitate, and enforce human rights are certainly not without their problems, but they have both discursive and instrumental value in relation to accountability. They allow for a reframing of development as something that impoverished people and communities can claim as their due, instead of a voluntary charity from those who are well-off or more powerful. Such a shift in thinking also foregrounds accountability for outcomes, rather than focusing simply on aid flows.

Rights-based development explicitly involves democratic inclusion at its root; such inclusion is vital, not only to produce effective poverty-alleviation policies, but as an end in itself. Human rights—civil, political, economic, social, and cultural—sit uneasily with the top-

down, technocratic character of the MDG model, which treats poor populations as if they are incapable of participating effectively in development design and implementation. Spaces for participation and redress, such as commissions and courts that explicitly address human rights, are more compelling mechanisms for protecting vulnerable populations and monitoring outcomes than moral appeals to commitments, as can be seen with the use of “social guarantees” to guide policies (World Bank 2007; Haglund and Aggarwal 2011).

As 2015 approaches, and poverty and inequality stubbornly persist, it is time to think more seriously about the wider political economy within which the poor are situated, as well as new mechanisms to ensure that duty holders account for their role in maintaining and perpetuating deprivation. There are enough resources here to sustain us all. Achieving a more just allocation of those resources requires, at minimum, a commitment to basic human rights.

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## After the MDGs, What? Constructing a Post-2015 Learning Goal

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Today, two years before the deadline when they are due to be achieved, some are hailing the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as among the most successful of all the goals. For the most part, however, that is not the view of international education experts, particularly those in the international development community. These experts argue that the low bar established for the education MDGs has resulted in a sharp decrease in the quality of education in countries with the farthest to go to meet those goals. For the last seven years a small group within the international development community has self-consciously set about establishing a better quality indicator for primary education. As international discussions for the post-2015 development agenda began in 2011 and regional and national discussions are in process, education experts were marshalling their epistemic community to ensure not just that a new global learning goal is on that agenda, but that education quality is integral to that goal and measured in a specific way. This process involves professionals—not nation-states—enacting in innovative ways what institutionalist scholars have called world culture (Boli 1999) or world society (Meyer 2009). This essay explores the process these education experts in international development organizations have used to shape

global discourse and perhaps future global goals for education, around a particular quantitative indicator of quality.

Discourse about the MDGs and a post-2015 agenda takes place largely in meetings, conferences, and reports organized by international development organizations, largely funded but not controlled by nation-states. The origins of these organizations lie in discourse in the 1950s that something like a Marshall Plan—massive transfers of funds at low or no interest used to rebuild Europe after World War II—might bring about rapid socio-economic development in newly independent countries, i.e., international development. This discourse was formalized in meetings and conferences and eventually became institutionalized in a field of organizations to carry out international development activities. Today, this field includes UN agencies, the World Bank and regional development banks, bilateral and regional governmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and for-profit consulting firms. Within this field, education constitutes an essential element (Meyer 1977), but it has proved difficult to operationalize within the time and resource constraints of existing international development organizations (Chabbott 2003).

Beginning in the 1960s, the number of these organizations and the complexity of their work increasingly demanded specialized knowledge from the civil and international public servants, the scientific experts, and the relief and volunteer workers who staffed them. This demand contributed to the formation of an international development profession. Typical of professionals throughout the modern world, international development professionals construct their role not just as agents of the funders, but as principals who educate and advise governments about optimal courses of action, given the scientific, administrative and implementation limitations of both the field and its donors. Some of these professionals have become “norm entrepreneurs,” motivated by ideals such as poverty eradication, using the organizations they work in as platforms for furthering those ideals (Finnemore 1998). Others are “message entrepreneurs,” who may be equally idealistic but whose work is largely motivated by the interests of the organizations for which they work (Fukuda-Parr 2011).

Within the organizational field of international development, the logical place to develop education MDGs would be the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which holds a mandate from the UN to coordinate international activities around education. In the 1950s, however, UNESCO became a major battleground in the Cold War between the capitalist First World and the communist Second World. Later in the 1970s, it also was a prime venue where less industrialized countries that refused to align with either First or Second World, designating themselves the Third World, could set the agenda and the tone. The education agenda developed in UNESCO, therefore, tended to be aspirational and focused on the interests of the Third World. For both of these reasons, major donors in the First World—largely from the Anglophone capitalist world including the US, the UK, Australia but also the World Bank—refused to fund UNESCO at a level commensurate with its mandate and, for decades at a time, decamped to other venues to discuss education and development (Jones 1990). Thus, for the last 30 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, First World donors, represented by international development organizations, convened and built consensus on education and development in conferences and reports outside UN

venues.

The Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development was one such venue and in 1998, it was there professionals from major donors formulated the prototype for the MDGs, i.e., the International Development Goals. According to Hulme (2009), norm “messengers” like Jan Vandemoortele of the UNDP, helped to identify the most “realistic” goals embedded in recent UN conferences and declarations and to express them in succinct, compelling language. Predictably, their formulation was more acceptable to donors than to the Third World or to sector experts. The “realistic” goal for education, for example, sets aside multiple goals and targets covering all levels of education as declared at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) and its follow-up forums. Instead, the education MDG addresses one level with one target—universal primary education completion by 2015—and adds another goal relating to gender equity in all levels. The MDG framers rationalized that completion and enrollment were prerequisites for all other educational achievement and that primary school completion was one of the more readily available indicators in the countries with the farthest to go to meet the education MDGs (Vandemoortele 2011).

For education experts, however, the potential for this goal to cause harm had been clear for over a decade (Fuller 1989). Most countries could indeed raise primary school enrollments and completion quickly by relaxing standards and by offering student stipends and school feeding. At the same time, few countries could counteract the overcrowding, poor instruction, and general decline in quality that resulted from such policies. Historically, declines in school quality were harder to measure than primary school completion rates. At the beginning of the 2000s, several major donors in primary education—the UK Department of International Development, UNICEF, the US Agency for International Development, the World Bank—commissioned new sector evaluations and meta-analyses of existing evaluations to examine decades of investments. These evaluations found little impact of educational aid programs. Evaluators pointed to the absence of quality and impact indicators in the project designs as an important reason for the lack of an effect, spurring a search for such

indicators.

International development professionals had begun experimenting with quicker, better, cheaper measures of primary education quality in the early 2000s. In Niger in 2004, using quick oral reading fluency tests, World Bank evaluators discovered that in schools close to the capital, where earlier documents claimed that “schooled children surpassed ‘all major outcome targets,’ none of the students were functionally literate.”<sup>1</sup> Subsequent work in Peru by the World Bank and the Research Triangle Institute (RTI)<sup>2</sup> found only slightly less drastic learning gaps and provided an opportunity to further refine oral reading fluency tests (Abadzi 2005). Eventually, they and education experts in other international organizations developed and tested a battery of oral fluency tests that established high levels of validity and reliability and were easy to adapt to various low-resource settings (Gove 2011). Such tests were by no means new to domestic and international educators, but adapting them quickly and implementing them systematically and rigorously was well-received by international development organizations eager to frame their activities as based on scientific evidence rather than politics (Ferguson 1990).

Professionals in international development organizations began incorporating these Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA) in policy papers and projects in developing countries, using them as “dipsticks” or indicators of the overall health of primary education systems and also for continuous assessment at the individual and classroom level.<sup>3</sup> Since much of the funding for this work was public, the professionals involved went to some lengths to publicize and encourage others to undertake and improve EGRA. An English version of a toolkit for designing and implementing EGRA appeared on a public website in 2009; French and Spanish versions followed shortly.

As early innovators diffused among organizations, they gathered and disseminated scientific evidence for the new measure. In 2006, for example, one of the early innovators at the World Bank published a book that provided scientific justification for the new early reading approaches (Abadzi 2006), US Agency for International Development (USAID) published its first report on early grades reading (Chabbot 2006), and a small workshop

brought together professionals involved in new reading initiatives with international cognitive scientists of international repute. Subsequent meetings in 2008 and 2010 drew hundreds of participants, including officials from countries undertaking new, externally funded reading projects and also non-governmental organizations (NGOs) piloting early grades reading interventions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. At these and other meetings, EGRA proponents stuck to their narrative: reading was something that policy makers and parents in all countries should expect from their primary schools; improving reading was as simple as measuring it, well within the capacity of the weakest teachers in the weakest school systems; children who learned more would drop out less; and improvements in learning could be effected and measured at reasonable cost within the 3-5 year duration of a conventional education project.

Most of the buzz around reading was in organizations working in the Anglophone and Francophone First World, where languages that were relatively difficult to learn to read had led to much research on reading. However in 2008, UNESCO commissioned a report, *Learning Counts*, and convened a meeting on how learning might be better constructed and measured (Bernard 2009). Following the workshop, UNESCO commissioned a report on learning assessments from the International Literacy Institute, which devoted several chapters to early reading and EGRA. In 2010, the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI), the major multi-lateral funder of the education MDG, incorporated early reading into the “Indicative Framework” used to determine whether recipient countries were making adequate progress towards universal primary school completion to warrant further funding. In early 2011, in part to address concerns that the early reading assessments were emanating from a small number of organizations and professionals, the Fast Track Initiative convened an international panel of psychometricians, child psychologists, to establish which set of early reading assessments would be used to measure the effectiveness of their programs. To address interest in a broader curriculum, RTI developed an Early Grades Mathematics Assessment parallel to EGRA.

In 2009, RTI staff drew a direct line between the call for a “Millennium Learning Goal” (Filmer 2006) and the

evolving EGRA and EGMA work (Crouch 2009). Over the next two years, early reading featured prominently in new education strategies of the largest donors and many countries, the latter due in large part to the requirement of FTI's Indicative Framework. Over time, more pilot early reading interventions funded by the World Bank, USAID, the UK's Department for International Development, and the Hewlett Foundation were being evaluated using randomized, controlled trials, generating more policy-relevant evidence than other approaches (Gove 2011).

Finally in June 2011, the Global Compact on Learning, funded largely by U.S.-based philanthropies, such as the Hewlett and MacArthur Foundations, launched a campaign to ensure that a goal focused on early learning was incorporated in any post-2015 development agenda. The Compact established several Task Forces, including one on Learning Metrics, with the Internet allowing for participation by First World international development organizations, Third World research institutions, and NGOs based in the global South. This arrangement allows the Campaign to claim scientific legitimacy, active participation by the global South, and transparency, all strong norms in the international development field. Resistance comes largely from those who see its parallels to a discredited "Reading First" agenda in the US, its donor-driven origins, and its dissent from prior, more holistic global education agreements. But luck favors the well-prepared, world culture favors the "scientific", and politics favors compelling narratives. Therefore, as the UN began the first meetings on the post-2015 development agenda, "All Children Reading" is the leading contender for a new global learning goal.

## Endnotes

1. Helen Abadzi, personal communication, 3/23/2012.
2. RTI is a non-profit research institute based in North Carolina, founded in 1958, funded by its own endowment and contracts and grants from governmental and non-governmental organizations. Its first international project was in 1978 and it routinely competes for contracts and grants from international organizations such as USAID and the World Bank.

<http://www.rti.org/page.cfm?obj=E4550DC8-C1E5-4A9D-A4EFB3CF60379343>

3. For a complete list of assessments see <https://www.eddataglobal.org/documents/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&id=188>

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## Women, Gender, and the MDGs

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"...we were concerned with the social and economic status of the majority of our members, who were poor, rural women. We worried about their access to clean water and firewood, how they would feed their children, pay their school fees, and afford clothing, and we wondered what we could do to ease their burdens... This was not a remote problem for us. The rural areas were where our mothers and sisters still lived. We owed it to them to do all we could." (Maathai 2006: 124)

2004 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Wangari Maathai helped to publicize the crucial role that women play in development around the world. One measure of the success of international women's movements is that the Millennium Development Goals explicitly and implicitly place gender at the center of

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development. However, the Goals insufficiently address the deeply gendered patterns of social organization that affect the status of women. In focusing on measurable outcomes, the Goals leave aside questions about how to restructure gender relations.

Undoubtedly, achieving the MDGs, or even making progress on them, could improve women's status. Explicitly, the third MDG—Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women—seeks to achieve equality between boys and girls at all levels of education, increase the share of women in non-agricultural wage employment, and increase the proportion of national parliamentarians who are women. The fifth MDG calls for a reduction in maternal mortality by three quarters and

for universal access to reproductive health. Implicitly, achieving the remaining MDGs will require attention to gender as well. Women tend to be disproportionately affected by poverty and hunger, environmental degradation, and now HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, women are most often tasked with rearing healthy, properly socialized and adequately nourished children.

But the Millennium Development Goals are far from perfect with respect to gender. Even while claiming to challenge the neoliberal prescription of one path to development through economic growth, the Goals still fit neatly into economies that have been structured along neoliberal lines. Although increasing the number of women in paid employment moves toward the third goal and helps meet a target of the first goal (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger), this prescription allows the UN and member countries to sidestep acknowledging the tremendous amount of back-breaking, life-threatening, species-sustaining, **unpaid** work that women do. Many or most women around the world are still holding up their “half the sky” without formal recognition that can be measured in take-home pay.

Certainly, a first step to meaningful, paid work is education. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012 highlights the fact that, in the world as a whole, almost as many girls are in school as boys. When girls break educational gender barriers and gain access to primary school, they are more likely to get to the last grade than boys in almost 80% of the reporting countries. Women’s access to paid employment, however, is improving more slowly than their educational success. In no region do women work in the non-agricultural sector at the same levels as men. One interesting problem that the societies and the international community will face in the not too distant future is a bevy of literate, educated, and empowered women who continue to be shut out of paid employment, especially if the global recession continues.

Even when women *are* in productive employment, too often such work is gender-typed. The subtitle of Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild’s acclaimed *Global Woman* paints the grim picture that illustrates what awaits too many women in paid employment: they can be “Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy.” Is this what the UN has in mind when it talks about “full and productive employment and decent work for all”? And, as Naila Kabeer (2005) points out, women are rarely able to renegotiate the gendered division of labor at home once they transition into paid employment. In many places, the burden of household labor and raising younger children must be transferred to older girl-children still

at home. This, of course, conflicts directly with the third MDG of achieving universal primary education, and may in fact come back to hinder progress toward the gender empowerment goal if girls are kept home while their mothers work long hours.

Unfortunately, women still pay the price for those who feel threatened by their progress and status. Anywhere from 60 million to 110 million females are “missing” from the world today. We must pay greater attention to the (un)lived reality of gender discrimination that starts at an early age (or in utero) (Sen 2003) and continues throughout adulthood. Many still see women’s empowerment as so threatening that they are willing to attack and kill for it. While the world may have nearly achieved gender parity in primary education, as of this writing 14-year-old Malala Yousufzai is slowly recovering after being shot along with two of her classmates for publicly advocating for girls’ education, and criticizing the Taliban in Pakistan.

### **Conflict, Foreign Aid and Gender**

The MDG progress monitors are not well-equipped to take into account social, ethnic, and religious conflicts that lead some to terrorize girls like Malala into maintaining the status quo. Consider the eighth MDG: “Develop a Global Partnership for Development,” which includes increasing, and more effectively distributing, foreign aid. I want to discuss here the experience of the United States in Afghanistan as related to ending gender discrimination and promoting gender equality. While war takes a terrible toll on populations, including women, countries with a recent history of armed conflict often experience changing gender norms, as traditional gender roles are temporarily nullified or shed during social and political upheaval (Paxton and Hughes 2007).

The official stance of the United States has been a strong commitment to women’s rights in Afghanistan. In fact, President George W. Bush himself made liberating Afghani women a top priority as he rallied support from the public and Congress for the war. On November 17, 2001, in the lead up to the invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. State Department released a report containing quotes from Taliban officials who are generally in agreement that women are, at best, second class beings (not exactly citizens), and quotes from Afghani people, including a poem by Zieba Shorish-Shamley, written for the anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. A line from the poem goes, “They made me invisible, shrouded and non-being/A shadow, no existence, made silent and unseeing.” Now after more than 10 years of war, reconciliation and rebuilding, what is the state of Afghani women?

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) reports that since 2002, it has spent \$7.9 billion on development assistance in Afghanistan—a tiny fraction of the cost of the war and rebuilding, but still a significant amount of money. From 2002–2007, USAID reports spending 19% of its budget on education, health and food assistance, which are likely the areas that most directly affected women, followed by another 6% on Democracy and Governance/Civil Society. As a share of the aid budget, health, education, and food assistance fell to 14% in 2008 and 10% in 2009.

Does this budget contraction on social programs suggest that during those years gender equality made such great strides that the money was not necessary anymore? Between 2004 (when Afghanistan signed on to the MDGs) and 2010, the ratio of girls-to-boys in primary school climbed 57%, from 4 girls for every 10 boys enrolled to about 7 girls for every 10 boys. In secondary school, the climb was from 2 girls for every 10 boys to 5 girls for every 10 boys. Given the fact that girls are routinely attacked with acid, grenades, fists, and threats on their way to and from school, we should probably take these increased enrollments as something close to a miracle. Afghani women have not made as many gains in wage employment outside the agricultural sector. Less than 20% of women are employed for wages. Perhaps surprisingly, women make up about a quarter of national parliamentarians since 2006; less surprising, though, when we note that 68 out of 249 seats are constitutionally held for women.

In terms of health, maternal mortality has fallen by 54% between 2005 and 2010, but at 460 deaths for every 100,000 live births, Afghanistan still has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. The percent of births attended by skilled health personnel is now around one-third, which is problematic in a country where two-thirds of women get at least one antenatal care visit, and less than 20% get at least four visits. In such a conservative country as Afghanistan, unmet need for family planning remains unmeasured. Evidence suggests that women are interested in limiting their family size, considering that the average number of children in an Afghani household is six, with it not uncommon to have over 10 children. Half of the country's population is under 15, which will continue to put pressure on the fragile economy, and feed the militias (including the Taliban) with new boys for decades to come. The experience of Afghani women since 2001 is a mixed bag: women have made tremendous strides in health, education, and politics, but continue to face serious threats from entrenched patriarchy, poverty, and Taliban resurgence.

As we draw closer to 2015, the deadline set for most countries to achieve the MDGs, it is clear that we as a global community will fall short of our expectations. And as the United States begins drawing down troop levels and spending less on development in Afghanistan, women and girls will have to be even more heroic in their quest for education and empowerment. It is easy, and perhaps even comfortable, for sociologists to poke holes in the MDGs. But moving forward (and beyond 2015), we should work harder than ever to demonstrate what we know to be true: economic growth in the neoliberal tradition *may* be necessary for eventually reaching the Goals. But it will not be sufficient as long as gender, religious, ethnic and political power inequalities stay the same or grow worse, and it will not be sufficient in the face of violent conflict, both civil and international. We certainly have our work cut out for us.

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Michael Blain. 2012. *Power, Discourse, and Victimhood Ritual in the War on Terror*. Williston, VT: Ashgate Publishers. [www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409436058](http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409436058)

Blending concepts from ‘dramatism’ such as ‘victimhood ritual’ with Foucault’s approach to modern power and knowledge regimes, this book presents a novel and illuminating perspective on political power and domination resulting from the global war on terrorism. With attention to media sources and political discourse within the context of the global war on terror, the author draws attention to the manner in which power elites construct scapegoats by way of a victimhood ritual, thus providing themselves with a political pretext for extending their power and authority over new territories and populations, as well as legitimating an intensification of domestic surveillance and social control.

Christopher Bonastia. 2012. *Southern Stalemate: Five Years without Public Education in Prince Edward County, Virginia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

In 1959, Virginia’s Prince Edward County closed its public schools rather than obey a court order to desegregate. For five years, black children were left to fend for themselves while the courts decided if the county could continue to deny its citizens public education. Investigating this remarkable and nearly forgotten story of local, state, and federal political confrontation, Christopher Bonastia recounts the test of wills that pitted resolute African Americans against equally steadfast white segregationists in a battle over the future of public education in America. Beginning in 1951 when black high school students protested unequal facilities and continuing through the return of whites to public schools in the 1970s and 1980s, Bonastia describes the struggle over education during the civil rights era and the human suffering that came with it, as well as the inspiring determination of black residents to see justice served. Artfully exploring the lessons of the Prince Edward saga, *Southern Stalemate* unearths new insights about the evolution of modern conservatism and the politics of race in America.

Dan Breznitz and Michael Murphree. 2011. *Run of the Red Queen: Government, Innovation, Globalization, and Economic Growth in China*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

*British International Studies Association Susan Strange Best Book Award (2012)*

Breznitz and Murphree argue that “China shines by keeping its industrial-production and service industries in perfect tandem with the technological frontier. Like the Red Queen, it runs as fast as possible in order to remain at the cusp of the global technology frontier without actually advancing the frontier itself” (p. 3). Breznitz and Murphree contend that in a global system of fragmented production China (and other emerging economies) should not look to become technological innovators if the national aim is widely distributed wealth and sustained prosperity; keeping up is lucrative in terms of sustainable economic growth and, as they point out, already plenty difficult to do. Their study explodes what they see to be the “techno-fetishism of novelty,” an “obsessive focus on novel-product innovation or new technologies,” which results in misguided policies that “lust after innovation, believing it to be the key to resolving all economic-development issues” (p. 13). *Run of the Red Queen* takes on this technonationalist hype, particularly in the developing world, by demonstrating how tremendously high-risk growing a novelty-centered knowledge economy can be, and how much economic value – measured in terms of profits, employment, investment – can be accrued by *not* being world innovators. Chinese firms have learned how to take advantage of an increasingly globalized and fragmented production networks. This model, they argue is against the declared wish of the central government, and hence, the book also advances a theory based on structured uncertainty and the political economy of center-local relations to process trace the evolution of the Red Queen Run model in China’s innovation economy.

Nancy J. Davis and Robert V. Robinson. 2012. *Claiming Society for God: Religious Movements and Social Welfare in Egypt, Israel, Italy, and the United States*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. [www.iupress.indiana.edu/catalog/155715](http://www.iupress.indiana.edu/catalog/155715)

Across the world today, religiously orthodox (what some would call “fundamentalist”) movements of Christians, Jews, and Muslims have converged on a common

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strategy to install their own brand of faith at the center of societies and states they regard as alarmingly secularized. While many scholars, political observers, and world leaders, especially since 9/11, see this shared line of attack as involving armed struggle or terrorism, *Claiming Society for God* shows that the strategy-in-common of the most prominent and successful religiously orthodox movements is not violence, but a patient, under-the-radar effort to infiltrate and subtly transform civil society that the authors call “bypassing the state.” Telling the stories of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Sephardi Torah Guardians or Shas in Israel, Comunione e Liberazione in Italy, and the Salvation Army in the U.S, Davis and Robinson show how, one institution at a time, these movements are building massive, grassroots networks of religion-based social service agencies, hospitals and clinics, clubs, rotating credit societies, schools, charitable organizations, worship centers, and businesses—networks that are already being called states within states, surrogate states, or parallel societies. Bypassing the state, rather than directly confronting it, allows these movements to quietly accomplish their theological, cultural, and economic agendas across the nation, address local needs not being met by the state, and establish a broad base of popular support that some of them use to push their agendas in the arena of party politics. This bottom-up, entrepreneurial strategy is not mere reformism or accommodation to the state; it is aimed at nothing less than making religion the cornerstone of society.

G. William Domhoff. 2013. *The Myth of a Liberal Ascendancy: Corporate Domination from the Great Depression to the Great Depression*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

This book examines power conflicts in the United States from the late 1930s to the present through the policy statements, memoranda of dissent, and archives of the corporate moderates who formed the Committee for Economic Development in 1942 and played a key role in developing the framework for an international economy and supporting government social programs for low-income people, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, all the while resisting unions and blaming inflation on unions due to unfair contract settlements. The book began as an attempt to understand the conservative turn in American public policy that apparently began in the mid-1970s. Research

for the background chapters gradually led to the conclusion that American public policy has been moving rightward since 1939, with slight interruptions due to World War II, the Korean War, and the movements of the 1960s. With the partial exception of Medicare, the liberal-labor alliance lost on every piece of major legislation that came before Congress after 1938. The conclusions in this book are compared with the wistful new conventional wisdom that the right turn occurred because poorly coordinated corporate elites finally got fed up and organized the mighty Business Roundtable, while at the same time personally lobbying members of Congress, hiring Washington representatives, and spending more money on campaign finance. Although the book makes an empirical case for postwar corporate dominance, it does not use this conclusion to support any particular theory, so Grand Theorists of all persuasions can make of it what they will.

Halfmann, Drew. 2011. *Doctors and Demonstrators: How Political Institutions Shape Abortion Law in the United States, Britain and Canada*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2012 Charles Tilly Best Book Award, Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements of the American Sociological Association

Jerome Hodos. 2011. *Second Cities: Globalization and Local Politics in Manchester and Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Urban History Association's Kenneth Jackson Award (best book, 2011)

*Second Cities* analyzes how Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Manchester, England have engaged with multiple dimensions of globalization over the past two centuries. Rather than being marginalized, both cities have long been active participants in global society. But they are not just global cities in miniature; they exemplify the second city as a historical alternative to the “global city” path. Philadelphia and Manchester display strikingly similar patterns of integration into global economic, migratory and cultural flows. For example, the book uses an innovative database of foreign direct investment to track both cities' involvement in the global economy, particularly in manufacturing but (different from global cities) not in international finance. The two cities likewise exhibit patterns of cultural production and migrant settlement that are similar to each other

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but distinct from those of global cities. Both city governments also employed “municipal foreign policy” to act on their own behalf in search of greater global prominence and recognition. They repeatedly built new transportation infrastructure to enhance their global connections, and also elaborated a specifically second city urban identity through cultural planning projects. The analysis of urban development over a broad time frame thus offers lessons for policy makers, scholars, and community leaders concerned with the urban impact of globalization. The second city offers a lens through which to view other urban centers, from Atlanta to Bangalore, Seattle, and Turin.

Stephen Kalberg. 2012. *Max Weber's Comparative-Historical Sociology Today: Major Themes, Mode of Causal Analysis, and Applications*. Williston, VT: Ashgate Publishing. <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409432234>

Bringing together the author's major scholarly work on Weber over the last 30 years, offering a rich examination of the major themes in his sociology alongside a reconstruction of his mode of analysis and application of his approach, this book will appeal to scholars around the world with interests in social theory, German and American societies, cultural sociology, political sociology, the sociology of knowledge, comparative-historical sociology and the sociology of civilizations.

Holly McCammon. 2012. *The U.S. Women's Jury Movements and Strategy Adaptation: A More Just Verdict*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

When women won the vote in the United States in 1920, they were still routinely barred from serving as jurors. But they began a vigorous campaign for a place in the jury box. This book tells the story of how women mobilized in 15 states to change jury laws so that women could gain this additional citizenship right. Some of these jury campaigns were successful quickly; others took substantially longer. The book reveals that when women strategically adapted their tactics to the broader political environment, they were able to speed up the pace of jury reform, while less strategic movements took longer. A comparison of the more strategic women's jury movements with those that were less strategic shows that the more strategic movements built coalitions with other women's groups, took advantage of political opportunities, had more past experience in seeking legal reforms, and confronted tensions and even conflict within their ranks all in ways that bolstered their strategic action.

This volume helps us understand how social movement actors can win substantial political reforms.

Thomas Medvetz. 2012. *Think Tanks in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo13181062.html>

Over the past half-century, think tanks have become fixtures of American politics, supplying advice to presidents and policymakers, expert testimony on Capitol Hill, and convenient facts and figures to journalists and media specialists. But what are think tanks? Who funds them? And just how influential have they become? In *Think Tanks in America*, Thomas Medvetz argues that the unsettling ambiguity of the think tank is less an accidental feature of its existence than the very key to its impact. By combining elements of more established sources of public knowledge—universities, government agencies, businesses, and the media—think tanks exert a tremendous amount of influence on the way citizens and lawmakers perceive the world, unbound by the more clearly defined roles of those other institutions. In the process, they transform the government of this country, the press, and the political role of intellectuals. Timely, succinct, and instructive, this provocative book will force us to rethink our understanding of the drivers of political debate in the United States.

Ellen Reese. 2011. *They Say Cut Back, We Say Fight Back: Welfare Activism in an Era of Retrenchment*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

In *They Say Cutback, We Say Fight Back*, Ellen Reese offers a timely review of welfare reform and its controversial design, now sorely tested in the aftermath of the Great Recession. The book also chronicles the largely untold story of a new grassroots coalition that opposed the law and continues to challenge and reshape its legacy. While most accounts of welfare policy highlight themes of race, class and gender, *They Say Cutback* examines how welfare recipients and their allies contested welfare reform from the bottom-up. Using in-depth case studies of campaigns in Wisconsin and California, Reese argues that a crucial phase in policymaking unfolded after the bill's passage. As counties and states set out to redesign their welfare programs, activists scored significant victories by lobbying officials at different levels of American government through media outreach, protests and organizing. Such efforts tended to enjoy more success when based on broad coalitions that cut across race and class, drawing together a shifting alliance of immigrants, public sector unions,

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feminists, and the poor. The book tracks the tensions and strategies of allies brought together by their opposition to four major aspects of welfare reform: immigrants' benefits, welfare-to-work policies, privatization of welfare agencies, and child care services. Success in scoring reversals was uneven and subject to local demographic, political and institutional factors.

Jackie Smith, Scott Byrd, Ellen Reese, & Elizabeth Smythe, editors. 2012. *Handbook on World Social Forum Activism*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

The World Social Forums began in 2001 as a civil society countersummit to the World Economic Forum, an annual gathering of global corporate and political elite that shapes global economic policies. Since then they have become the main focal point for a diverse array of movements and associations advancing alternative visions of globalization. The World Social Forum *process* encompasses a variety of meetings and networking activities taking place around the world at local, national, regional, and global levels. United by a belief that "Another world is possible," World Social Forum activists are engaging in a massive global experiment to bring about a more democratic and just world. Social Forums held at multiple levels from local to global help connect activists in an increasingly dense network of advocates for radical social change. They have mobilized hundreds of thousands of people and may be one of the most important political developments of our time. The Forums' overlapping networks link conversations across vast distances as well as over time, allowing unprecedented learning and sharing across movements and across continents. *Handbook of World Social Forum Activism* brings together leading scholars from North America and Europe to offer comparative and longitudinal analyses of the World Social Forum process. Succinct chapters offer lessons and insights on this important global movement drawing from a variety of innovative research methods. The collection documents and contributes to the ongoing process of reflection and learning from World Social Forum experiences and is accessible to activists, students, and scholars alike.

Jackie Smith and Dawn Wiest. 2012. *Social Movements in the World System: The Politics of Crisis and Transformation*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Global crises such as rising economic inequality, volatile financial markets, and devastating climate change illustrate the

defects of a global economic order controlled largely by transnational corporations, wealthy states, and other elites. As the impacts of such crises have intensified, they have generated a new wave of protests extending from the countries of the Middle East and North Africa throughout Europe, North America, and elsewhere. This new surge of resistance builds upon a long history of transnational activism as it extends and develops new tactics for pro-democracy movements acting simultaneously around the world. In *Social Movements in the World-System*, Jackie Smith and Dawn Wiest build upon theories of social movements, global institutions, and the political economy of the world-system to uncover how institutions define the opportunities and constraints on social movements, which in turn introduce ideas and models of action that help transform social activism as well as the system itself.

### ARTICLE ABSTRACTS

Paul D. Almeida. 2012. "Subnational Opposition to Globalization." *Social Forces* 90(4): 1051-1072.

Using a unique dataset on the geographic distribution of reported protest events from local sources, the study explains the variation in community-level mobilization in response to neoliberal reforms in two countries in the global periphery. Building on insights from macro, cross-national studies of protests related to market reforms, this article highlights local structural conditions that more likely generate popular contention in poorer countries. Count regression models show that localities with greater levels of state and community infrastructure (highways, administrative offices, universities, NGOs and local chapters of oppositional parties) were associated with heightened collective action opposing the privatization of health care and public utilities. These state and community infrastructures were shaped by national contexts in the era of state-led development preceding the current epoch of accelerated globalization.

Colin J. Beck, Gili S. Drori, and John W. Meyer. 2012. "World Influences on Human Rights Language in Constitutions: A Cross-National Study." *International Sociology* 27(4): 483-501.

A recent movement has extended previous emphases on the rights of national citizens by asserting the global human rights of all persons. This article describes the extent to which this change is reflected in the language of national constitutions

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around the world. Human rights language – formerly absent from almost all constitutions – now appears in most of them. Rather than characterizing developed or democratic states, human rights language is, first, especially common in countries most susceptible to global influences. Second, human rights language is driven by the extent of the international human rights regime at the time of a constitution's writing. Third, human rights language tends to appear in newer constitutions and in the constitutions of emergent and reorganized states. National constitutions are imprinted with global social conditions, which now stress the discourse of human rights.

Eric Bonds. 2012. "Indirect Violence and Legitimation: Torture, Surrogacy, and the U.S. War on Terror." *Societies without Borders* 7: 264-294.

This paper contributes to the sociological study of legitimation, specifically focusing on the state legitimation of torture and other forms of violence that violate international normative standards. While sociologists have identified important discursive techniques of legitimation, this paper suggests that researchers should also look at state practices where concerns regarding legitimacy are "built in" to the very practice of certain forms of violence. Specifically, the paper focuses on surrogacy, through which powerful states may direct or benefit from the violence carried out by client states or other armed groups while at the same time attempting to appear separate from and blameless regarding any resulting human rights violations. The utility of this concept is demonstrated in case studies of torture in the U.S. "War on Terror," examining the policy of extraordinary rendition and U.S. policy regarding Iraqi-state torture during its occupation of that nation. The case studies are developed from analyses of human rights reports, leaked military documents from U.S. soldiers in the Iraq War, and U.S. newspaper and television coverage.

Paolo Parigi and Laura Sartorib. 2012. The political party as a network of cleavages: Disclosing the inner structure of Italian political parties in the seventies. *Social Networks* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2012.07.005>

Building on two established perspectives on the political party, in this paper we view the party as an organized network of formal and informal relationships between individuals that reflects national cleavages. We test this interpretation using two

Italian parties of the 1970s that played major roles in shaping political and social life of the country: the Christian Democrats, or DC, and the Communists, or PCI. The 1970s saw the culmination of the DC and PCI's two-party dominance of the Italian state. Further, it was during this same period that the economic and social contradictions of Italy's tumultuous post-World War II process of industrialization became apparent, making social cleavages easy to grasp. We use cosponsoring of bills between parliamentary members as a measure of formal and informal relationships within each party. We deem this appropriate in the context of a pure proportional electoral system and highly polarized audiences. Data comes from the lower chamber of the Parliament during the Sixth Legislative cycle (1972–1977). We use HLM to model dyadic interactions between MPs and distinguish between repeated cosponsoring of bills (strong ties) and single occurrences of cosponsoring (weak ties). Our results show that within each party, national cleavages significantly increased the likelihood of strong ties but were not relevant in structuring weak ties. We conclude that the party has an internal structure made of a network of MPs informed by external social cleavages and held together by the common goal of being reelected.

Sadia Saeed. 2012. "Political Fields and Religious Movements: The Exclusion of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan." *Political Power and Social Theory* 23: 189-223.

This paper examines the Pakistani state's shift from the accommodation to exclusion of the heterodox Ahmadiyya community, a self-defined minority sect of Islam. In 1953, the Pakistani state rejected demands by a religious movement that Ahmadis be legally declared non-Muslim. In 1974 however the same demand was accepted. This paper argues that this shift in the state's policy towards Ahmadis was contingent on the distinct political fields in which the two religious movements were embedded. Specifically, it points to conjunctures among two processes that defined state-religious movement relations: intra-state struggles for political power, and the framing strategies of religious movements vis-à-vis core symbolic issues rife in the political field. Consequently, the exclusion of Ahmadis resulted from the transformation of the political field itself, characterized by the increasing hegemony of political discourses referencing Islam, shift towards electoral politics and the refashioning of the religious movement through positing the "Ahmadi issue" as a national question pertaining to democratic norms.

## Abstracts

Sourabh Singh. 2012. "Unraveling the Enigma of Indira Gandhi's Rise in Indian Politics: A Woman Leader's Quest for Political Legitimacy." *Theory and Society* 41(5): 479-504.

This article employs Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital to explain how Indira Gandhi gained legitimacy in Indian politics. It reveals that, in spite of having belonged to the politically illustrious Nehru family, Gandhi suffered numerous indignities as a minister in the immediate post-Nehruvian period because the incumbent political elite at the time, the Syndicate, devalued the symbolic value of her family-name-based-capital of mass popularity. In the meantime, changes in the clientelistic relations between the landed and landless caste groups had created conditions for the failure of the Syndicate's claim that their capital of popularity among politicians was the symbolic capital of the Indian political field. Aware of social changes taking place in the countryside, Gandhi took advantage of her access to the symbolic power of the state offices to classify the landless caste groups as *garib* (poor) in order to defeat the Syndicate electorally. Having established her capital of popularity among the masses as the symbolic capital of the Indian political field, she cemented its status by using her control over ruling party leaders' access to state offices and simultaneously creating a new classification of a competent leader in the ruling party. This study contributes to the existing studies of leadership, especially leadership by women, and the legitimacy-gaining process by revealing the role of contest among the elite over the meaning of symbolic capital in creating or destroying their respective authority.

Anthony J. Spires. 2012. "Lessons from Abroad: Foreign Influences on China's Emerging Civil Society." *The China Journal*, no. 68: 125-146.

Over the past decade, a number of foreign grantmakers and international NGOs have funded, initiated and/or designed training programs that introduce their Chinese grantees to "best practices" in "NGO management". Drawing on several years of fieldwork, this article sheds light on the origins and lessons conveyed by two such "capacity-building" programs. Rather than being grounded in the actual, lived experience of Chinese civil society organizations and emerging organically from the bottom up, these programs are shown to reflect more accurately the concerns of foreign donors and the professionalized segment of the North American nonprofit world. The

article concludes by suggesting that, despite recurring Chinese suspicions of civil society as a new weapon of foreign imperialism, the structures and practices promoted by donors mesh well with state efforts to channel new social energies into predictable and governable organizational forms.

Julie Stewart. 2012. "Fiction over Facts: How Competing Narrative Forms Explain Policy in a New Immigration Destination." *Sociological Forum* 27 (3): 591-616. doi: 10.1111/j.1573-7861.2012.01337.x

U.S. immigration has changed dramatically in the last 20 years: immigrants have increasingly gravitated toward "new destinations" and a growing portion are undocumented. In the absence of federal comprehensive immigration reform, states are proposing a patchwork of laws. While some laws encourage immigrant integration, most seek restriction. To understand this trend, this article analyzes Utah as a new immigration destination, exploring its transformation from an inclusive to a restrictive state. It focuses on a major debate: whether to allow unauthorized residents legal driving privileges. Because Utah initiated this law earlier than most, it leads this debate. To explain its evolution, this article analyzes 10 years of legislative debates and articles published on this law. Building on the narrative studies literature, I find that both sides of the immigration debate utilized a public safety and well-being narrative. However, supporters of the driver license law relied on a "lower mimetic" narrative, characterized by logic and factual arguments. In contrast, their opponents wove a compelling, "apocalyptic" narrative to criticize the law. This narrative indelibly linked immigration to the dangers of crime and terrorism and thus paved the way for the passage of one of the most restrictive immigration laws in the United States.

Julie Stewart and Ken Jameson. 2012. "Interests Aren't Everything: An Exploration of Economic Explanations of Immigration Policy in Utah." *International Migration* July. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2012.00765.x.

Current debates around US immigration policy are playing out against a backdrop that has changed significantly in the past 20 years: immigrants have increasingly gravitated towards "new destinations"; a large and growing portion of immigrants are undocumented; and the federal vacuum in responding to the

## Abstracts

promise and problems of these new immigration trends has devolved policy to the states. As a result, we have seen innovation on the state level as policymakers seek to accommodate, welcome or resist immigration, with varying degrees of success. In this paper, we explore the case of Utah as a new immigration destination, seeking to understand its transformation from a state with very inclusive immigrant policies as late as 1999 to one currently adopting highly restrictive immigrant policies. To explain this trajectory, we test three prominent materialist theories of public policy: instrumentalism, structuralism and strategic-relational approaches. We draw on a decade's worth of primary data – including data on state-level legislation, key economic indicators, public statements concerning immigration from the private business sector and the LDS Church, and the editorial content of the state's two major newspapers regarding immigration – to examine the policy explanations that grow out of interest-based theories of the state. Whereas these theories provide robust explanations for a large and diverse array of public policies, we find that they fall short in explaining immigration policy. While conventional wisdom – and extensive scholarly research – suggests that economic interests drive policy, we find that the policies around immigrants challenge this economic reductionism, suggesting the need for more complex and ideational accounts of this important phenomenon.

Julie Stewart and Thomas Christian Quinn. 2012. "To Include or Exclude? A Comparative Study of State Laws on In-state Tuition for Undocumented Students in the U.S." *Texas Hispanic Journal of Law and Policy* 18: 107-177.

Against the backdrop of a national environment growing increasingly unwelcome to immigrants more generally – and undocumented immigrants in particular – our study seeks to shed light on one area of immigrant law relevant to between one and two million people: in-state tuition laws for undocumented students. Most of these students came here as young children and grew up as Americans; yet without the rights of citizenship, they do not qualify for resident tuition rates at public universities. Across the country, state legislatures are struggling

with this issue, some passing laws to facilitate educational access, even as others seek to block these students entirely. To help explain this variation, our study summarizes dominant social science theories of state-level immigrant laws, highlighting the role played by racial/ethnic concentration, partisan pressure and economic influence. Because none of these theories fully explain or predict the adoption or reversal of these laws, we offer an intimate study of this law's life course in Utah, a new immigration destination and a trailblazer in immigrant policy. Based on this case, we propose that a trinity of factors – demographic flows, political identities and civic coalitions – explain Utah's somewhat unusual stance on this issue. We then compare this explanation to the case studies of Illinois and South Carolina, two states that, respectively, feature some of the most welcoming – and most hostile – laws toward undocumented students. This article concludes by reminding readers that the uproar over illegal immigration is likely to get worse before it gets better. The activists, attorneys and lawmakers who are better able to understand the formation of immigration policy will almost certainly have the upper hand going forward.

Bin Xu. 2012. "Grandpa Wen: Scene and Political Performance." *Sociological Theory* 30:114-129.

This article remedies the divide in the theory of cultural performance between contingent strategy and cultural structure by bringing scene back in. Scene fuses components of performance and links local performance to macrolevel cultural structures and historical events. I theorize two conceptual elements: scene-act ratio and event-scene link. A scene creates an emotive context that demands consistent and timely performance; features of macrolevel events shape the emotive context of the scene. The two concepts can be deployed to explain variation in performance effectiveness. The theory is illustrated in a comparative study of Chinese leaders' empathetic performance in disasters.

## Political Sociology Section Announcements

### 2012 Political Sociology Section Award Winners

#### Book Award

**Committee:** *Seán Ó Riain (Chair), Bart Bonikowski, James Mahoney, Chris Rhomborg*

**Recipient:** Greta R. Krippner. 2011. *Capitalizing on Crisis: The Political Origins of the Rise of Finance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Greta Krippner's elegant and beautifully crafted book examines the political origins of financialization, one of the defining socio-economic processes of the contemporary era. Krippner argues that the roots of the US financial crisis lie in the unintended consequences of policymakers' ad hoc responses to the challenges posed by the economic crises in the 1970s. Liberalizing financial markets was initially seen as a political strategy that could discipline inflation and socio-political demands. To their surprise, policymakers soon discovered that financial deregulation and low interest rates resulted in precisely the opposite – a significant loosening of economic discipline. However, this unanticipated policy failure quickly proved attractive to them. Finance provided a new motor of economic growth, apparently resolving the growth crisis and distributional conflicts of the 1970s. Furthermore, the turn to finance offered the opportunity to depoliticize the political management of the economy. By acting under the cover of 'the market', policymakers believed they could manage socio-economic tensions while maintaining the appearance of an economy free from politics. Ultimately however, they relinquished control of the economy to financial markets, creating the conditions for the financialization that drove the capitalist economy into systemic crisis. Based on detailed analysis of official documents, hearings transcripts and interviews with key informants, this book adds significantly to our understanding of how the inner workings of the US state shaped the financialization of the economy. Even more fundamentally, it explores the dynamic interaction between politics and economy, showing how the interaction between the state and finance ultimately resulted in the abdication of politics in the face of 'the market' it had helped to create.

**Honorable Mention:** Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery. 2011. *Peasants Under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery provide a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the collectivization of Romanian agriculture, a dramatic and brutal project of social engineering. Through a detailed and nuanced account of the process of collectivization, the book explores how peasants were made into bureaucrats and rural communities were transformed by being subsumed under formal organizations. Drawing on a remarkable range of research sites and data, the analysis details the social technologies through which party cadres transformed persons into subjects and created new social divisions and authority relations. However, these processes also varied significantly by locality as cadres were often weak, poorly controlled from the centre and exercised their new power by inserting their practices into local idioms. Ironically, the bureaucratization of Romanian rural life produced a 'personalization' of power relations while the promotion of a unitary identity produced a 'divided personhood'. This is a rich account of the often mundane processes through which the Romanian state transformed communities, persons and ultimately itself. It greatly enriches our understanding of the processes of politics and of the 'political' itself.

#### Article Award

**Committee:** *Isaac Martin (Chair), Mabel Berezin, Celia Winkler, Cheol-Sung Lee*

The best article award committee received 23 submissions. After several rounds of deliberation we agreed upon two co-winners.

**Co-Recipient:** Anthony Spire. 2011. "Contingent Symbiosis and Civil Society in an Authoritarian State: Understanding the Survival of China's Grassroots NGOs." *American Journal of Sociology* 117(1): 1-45.

This article challenges Tocqueville's classic argument that civic associations encourage the development of democracy. In contemporary China, Professor Spire argues, this conventional Tocquevillian view has it backwards: many civic associations have developed in tacit collaboration with the authoritarian state. Professor Spire's extensive field work allows him to document the benefits that public officials derive from the unofficial toleration of unlicensed civic associations, and the reciprocal benefits that some of these civic associations derive from allowing the government to claim credit for their actions. The article shows that the relationships between civil society and authoritarian states are neither necessarily antagonistic, nor necessarily cooperative; they are contingent. But at least sometimes a vibrant *and illegal* civil society

## Political Sociology Section Announcements

can aid an authoritarian state by solving otherwise intractable problems of rule. This surprising and provocative conclusion may provoke a major rethinking of a central issue in political sociology: the social conditions that support dictatorship and democracy.

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

This article addresses a classic question in comparative political sociology: the origin and character of populist rule. By reconceptualizing populism as a form of political practice—instead of as an ideology, or a peculiar class coalition, or a specific form of government—Professor Jansen sheds new light on the trajectory of political regimes in twentieth century Latin America, and opens the door to new comparative studies with even broader application. Much of the confusion in the comparative sociology of populism is cleared up if we recognize that populist mobilization is a strategy that has been employed by various actors to various ends. Professor Jansen equips us to pursue an ambitious comparative research agenda: discovering the conditions under which populist mobilization takes place. Political sociologists will no doubt be pursuing this agenda for some time to come.

### Graduate Student Paper Award

**Committee:** Edward Walker (*chair*), Sarah Sobieraj, Kathleen Fallon, Jason Beckfield

The ASA Political Sociology Graduate Student Paper Award committee received 27 submissions from a diverse range of applicants. The committee was generally very impressed with the overall quality of the papers and saw considerable strengths in the submissions.

After a thorough evaluation and an extensive series of exchanges between the committee members, the committee selected the following submission as the award winner:

**Recipient:** Carly Knight, "A Voice but Not a Vote: The Case of Surrogate Representation and Social Welfare For Legal Noncitizens Since 1996"

The committee's voting members on this case found much to admire in this groundbreaking paper. On a conceptual level, the study examines a fundamental question about the political representation of noncitizens in advanced democratic welfare states. That is, how is representation possible for noncitizens despite

few channels of access and the absence of voting rights? The study addresses this question by examining variation across U.S. states in their willingness to extend eligibility of welfare benefits (through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF) to noncitizens in the wake of the 1996 welfare reform legislation, finding that twenty-one states took measures to extend benefits to noncitizens. The study also examines how six of these states, when faced with shifting political sentiments and/or resource constraints, later removed this benefit. Although Knight's QCA models make clear – as one might expect – that a state's liberalism was a major factor in whether it extended benefits to noncitizens, Knight's more consequential finding is that having a sizable representation of citizen co-ethnics in a state served both to promote the extension of benefits to noncitizens and also to thwart the threat of retrenchment. Thus, citizen co-ethnics help to provide "surrogate representation" to noncitizens both in terms of initial policymaking and also in the maintenance of the policy. We expect that this study will have a strong impact on a variety of debates not only within political sociology, but also in scholarship on immigration, social stratification, and ethnicity.

**Honorable Mention:** Christopher Gibson, "Making Redistributive Direct Democracy Matter: Development and Women's Participation in the Gram Sabhas of Kerala, India"

The committee was also impressed with this important study of Redistributive Direct Democracy in the *gram sabhas* of the Indian state of Kerala, which challenges existing theories of development that emphasize the role of parties in power, women in office, the capacity of the state, social capital, or expenditures by the state. Importantly, the study highlights the unique institution of the *gram sabhas* – institutions that give citizen participants the constitutional authority to engage directly in development activities typically reserved for state bureaucrats – which open important opportunities for women's political participation. Using a unique dependent measure of public goods that reflect redistributive development – the construction of local housing and latrines – the study shows that women's participation in direct democracy can have substantial effects on development. The committee was especially taken by Gibson's effort to collect systematic data on a stratified random sample of 72 local governments across Kerala. Consistent with the "Real Utopias" theme of the 2012 ASA meeting, this study offers concrete evidence of how democratic practices can realize social change, and is likely to reorient thinking about development, politics, and gender.

## Political Sociology Section Announcements

### Political Sociology Sessions for 2012 Annual Meeting

The Section will have six sessions at the 2012 Annual ASA Meetings in New York. 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: Media and Politics in the School Reform Movement: An Interactive Workshop

Session Organizer: **William Gamson, Boston College**

#### Open Session: The U.S. Corporate Community, Nonprofits, and Government: Do They Still Interlock?

This session will present a forum for network analyses of recent large-scale databases of American corporations (2002 to the present) and their links to nonprofits and/or government agencies, commissions, or advisory groups. Comparisons with studies using similar databases for the United States from the 1960s through the 1990s are welcomed, but they are not necessary.

Session Organizer: **G. William Domhoff, University of California, Santa Cruz**

#### Open Session: Global Land Grabbing and the Politics of Dispossession

Over the past ten years, there has been a massive rush to acquire land. Although reliable data is difficult to come by, multilateral organizations from Oxfam International to the World Bank estimate that the amount of land changing hands has increased tenfold just since 2008. Dubbed a global "land grab" by activists and the media, considerable research now suggests that land has become increasingly attractive as a long-term investment for both public (state) and private actors because of rising and volatile food prices, growing demand for meat, concerns about peak oil and the search for biofuel alternatives, and financial speculation. Although as many as three quarters of the land deals have not yet been put to production, there is evidence that local people and livelihoods are being displaced to make way for large-scale industrial production of so-called flex crops (crops that can serve as food, fuel and industrial inputs) for export. As such, the rise of global land deals demands a sociological perspective. We call for papers that analyze the broader political, economic and social transformations that have generated land deals as well as papers

that interrogate the implications of these deals for property, gender relations, inequality, governance, and political economy. How are land deals shaped by elite networks, bureaucratic design and divisions within national states? Who wins and who loses from land acquisitions and why? How do local contexts shape the land deals and why are they implemented in some places and not others? How are they being resisted and negotiated and who are the key actors?

Session Organizer: **Wendy Wolford, Cornell University**

#### Open Session: Global Inequality and the Politics of Climate Change

Global society is experiencing increasingly severe rifts between areas suffering the worst damages from climate change, such as in Eastern Africa, and areas where the damages are still on balance relatively moderate or even in some ways beneficial, such as in Canada or Russia. Over the coming decades, as climate change intensifies, the social victimization zones will expand and the benefit zones contract. National politics of climate change, around assuming the burdens of mitigating greenhouse gas outputs, differs greatly by location within these shifting victim and benefit zones. It seems that "all (climate change) politics is local," that globally oriented concerns are having a very weak impact, especially as the local economic costs of mitigation become more evident. This panel invites papers on the general theme of how national politics and international negotiations interact with inequalities in the damages produced by global climate change.

Session Organizer: **Jeffrey Broadbent, University of Minnesota**

#### Open Session: Political Sociology

Session Organizer: **Judith Stepan-Norris, University of California, Irvine**

#### Open Session: The Triad of States, Individuals, and Human Rights

(Co-sponsored with the Human Rights Section)

Session Organizers: **Davita Glasberg, University of Connecticut, and Theo Majka, University of Dayton**

#### Open Session: Political Sociology Section Roundtables

Session Organizer: **Ann Mische, Rutgers University**

## Political Sociology Section Announcements

### Call for Nominations: Political Sociology Section Awards 2012

#### Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship (Book) Award

This award is given annually to the outstanding recent book in political sociology (we will not consider edited books for this award). To be eligible, the book must have a 2012 copyright date. The selection committee encourages 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 short letter (via e-mail) nominating the book to each committee member below and 2) have a copy of the book sent to each committee member, at the addresses below. Winners will be notified and announced prior to the ASA meetings allowing presses to advertise the prize-winning book. The deadline for nominations is March 1, 2013.

Committee Chair:

**Mabel Berezin, Cornell University**

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Committee Members:

**Isaac Martin, University of California, San Diego**

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Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1382

**Kevin Leicht, University of Iowa**

kevin-leicht@uiowa.edu

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140 Seashore Hall

Iowa City, IA 52242

#### 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 2012 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. The deadline for nominations is March 15, 2013.

Committee Chair:

**Katy Fallon, McGill University**

kathleen.fallon@mcgill.ca

Committee Members:

**Edward Walker, University of California, Los Angeles**

walker@soc.ucla.edu

**Anthony Spires, Chinese University of Hong Kong**

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**Nathan Martin, Arizona State University**

ndm@asu.edu

#### 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 subsequently published as co-authored work. (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 addresses below. The deadline for nominations is March 15, 2012.

Committee Chair:

**Anne Costain, University of Colorado, Boulder**

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Committee Members:

**Catherine Lee, Rutgers University**

clee@sociology.rutgers.edu

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**Debbie Becher, Barnard College, Columbia University**

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## Interview with Article Award Recipient

# Robert Jansen

Interviewed by Shannon Golden  
University of Minnesota

Robert Jansen was a co-recipient of the Political Sociology Section's Article Award in 2012 for his article "Populist Mobilization: A New Theoretical Approach to Populism" (2011, *Sociological Theory* 29(2): 75-96). Jansen is currently an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Michigan.

*What motivated you to consider the topic of populist politics? How do you situate this work in your broader research agenda, both your past work and future research plans?*

RJ: I came to the study of populism through a broader interest in contentious politics. In particular, I've long been fascinated by the relationship between political practices, on the one hand, and the formation and dissolution of social identities and solidarities (whether based on nation, race/ethnicity, class, region, or political loyalty), on the other. It was this interest, for example, that motivated my earlier research into the uses of collective memory by Latin American revolutionary movements. And it was this interest that guided me as I considered a small handful of potential dissertation topics.

In the early 2000s, as Latin American politics seemed to be on the verge of a new turn to the left, many countries in the region had also recently seen what was being recognized as a revival of populism. Venezuela's Hugo Chávez was, of course, the prime example; but there were others as well. These contemporary political developments caught my attention. And I quickly realized that studying Latin American populism would afford me many opportunities to address my underlying theoretical concerns. At the same time, as I dug a little deeper, I was struck by political sociology's general lack of engagement

“ In the early 2000s, as Latin American politics seemed to be on the verge of a new turn to the left, many countries in the region had also recently seen what was being recognized as a revival of populism. Venezuela's Hugo Chávez was, of course, the prime example; but there were others as well. These contemporary political developments caught my attention.

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work has enabled me at least to touch on my motivating interest in the political foundations of social solidarities, but it has also pushed me into new areas, most notably, into questions of political innovation and repertoire emergence.



(at least in the Latin American context) with cases that have traditionally been labeled "populist." So I constructed a dissertation project around this topic.

I'm currently in the midst of extending this work into book and a series of articles on what I argue is the first case of large-scale populist mobilization in Latin American history: the campaigning that led up to Peru's 1931 presidential election. In this episode, two quite different candidates developed similar populist strategies in their competition to mobilize ordinarily marginalized social sectors. This

When I look beyond this current work and into the future, I think it's safe to assume that my research trajectory will be guided more by my underlying theoretical interests than by the substantive topic of populism. This isn't to foreclose the possibility of doing further work in the area (indeed, I have some potential follow-up projects in

## Interview with Article Award Recipient

mind). But I have also considered other lines of research that might, on the surface at least, appear to be more of a departure.

*You develop the concept of populist mobilization as a new theoretical approach, seeing it as a means (rather than an end) or as a political project, rather than as a particular type of ideology or regime. Can you explain the process by which you developed this idea? How did you become interested in this specific theoretical project?*

RJ: I didn't start out intending to write a theoretical piece on populism. But as I began to learn more about the recent cases of Latin American "neo-populism," I was looking for a theoretical apparatus that could make sense of these new cases and situate them appropriately in historical context. I was disappointed with what I found. Digging through the interdisciplinary literature on populism, I found much use of the term (as a common-sense descriptive label), but very little serious conceptual or theoretical work. And the concepts and theories that I did encounter seemed plagued by intense disagreements and deep contradictions. The literature was fragmentary and conceptually problematic; and people had been talking past one another for decades.

Obviously, it would have been hubris to think that I could rectify this situation on my own, with one article. But I at least needed to assess what was out there and to set out my own conceptual toolkit—it was a necessary preliminary for the empirical work that I wanted to do. And I hoped that others might find at least some utility in this exercise.

In the article, I tried to assess the interdisciplinary literature and to identify some common strengths and weaknesses in the various perspectives. The most common stumbling block that I came across was a relentless desire to pin down the true nature or essence of populism (whether as a regime, movement, or ideology type)—to figure out what this political form truly is. But one of the most striking things I was learning as I studied a wide range of Latin American cases was just how flexible, versatile, and adaptable populist practices can be. They are enacted in a wide range of contexts, by a wide range of political actors, to accomplish a wide range of ends. If there is any consistency across cases, it is in what popu-

list politicians actually do—in the sorts of mobilization practices that they develop, and the type of rhetoric with which they infuse these practices—not in who they are, in the nature of their political enterprise, or even in what they are trying to achieve. And this is why I ultimately made the shift from a focus on populism per se to a focus on populist mobilization as a political practice.

*In the article, you apply the concept of populist mobilization to mid-twentieth-century Latin America. Can you address the relevance or applicability of the theoretical concept to other regions or other time periods?*

RJ: I'm quite aware that my expertise in this topical area is largely limited to the Latin American context. The initial impetus for my research came from following contemporary politics in the region. I eventually shifted to considering a range of historical cases there and I ended up conducting a sustained study of early-twentieth-century Peru. These were the cases on which the literature that I was reviewing was largely focused and these were the cases that I was wrestling with as I developed the article's core theoretical contributions. This is why the empirical section of the article, in which I attempt to demonstrate the analytical utility of my approach, focuses on mid-twentieth-century Latin America.

I note in the article that I'm agnostic about the applicability of the framework beyond Latin America, and I remain so. Without a much larger base of comparative case knowledge, any stronger claim would be too presumptuous for my taste.

That said, the umbrella term "populist" has certainly been applied to a wide number of movements and situations around the world in recent years. Most notably, the rise of right-wing parties in Europe, the emergence of the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street movements in the U.S., and the flowering of Arab Spring protests have all been painted with this brush, at least by some. Ultimately, the applicability of my framework to such cases is for area experts to assess. But I do hope that my article at least raises provocative questions, highlights some interesting similarities and differences in the domain of contentious political practice, and provides a provisional baseline for good comparative research.

## Journal Profile

# Mobilization

Amanda Pullum  
University of California-Irvine

Founded in 1996, *Mobilization* is a relatively young journal, but it has already gained a reputation for publishing high-quality research on social movements and contentious politics. These fields were quickly growing in popularity among scholars, and the journal's founder, Hank Johnson, wanted to create an international, interdisciplinary outlet for their research. Today, Rory McVeigh serves as editor-in-chief of *Mobilization*, while Johnson continues to act as publisher and managing editor.

In its early days, *Mobilization* published only two issues each year, but that number has now doubled; since 2006 *Mobilization* has been published quarterly. Special issues are published about once each year and have addressed topics such as political violence and terrorism, social movement outcomes, and contentious politics of European unemploy-

### Findings and Ideas from *Mobilization*

In "Strategic Framing Work(s): How Microcredit Loans Facilitate Anti-Witch-Hunt Movements," Chakravarty and Chaudhuri (17(2): 175-194) exemplify the creative, cross-national, and cross-disciplinary scholarship for which *Mobilization* is known. The article focuses on mobilization against a cultural and religious practice, rather than against state or corporate actors, and provides a new look at framing processes through the use of an interesting and timely case study. Based on police and newspaper archives, in-depth interviews, and participant observation, the authors found that activists in India were able to mobilize women against male-led witch hunts through the simultaneous use of microcredit groups and strategic framing. Female-only meetings for microcredit loan recipients were also spaces where women could talk about common threats, such as domestic violence and alcoholism. Based upon women's discussions of these threats, activists were able to extend anti-witch hunt frames to resonate with existing concerns, developing a master frame that linked the microcredit loan group's goals with those of the anti-witch hunt movement and motivated loan recipients to mobilize against the witch hunts.

### Findings and Ideas from *Mobilization*

Budros' 2011 article "Explaining the First Emancipation: Social Movements and Abolition in the U.S. North, 1776-1804" (16(4): 439-454) takes a new look at a key decision in U.S. history: the abolition of slavery in the northern states. Budros uses social movement theory and quantitative analysis of an original data set to explain the different rates at which northern states abolished slavery. His model explains that emancipation rates in northern states were influenced by social movement dynamics: particularly pro- and anti-abolition religious movements, slave owners' economic interests, and lack of political opportunities for abolitionists. Budros' paper speaks to the relatively understudied field of movement-counter-movement dynamics as well as to anyone interested in the lesser-known "first emancipation" in American history.

ment. Upcoming special issues will include a compilation of research using one massive dataset based on survey responses from about 15,000 protest participants in many different countries, a set of articles on recent activism in the Middle East, and a showcase of papers using groundbreaking new methodologies.

Current political events and movements, including Arab Spring, Occupy, and the Tea Party, make this an exciting time for *Mobilization*. McVeigh notes that there has been an increased interest in conservative movements, consequences of activism, and new approaches to studying micro- and macro-level movement processes such as the role of emotions in movements, mechanisms of diffusion, and transnational social movements. Further, accounts of historical movements are being used to explain and inform research on modern protests, which helps to connect current social movements to their predecessors.

Many papers in *Mobilization* also connect social movement literature to other disciplines or other fields within sociology. Recent publications in *Mobilization* examine a variety of movements, both modern and historical, in the United States and around the world (as well as transnational movements). For example, in the past year, articles have explained individuals' decisions to participate in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution of 2004 (Beissinger 2011, 16(1):25-43); employed organizational theory and network analysis to show the role

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of identities in movement network patterns (Diani and Pilati 2011, 16(3): 265-282); and developed a new model for explaining politically motivated killings of civilians in Northern Ireland (Maney et al. 2012, 17(1): 27-48).

*Mobilization* emphasizes high-quality, innovative research. Therefore, submissions that employ rigorous yet creative methods of data collection and analysis are especially encouraged. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies are welcomed, but all authors should present their work in ways that benefit a wide variety of readers. Interdisciplinary papers, drawing on relevant literature outside the field of social movement studies to provide new insight into movement processes, can also be valuable contributions to *Mobilization*. McVeigh encourages authors to focus on quality, originality, clearly developed research questions, and accessibility to a broad audience. *Mobilization* is committed to providing a positive experience and quick response for authors, averaging an eight week turnaround time for new submissions over the past four years.

*Mobilization* acts as a forum connecting social movements scholars across multiple generations, disciplines, and nations. With its focus on publishing methodologically innovative, highly accessible research, *Mobilization* is an important resource for all researchers of social movements and contentious politics.

### Findings and Ideas from *Mobilization*

Von Bülow's 2011 article, "Brokers in Action: Transnational Coalitions and Trade Agreements in the Americas" (16(2): 165-180), examines the role of mediating actors in transnational anti-free trade movements. Von Bülow combines interview and survey data with social network analysis techniques to study two coalitions—one in Mexico, one in Brazil—formed to oppose free trade agreement negotiations. Her paper presents a hierarchical typology, or "brokerage ladder," of brokers' multiple roles in creating and maintaining connections across networks of activists and social movement organizations. Brokers act as translators (disseminating knowledge), coordinators (managing the division of labor and resources, mobilizing new and current activists), articulators (facilitating debate or discussion), and representatives (speaking to various audiences on behalf of the coalition). The importance and ease of fulfilling each of these roles fluctuates over time, leading to particular challenges for institutionalized brokers. This study will be of interest to scholars of transnational movements, coalitions, and leadership structures within movements, as well as those who are interested in the politics and resistance efforts surrounding free trade agreements.

### Call for Submissions: States, Power, and Societies Volume 18 #2

We invite your contributions for the next issue.

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

We will publish our 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)

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## Teaching Political Sociology

# Teaching Undergraduate Political Sociology: Country Case Studies as Assignments

Erik Larson  
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Frequently, undergraduate courses in political sociology draw interest from both upper-level majors and from students in cognate disciplines interested in a broader perspective on familiar issues. Serving both of these audiences well at times requires creativity and careful balancing: sociology students may need to develop their analytical skills for more independent work, while the students of anthropology or political science may require more of an opportunity to try out some of the new ideas.

To serve students from these different backgrounds, I developed two paper assignments (in different courses) for students to develop a case study in which they apply insights from material we have studied. In one course, I have a topical paper assignment asking students to provide the perspective of a sociologist giving feedback to the International Monetary Fund about a country report concerning development. In the other—Indigenous Peoples' Movements in Global Context—students complete a semester-long case study of an indigenous people's movement.

For the topical paper, students are free to select any country of interest and are encouraged to imagine themselves as consultants whose role is to advise the IMF about its policy recommendations using insights from sociology about development. Students draw on material that we have studied, including debates about how states can influence development, the legacies of colonialism on prospects for development, the role of NGOs in development, and how international financial institutions, in general, and the IMF, in particular, are governed.

During the semester-long case study, I expect students to draw on a wider range of resources (such as statements by indigenous peoples' organizations at international meetings, reports by treaty-monitoring bodies, and newspaper accounts of events). By providing staged assignments, students can develop ideas over the semester as we are studying material. In their papers, students consider the conditions under which groups come to participate internationally and the global-domestic

dynamics that shape prospects for political change.

Both case studies enable students to appreciate how political sociology offers insights into important issues in the contemporary world by posing questions that encourage a broader perspective on the world. By applying the more abstract ideas from the course content to a particular country or movement, students often better understand both the content and the case itself. They also appreciate how case studies provide an opportunity for challenging and extending theoretical insights. Finally, by having students use reports of and statements in front of international bodies, students become aware of the constraints and opportunities of international processes. To draw on the reports, students have to consider how and for whom they are produced; they also have an incentive to learn more about how these international agencies operate.

Beyond individual assignments, the papers themselves serve as a foundation for further discussion. Because students are completing a variety of case studies, typically spanning much of the world, they usually notice some surprising similarities and differences. These emergent, larger-scale findings raise questions about what might account for these patterns across countries and settings. The subsequent discussion provides another opportunity to apply insights from political sociology to transnational and global processes.

This paper model could be extended to other domains. For instance, one could use case studies of reports by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to examine how inequalities intersect with politics and the state in different countries or the development of global anti-terrorism strategies and how these strategies play out in different countries with respect to global differences in power and domestic civil liberties. In addition, one could scale this paper model in other dimensions beyond the duration of the assignment (single paper/semester-long study). For example, one could integrate a group element to an assignment by having students come together on a collaborative (or regional) basis to develop larger-scale insights prior to a larger class discussion.