



POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

States, Power, and Societies

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Section, ASA**

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SYMPOSIUM ON TEACHING POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

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Editor's Note: For this issue, I've asked some of our section's leading teachers of political sociology to contribute. I asked them to describe a handful of key resources or general lessons for teaching political sociology.

Erik Larson, Macalester College

Since the usefulness of resources depends on the context in which they are used, I want to provide a brief overview of the course in which I use these resources. "Political Sociology" is an upper-level elective that both Sociology and Political Science students may count toward their majors. The course, which has a heavy reading load, aims to introduce students to a variety of classical and contemporary theoretical debates in political sociology in order to provide students with a foundation to pursuing senior research theses that might draw upon and contribute to recent advances in political sociology. Here are some resources that have helped me to make the course successful:

1. Edited volumes relevant to political sociology. In various iterations of the course, I have used these books either as assigned readings, sources of ideas for original source materials to assign, or supplemental resources.

I like to start the course by discussing debates about how to understand power and have found Steven Lukes' edited volume *Power* (1986, NYU Press) and Marvin Olsen and Martin Marger's *Power in Modern Societies* (1993, Westview Press) valuable resources. A later module in the course focuses on citizenship. I have assigned Gershon Shafir's *The Citizenship Debates* (1998, University of Minnesota Press) a good source for classic debates about citizenship and Alison Brysk and Gershon Shafir's *People Out of Place* (2004, Routledge), which provides a more contemporary human-rights centered focus on citizenship.

2. A reference volume. *The Handbook of Political Sociology* edited by Thomas Janoski, Robert Alford, Alexander Hicks, and Mildred Schwartz (2005, Cambridge University Press) is filled with chapters that provide overviews of a variety of bodies of literature in political sociology. These chapters have been particularly useful in getting students to think about further research as well as suggesting potential additions to the course syllabus.

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Political Sociology In the Heart of the Action at the Iowa Caucuses, by Kevin T. Leicht

The Iowa Caucuses... I *know* what you think! Farmers in overalls; fat, Nordic women in plaid dresses with Jello salads in tow; blond hair and blue eyes as far as the eye can see; bucolic fields of corn and smelly hog lots. But what is it really like to be there, as a political sociologist, at the start of what might be the most anticipated election in American history?

The simplest answer is, amazing! As Director of the Social Science Research Center here at The University of Iowa I had a ringside seat and (in a small way) even got in on the action. My Center directs the Hawkeye Poll

(<http://www.ssrc.uiowa.edu/HawkeyePoll.htm>) and we also are connected with Iowa Electronic Markets (<http://www.biz.uiowa.edu/iem/markets/Nomination08.html>), a unique commodity futures market that predicts vote totals for Presidential candidates. IEM (as it's called) was featured in *Scientific American* (March, 2008) and George Neumann (the founder of IEM) is a faculty affiliate of the Institute for

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SYMPOSIUM CONTINUED:

3. Sources of ideas for updating assigned readings. Since I aim to introduce students to contemporary theoretical debates, I look to update the syllabus each time I teach the course. I have found recent award-winning books and articles provide a particularly compelling way to keep the reading list fresh. In particular, the Political Sociology section's recent Best Book and Best Article award and the ASA's Distinguished Book Award have been good sources.
4. Sources of ideas for debates about contemporary applications of political sociology: At the end of the semester, when students are working on their final research proposals, I like to shift the focus of the course to ways in which political sociology provides insight into contemporary issues. Journal editors have made the task of gathering a set of readings quite easy by publishing symposia on such topics. For instance, I have used the Scholarly Controversy section on the war in Iraq from volume 16 of *Political Power and Social Theory* as well as the symposium on terrorism from *Sociological Theory*.
5. Planning the course: Although initially unplanned, our department has now taken to scheduling the Political Sociology course during the same semester as our Comparative-Historical course (which is one of two options students have for completing a second research methods course). My colleague, Terry Boychuk, and I have discovered that students who concurrently enroll in the courses draw connections over the semester that contribute to the overall success of both courses.

W. Lawrence Neuman, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

When asked to pick a few significant teaching resources in political sociology, my first question was, which area within political sociology? I can think of a half-dozen titles for each of several areas. My list has several limitations. It only has late 20th century works, it is heavily American-centered, and it does not reflect the import of feminist theory or the "cultural turn" of the past decade. Also absent is rational choice theory that has a large presence in political science but is limited within political sociology. Here are my "magnificent seven." Anyone who is teaching political sociology should be familiar with these works and work to convey the theory and ideas within them to students.

POLITICAL MAN: THE SOCIAL BASES OF POLITICS (1960) by Seymour Martin Lipset is nearly a half-century old. Most of its findings and ideas have been superseded, but this classic was a true watershed in post World War II political sociology. Its discussion of the conditions sustaining democratic institutions, sources of anti-democratic belief, and the influence of social structure on voting behavior established an agenda for decades of scholarship after it appeared.

WHO RULES AMERICA (1967) by G. William Domhoff is rarely read today. Heir to C. Wright Mill's *Power Elite*, it documented the existence of ruling class in the U.S. provided the foundation for the power structure (denigrated as instrumentalist) studies that continue into the 21st century.

POWER: A RADICAL VIEW (1974) by Steven Lukes is a slim book with a simple framework that significantly shifted thinking about a core political sociology concept. It gave readers a structure to see through existing debates over power and introduced ideas developed by Bourdieu, Foucault, and Gramsci into the mainstream of political sociology.

STATES AND SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS (1979) by Theda Skocpol was heir to the scholarship of Barrington Moore and laid the groundwork for a comparative-historical and institutional approach that continues to today. Its broad scope and structural analysis moved the state to be a central focus.

POLITICAL PROCESS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLACK INSURGENCY 1930-1970 (1982) by Douglas McAdam laid the groundwork to move beyond the Resource Mobilization theory of movements by offering a Political Process Model. It incorporated a more dynamic approach that included institutional and consciousness factors, and it both legitimated the idea of political opportunity structure and paved the way for discussing movement frames.

THREE WORLDS OF WELFARE CAPITALISM (1990) by Gösta Esping-Anderson stimulated a paradigm shift in the analysis of the modern welfare state. Beyond its substantive contribution to explaining welfare state policy, it combined a sophisticated analysis of cross-national statistical data with an innovative theoretical model without ignoring historical contingency.

TALKING POLITICS (1992) by William Gamson adopted a micro-level approach that emphasized discourse, media, and the formation of popular consciousness. This often overlooked study employed a methodology rarely used in political sociology. It contained implications for processes of deliberative democracy, movement participation, and the ways people formulate everyday understandings of public issues.

Sarah Soule, Cornell University

When I teach Political Sociology, I attempt to cover both institutional and non-institutional politics. One area that I focus on is theory and empirical work on political participation, with an eye toward understanding the common factors that explain participation in both institutional and non-institutional politics. Toward this end, I find Verba, Scholzman, and Brady's *Voice and Equality* to be essential. I have also used Russel Dalton's *Citizen Politics* with great success. I also focus on the effects of political participation, contrasting research on institutional and non-institutional politics and how these impact policy

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SYMPOSIUM CONTINUED:

matters. Toward this end, I find Edwin Amenta and colleagues' work very useful. Typically I use a series of their articles, but I will likely also use *When Movements Matter* the next time I teach this course. Finally, I like to cover work on various forms of state repression, whether it be policing of protest, detention of citizens, human rights violations, or some other form of repression. To this end, I like Christian Davenport's work, especially his *State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Peace*.

Kent Redding, University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee

"At the river I stand." This is a riveting one hour video of the events surrounding the poor people's campaign, the Memphis sanitation worker's strike, and the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968. It does a superb job of capturing the nuances of the 1968 struggle, including the role of police repression, labor unions, the local news media and political figures, factions within the civil rights movement and King's effort to navigate them. Even the gendered aspects of the protest comes into play in the "I AM A MAN" placards.

PBS Frontline: For those with internet accessible class rooms, this PBS mainstay now has most of its recent programs available via the internet for immediate use. The beauty is that you can play brief snippets to jumpstart analysis and discussion. Two of my favorite episodes to use: "The Persuaders," which includes a fascinating account of how Frank Luntz and others turned "global warming" into "climate change" and the estate tax into the "death tax"; "Al Qaeda's New Front," a very useful account of European struggles with Islamic extremism.

John Markoff's *Waves of Democracy*. This is a difficult book even for advanced undergraduate majors but it's the single best short, analytic history of democracy and its diffusion. It is essential reading on a fundamentally central topic in political sociology. Student's chafe at its complexities and ambiguities but give it a grudging respect once they read it.

Janoski, et al's *The Handbook of Political Sociology* (disclaimer: I co-authored two chapters). Extraordinarily useful overview of the field. Works well in a graduate seminar but too complex and dry for most undergraduates.

Ira Katznelson's *When Affirmative Action Was White*. Okay, I haven't had the opportunity to use this yet. Still, I think this book would be a useful corrective to much of the debate we have today about affirmative action because of the way it lays bare the production of white privilege in U.S. public policy in the 20th century.

Students. Some of my best moments in teaching political sociology have come when I have allowed students to choose some of the topics for the 2nd half of the course. I retain veto power over the topics and pick the readings. It is more work for me but students love it and feel more invested in the material and we all learn new things together. Two great topics I would have otherwise never have tackled: the Rwandan genocide and the Salem witch trials.

Anthony Orum, University of Illinois-Chicago

1. Election campaigns: Over the years that I have taught political sociology I have often used election campaigns as a means of drumming up interest in the topics of political sociology. Sometimes it's hard to do, even with a lively campaign, but this year in my class we actually are trying to simulate the primaries, and students are incredibly interested in the simulation, just as they are in the primary campaign. Four students have chosen to be the major remaining candidates, i.e. Obama, Clinton, McCain and Huckabee, and each candidate is also joined by one person who serves as his/her campaign manager. The rest of the students are divided into key issue-blocs, e.g. the War in Iraq. We soon will have debates in class between the leading Republican and Democratic contenders, and each issue bloc will be providing the class with the key ideas and historical summaries of the main issues.

2. Great books and ideas in political sociology: I also have relied on some great works to convey the key ideas and lessons of political sociology. One of my favorites is Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. I find that students are very responsive to Tocqueville's image of America and argument on behalf of democracy. He provides both a wonderful comparative vantage point, with Europe, but also a strong and powerful argument about the central advantages of a democratic system and society. I found this particular work very useful when I taught on a Fulbright last year at Fudan University in Shanghai. Tocqueville provided a means of getting into all the key issues, participation and equality chief among them. Yet no matter how hard I tried to advocate the benefits of democracy, the students, in the end, believed that China was not yet ready for such a system. As several students pointed out to me, "there is no politics in China."

The other work that I have found very useful, especially in recent years when authoritarian regimes have collapsed and there is talk of replacing them with democratic governments, is Joseph Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. Schumpeter becomes a good foil for talking about what it takes to establish democracy in former authoritarian regimes because of his insistence on his minimalist formula, i.e. elites competing for the popular vote of the people. Altogether this is a fascinating and provocative work, especially for advanced undergraduate and graduate students. At last count, by the way, it was in its 45th printing, having first been printed in 1945.

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SYMPOSIUM CONTINUED:**Martha Easton, Elmira College**

Teaching in the area of social movements, or a more general social change course, I have a number of favorite teaching objects. Here's a list of a few of them:

- 1) What's a protest like? Most of my students have very little idea. I've used YouTube clips of the WTO protests to spark some excellent discussions in class. There are a number of clips available, some with a soundtrack and some with the sounds of the protests.
- 2) For discussions of newer forms of protest, I've used some of the Culturejamming material, such as the Whirl-Mart campaign (see sites like <http://www.breathingplanet.net/whirl/>). I've also used visual material from Adbusters (<http://www.adbusters.org/home/>) and information about Shopdropping campaigns (<http://www.shopdropping.net/>). I once had a group of students actually try shopdropping at a local Walmart--with predictable results.
- 3) I've asked students to steal Abbie Hoffman's Steal This Book and read sections of it for class. For many of the students, Hoffman's manual is a strange artifact of a distant time, but it helps in understanding some of the disparate ideas from 1970's protest movements. Plus, students report it has the added benefit of sparking great conversations with their parents.
- 4) Unlike many other social movement documentaries, *One Woman, One Vote* (on the American women's movement) highlights a number of the theoretical issues in the social movement literature. It shows issues of resources, political opportunities, framing, commitment, cooptation, splits over tactics, and more. I show it at the beginning of the class, which has the added benefit of giving us all a common reference for future reading.

Lisa M. Martinez, University of Denver

My own research deals with politics and race/ethnicity, so I make it a significant component of my Political Sociology course. I like to frame the course around the idea of the tension that exists between capitalism and democracy, principally the fact that economic elites, while embracing democracy on one level, also fear its potential use by the working classes. We examine how this plays out historically and more contemporarily. I use Piven and Cloward's *Why Americans Still Don't Vote* to show the evolution of the two-party system, the electoral reforms institute by political elites in response to the 1896 Populist Scare, and the subsequent shift towards the constricted electorate. More contemporary forms of exclusion and suppression and the shaping of political participation provides an opportunity to bring in Uggen and Manza's work on felon disenfranchisement and readings about racial redistricting in Texas. Together these readings illustrate that even though the formal obstacles to voting have been eliminated, the informal ones still endure and, in some ways, are more insidious. I conclude the section with *No Umbrella: Election Day in the City* (2004), a film by Laura Paglin showing election-day failures in one of Ohio's poorest neighborhoods. All of this ties into Domhoff's treatment of class/corporate dominance and his more instrumental vision of how the state and policy making is captured by the corporate capitalist class.

IOWA CAUCUSES CONTINUED:

Inequality Studies here at Iowa. The Hawkeye Poll has fielded five polls since last spring and was the subject of a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. Our "election 2008" website (<http://www.uiowa.edu/election/>) was selected for the Library of Congress permanent election archive. As living proof that people can be famous for 15 minutes, our press release from our October Poll was the leading news item on Google News for (you guessed it...) *15 minutes!* Our work has been the subject of over 300 newspaper stories since the Spring of 2007.

What's it mean to be a political sociologist at the center of the political universe, even if it's only for a few weeks? Five press inquiries a day for me, including inquiries from Spain, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Argentina. Ten interviews daily for our polling director, Dave Redlawsk. Radio spots. TV spots. A 15- minute segment filmed by the NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams (derailed by the assassination of Benazir Bhutto). You're literally "on" all the time. But man, is it a rush!

But what do you end up saying? You talk about your poll results, and you talk about Iowa, a place most people have (at best) only driven through. Iowa's population (3 million people) is evenly dispersed around the state. Only 2.5 percent of the state is African American. There are Hispanic immigrants and a growing Hispanic population here (3.8 percent), but they're dispersed and the major lure is the meat packing plants that are located in a myriad of small towns throughout the state. But immigration, as it was defined by the candidates (especially the nativists) was not a big wedge issue here. The schools are good. The populace thinks. They take this caucus business seriously. We don't have a religious right (at least not a visible one). The Conservatives aren't that conservative and the liberals aren't that liberal. The state is politically divided down the middle – Bush received 50 percent of the vote in 2004, Kerry 49 percent (another 1 percent went to unspecified

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IOWA CAUCUSES CONTINUED:

“others”...). People don't vote “early and often” here – there's nobody trying to stuff ballot boxes, throwing them into rivers, or systematically disenfranchising the poor and stigmatized. That would be unneighborly.

And the candidates! You see them all, right in your town. My office is one block from the Hamburg Inn, the iconic working class diner where all the Presidential candidates are filmed eating breakfast (there's a plaque where Ronald Reagan once sat – no one remembers what he ordered). You can tell who is in town by how many Secret Service SUV's are in front of the Vitro Hotel (complete with the Robocops in sunglasses). You see the candidates – McCain, Romney, Clinton, Edwards, Obama, Thompson, and the rest – walking right down the street.

If you accept what I've just said about Iowa as a state, you'll understand what follows on the campaign trail. You can't just fly in here, walk out on the tarmac at the Des Moines airport, give a firey speech, get back on the plane, and fly to the coasts. Nor can you win by buying more TV ads than everyone else. You have to actually campaign the old fashioned way – door to door, in small towns, in cars and buses, meeting people, shaking their hands, kissing their babies, eating their food. If you're not the type that can do this (Rudy Gulianni wasn't) you don't stand a chance here. It helps if you know something about farming (gardening will suffice). Bread-and-butter issues work best here, and that was especially true this year. As a candidate, you could oppose abortion and support school prayer (or not), but if you couldn't discuss the anxieties of the middle class, you weren't going anywhere.

Then there's the process. A Caucus. Not only do the candidates have to travel from one town of 5,000 to the next one giving speeches and shaking hands for months, they have to convince the electorate that they're worth spending two-hours-or-so of their time with neighbors actually arguing about which candidate is the best one. This is a much more serious commitment than just showing up for a few minutes and pushing a button in a private booth. Fortunately, you're surrounded by your party's faithful from your precinct, so the crowd isn't totally hostile and is rarely, if ever, uncivil. Turnout (as you might guess) is always an issue, but not this year – Iowa's record turnout of 335,000 simply added to the anticipation as the results started coming in and January 3rd finally arrived. Even this political sociologist had to make a choice – go to the caucus or speak on American Family Radio from New York at 8 pm (right in the middle of caucus activity).

Then it's actually caucus night. Caucus goers gather at the precinct site at 7 pm to caucus for their candidate or to come up with a choice if they haven't made one yet. The Republicans take straw polls – the candidate with the simple majority in the straw poll wins all of the precinct's delegates. For the Democrats, things are more complicated. An initial straw poll is taken. Candidates with less than 15 percent of the caucus turnout in their precinct are declared “nonviable”, and a round of persuasion (usually 30 minutes) begins where supporters attempt to lure others to their favorite candidate. After this bargaining session, another straw poll is taken. Depending on the wishes of those present, the dickering can go on for hours, or the group can decide they're happy and divide up the delegates based on the votes the viable candidates receive.

The unlikely story to emerge from the January 3rd caucuses stunned the rest of the nation – Barack Obama and Mike Huckabee were the clear winners, testimonies to their concerted efforts to get out caucus goers and appeal to new voters. But, on the Democratic side, John Edwards nudged out Hillary Clinton for second place. Why? Almost all of the caucus goers who began as Richardson, Biden and Dodd supporters moved to the Edwards camp once their candidates were declared non-viable. This outcome was a monument to second choices. On the Republican side, Fred Thompson bested John McCain, who actually finished fourth (!).

Then, all of sudden, it's January 4th. The phone stops ringing. There are so many rental cars at the Des Moines airport that the rental car companies bring in extra employees to drive them away. The candidates and their organizations are gone. We're a flyover state again and things return to normal.

Is this the way electoral politics is supposed to be? No. As a political sociologist, I don't think the Iowa Caucuses have much of a future. But Iowa has some virtues that I hope are preserved if we lose our position in future Presidential primaries. You've actually got to show up and press the flesh. You have to appear in a small confined area with the other candidates. TV and Radio ads won't save you. Money doesn't guarantee much. The candidates have to talk you into believing in them, not just voting for them. The rest of the nation is watching, so don't do something stupid. One could do worse and as an Iowan it will be sad to see all this disappear.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

John C. Scott, Cornell University “Cooperation and Collusion: The Social Ambivalence of Lobbying in America.”

My dissertation examines a community of policy actors who are governed by trust-based norms specific to their community. Using a unique longitudinal social network of lobbying organizations in Washington, D.C., as well as qualitative interviews with political insiders and social movement activists, I focus on a specific public policy domain. I trace the development of social networks of organizations, the content of such networks, and their effects on political interactions over time. These effects are underwritten by social norms of cooperation, reciprocity, and confidentiality among embedded

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS CONTINUED:

lobbyists, which norms enable information-thick exchange and joint activity. I also focus on how the social norms among lobbyists exclude outside activists, who in response characterize lobbyists' social norms and relationships as collusive.

Brian J. Gareau, University of California-Santa Cruz “Dangerous Holes in Global Environmental Governance: The Roles of Neoliberal Discourse, Science, and California Agriculture in the Montreal Protocol.”

In my dissertation, I analyze the first indication of failure in what many consider the most successful global environmental treaty, the Montreal Protocol. I use an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from macrosociology, sociology of science, and human geography to examine how the stalled phase-out of ozone-depleting methyl bromide involves interconnections between geopolitics, agro-industry, and scientific knowledge. A key question in my dissertation deals with neoliberalism and global environmental politics. Drawing from conceptualizations of neoliberalism originating in sociology and geography, I explore how powerful actors use neoliberal discourse to articulate protectionist positions in protocol deliberations. Additionally, I illustrate the links between global political and economic dominance and global environmental governance. My work shows that powerful nation-states and agro-industrial firms are able to “jump scale” to influence decision-making at the global scale. Drawing from interviews with ozone scientists, state delegates, NGO and industry representatives, and direct observation at international meetings, I argue that the stalled phase-out of methyl bromide is largely the consequence of US protectionism of its strawberry production complex.

Delia Baldassarri, PhD Columbia University “Crosscutting Social Spheres? Political Polarization and the Social Roots of Pluralism.”

Political polarization is not only a phenomenon of opinion radicalization, but also a process of social division and ideological alignment that might occur at different levels of social reality. Accordingly, I address the current debate on political polarization in contemporary America by looking at people's preferences and their attributes, the patterns of social relations in which individuals are embedded, and the emergent web of group affiliations. I discuss the simultaneous presence and absence of polarization, by showing how people can perceive homogeneous political environments even though they are embedded in heterogeneous and non-polarized social contexts. I also show that American citizens, over the last forty years, have become more ideological without necessarily becoming more coherent in their political views and that association members have become politically more partisan, but such increased partisanship has not translated into greater civil society division. The picture that emerges from this study suggests that, despite the polarization of parties, and political activists over the last two decades, the inconsistency of the mass belief system and scarce interest in politics, in conjunction with declining civic engagement and associational life, have prevented public opinion from becoming more polarized. If these are the social roots of political pluralism, they are also the source of increasing inequality in interest representation.

Dan Slater, Emory University “Ordering Power: Contentious Politics, State-Building, and Authoritarian Durability in Southeast Asia.”

Capable and accountable public authority has proven elusive throughout the post-colonial world, but not entirely unattainable. Southeast Asia exhibits as much if not more variation than any other region in terms of both state capacity and democratic accountability. Why have some of this region's states proven so much more capable, particularly at extracting tax revenue from economic elites, than others? And why have some of Southeast Asia's authoritarian regimes proven so much more durable than others? In this comparative-historical analysis of seven Southeast Asian countries – Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Vietnam, and Thailand – I locate the answer to both puzzles in the types of contentious politics (i.e. labor strikes, ethnic riots, student protests, rural uprisings, and separatist rebellions) that erupted between the end of Japan's occupation of Southeast Asia in 1945 and the inauguration of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes throughout the region between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s. Subtly divergent patterns of contentious politics provide the best explanation for the striking divergence in Southeast Asia's contemporary political institutions. In short, the strength or weakness of these political institutions (parties, militaries, states, and regimes) reflects enduring patterns of elite collective action, which arose in response to specific types of threats from below.

Rita Stephan, University of Texas at Austin “The Family and the Making of Women's Rights Activism.”

My research brings the family into the study of feminism and social movements by highlighting the dynamics and interactions between activists and their kin groups in Lebanon. My central question is: how do Lebanese women's rights activists use their kinship system in their pursuit of citizenship rights and political recognition? To answer this question, I investigate the impact of being embedded in—or autonomous from—kinship structures on activism. To advance their movement's goals and strategies, my findings suggest that Lebanese women's rights activists leverage support from the kinship system and adhere to its behavioral norms. My analysis reveals that Lebanese feminists interact with kinship at three levels in *becoming activists*, in the course of *doing activism*, and by *setting the discourse* of their activism.

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS CONTINUED:***Abdolrahim Javadzadeh, Florida International University “Marxists Into Muslims: The Iranian Irony.”***

This dissertation examines the influence of Islamic ideology on Iranian Marxists during the 1979 revolution. The purpose of this study is to extricate the influence of Islamic culture, ideology, and terminology on Marxist organizations and on individuals who identified themselves as Marxists in Iran. This is especially of interest since in many ways Marxism and Islam are ideologically in conflict. To investigate the irony publications put forth by several Marxist organizations before and after the 1979 revolution were examined. Through the study of Marxist political organs, theoretical publication and political flyers distributed during and after the revolution, the phenomenon of Marxists converting to an Islamic ideology became clearer. Many Marxist organizations were demonstrably utilizing Islamic political ideology to organize and mobilize masses of Iranians. This study shows a historical precedence of Marxists' usage of Islam in the political history of Iran dating back to early twentieth-century. Primary and secondary Marxist literature showed that Islam was an inescapable social and political reality for Iranian Marxists. Internalizing the idea of martyrdom—of Shi'a Islam—was a shared belief that united Marxists with Muslims in their attempt to effect sociopolitical change in Iran. Although a significant contributor to the revolutionary movement in Iran Marxists operated within a contextual belief system of Islam. This pervasive belief system within the culture is what created the conditions for the possibility of Marxists becoming Muslims.

Edward T. Walker, Pennsylvania State University “The Privatization of Political Influence: Professional Grassroots Lobbying in the United States”

Institutional grassroots lobbying (GL) – attempts by corporations, industry, interest groups, and government to mobilize citizens in shaping legislation – became prevalent starting in the 1970s. The growth of subsidies for citizen activism suggests that dramatic changes have taken place in U.S. civil society, as citizens participate less, despite greater numbers of voluntary associations. Using unique, original data on the firms that provide GL services, I examine the sociological indicators that explain the rise of professional GL, and also consider how clients vary in their usage of GL. Evidence suggests that GL campaigns were supported by an expanding field of associations, alongside heightened business political engagement. For corporations that lobby the public, I find that GL is mainly an expansion of existing lobbying repertoires; industry groups, on the other hand, do so mainly to activate the businesses that comprise their organizations. Public interest groups, by contrast, tend to hire GL firms rarely, and those that do are wealthy and/or sizeable. I conclude by considering how GL is helping to privatize political influence not only in that firms promote private interests in the public sphere, but also in that the forms of participation they encourage – letter- and check-writing – are largely private in nature.

Azamat Junisbai, Indiana University “Economic Justice and Welfare State Attitudes in Post-Soviet Central Asia.”

Sociologists have long been interested in understanding popular attitudes about economic justice. Yet, our knowledge is based largely on research conducted in Western democracies. This dissertation contributes to the literature by analyzing economic justice attitudes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, two post-Soviet Central Asian countries that differ starkly from the usual venues of most studies to date. They are poorer, less democratic, predominantly Muslim, and are rapidly transforming into capitalist economies after nearly seven decades of state socialism. These factors combine to make them qualitatively different from the other countries in which similar studies have been conducted. With combined funding from the NSF and the State Department, I organized and oversaw nationally representative surveys in Kyrgyzstan (1000 respondents) and Kazakhstan (1100 respondents). In addition to variables measuring economic justice attitudes, the data contain a wealth of information about several closely related and previously untold stories. The core chapter on economic justice attitudes and their predictors is situated within the larger narrative of economic inequality and its causes and consequences in the two societies. Additional chapters explore the following questions: (1) Who are the winners and losers and what factors determine success and failure in today's economy? (2) Which social cleavages are most salient in fueling conflict between the haves and have-nots? and (3) What is the relationship between Islamic orthodoxy, which is increasingly prevalent, and economic justice sentiments? Whenever possible, findings from Central Asia are contrasted with existing data originating elsewhere.

Christopher Pieper, University of Texas-Austin “Peter, Paul, and Protest: Explaining Waves of Christian Activism in the United States, 1900-2000”

Using comparative-historical methods and in-depth cultural analysis, this dissertation aims to understand the rise and fall of various forms of religious activism, namely politically-inflected strains of Christianity in the 20th century U.S., and the mechanisms behind these transformations. A comprehensive ecological survey of activist organizations will produce a “movement map,” indicating their relative strength, duration, orientation, and support systems. Next, detailed qualitative case studies of key representative movements, derived from the ecological study, will reveal micro-level mechanisms and processes. Historical factors, resources, demographic changes, and cultural factors are examined across as key theory-building dimensions. Preliminary findings suggest although structural-historical factors provide the necessary conditions for religious

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS CONTINUED:

activism, they are repeatedly shown to be insufficient to explain why certain groups did or did not mobilize. Cultural processes, particularly "moral entrepreneurship," are found to be more decisive than existing literature allows. Moral entrepreneurs, unusually concentrated in religious traditions, effectively manipulate and challenge existing cultural codes, especially those deeply engrained "moral schemas" which define certain social practices and attitudes as right or wrong, permissible or prohibited. The phenomenon of enduring social transformation is thus revealed as much a process of macro-cultural code adjustment – through micro-level human agency – as it is a matter of political-historical contingency.

BOOK ABSTRACTS

D. Michael Lindsay, Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite (Oxford University Press 2007).

Evangelicals, once at the periphery of American life, now wield power in the White House and on Wall Street, at Harvard and in Hollywood. How have they reached the pinnacles of power in such a short time? And what does this mean for evangelicals and for America? Drawing on semi-structured interviews with 360 public leaders—including two former Presidents, dozens of political and government leaders, more than 100 top business executives, plus Hollywood moguls, intellectuals, athletes, and other powerful figures—Lindsay's work shows how evangelicals have effectively capitalized upon their structural locations in multiple elite networks to exercise "convening power." He also demonstrates that, even in the midst of institutional differentiation and emerging diversity within elite ranks, religion provides broad, cross-domain cohesion among leaders at the highest of levels. Over the last three decades, evangelical elites have used this to their benefit, advancing the evangelical movement and several of its priorities for American public life.

Li Yi, The Structure & Evolution of Chinese Social Stratification (University Press of America 2005).

There have been two great shifts of power on the world stage during the past five centuries: the rise of Europe following the Industrial Revolution, and the rise of the United States after its Civil War. As we speak, a new power shift is beginning to take shape: the rise of Asia. Leading Asia's charge toward the world's center stage is the reemerging powers of China and India. This book is a great groundbreaking work in China Studies. For generations, China scholars have pursued the structure of Chinese social stratification, but none has completely succeeded in constructing even a single, complete model. The Annual Review of Sociology 2002 reported: "Insufficient research attention has been given to emerging social classes in rural and urban China and existing analysis are hampered by the still evolving nature of social and economic structures in which social classes are in the making. Thus, insightful analysis and reliable assessments are to be called for from future researchers." (page 98) The Structure & Evolution of Chinese Social Stratification has finally addressed this gap. Dr. Li provides detailed analysis critical to understanding the class structure of Chinese society, both pre-1949 and in the post-Mao era. His explanation of the origin, structure, and evolution of the model will be essential reading material for any introductory student of Chinese society.

Dana R. Fisher, Activism Inc: How the Outsourcing of Grassroots Campaigns is Strangling Progressive Politics in America (Stanford University Press 2006).

This book compares the grassroots outreach on the Left and Right, focusing on the ways that the Left employs thousands of young people around the country to run its ground war in elections and political campaigns as canvassers. Through a 2-year study of a stratified random sample of canvassers who worked for one of the largest canvassing groups in the country, Professor Fisher documents how young people are being contracted out to raise money and support for numerous progressive issues on the Left. Fisher finds that this process results in extremely high turnover and burns through progressively minded young people. After their experience in fundraising canvassing, many of these potential leaders leave politics for good. This book is the first comprehensive study of this type of grassroots outreach, providing an ethnography of a little-known aspect of progressive politics in America.

Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow, Causes and Consequences of Political Inequality in Cross-National Perspective, Special issue of the International Journal of Sociology (Winter 2008, vol. 37, no. 4).

In 2004 the American Political Science Association Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy concluded that "[America's] ideals of equal citizenship and responsive government may be under growing threat in an era of persistent and rising inequalities" (APSA 2004). The central idea of "Causes and Consequences of Political Inequality in Cross-National Perspective" is to explore the issues raised by the Task Force concerning political inequality – citizen voice, government responsiveness, and patterns of public policymaking – as they exist outside of the United States. The main question

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is, do the Task Force findings hold in a cross-national and comparative context? In addressing the question, papers were organized into causes of political inequality, and consequences of it. The four papers included in this volume from sociologists and political scientists empirically examine disadvantaged groups' political participation in contemporary Europe (Aina Gallego), regime change and women's political representation across the world, 1950 – 2000 (Melanie M. Hughes), the interaction of gender quotas and women's descriptive and substantive representation in Germany (Christina V. Xydias), and the influence of unequal political knowledge on electoral outcomes in Romania and Moldova (Gabor Toka and Marina Popescu). Taken together, and in light of the Task Force's framework for analyzing political inequality, these articles provide directions for building theoretical models that explain the causes and consequences of political inequality in cross-national perspective.

Matt Bakker and Michael Peter Smith, Citizenship Across Border: The Political Transnationalism of El Migrante (Cambridge University Press 2008).

Our book is a political-economically contextualized ethnographic account of transnational politics across the U.S.-Mexican divide. We conducted qualitative field research in multiple communities in the Mexican states of Zacatecas and Guanajuato and various cities in California, particularly metropolitan Los Angeles. The five extended case studies in our book offer new ways of looking at the emergent dynamics of transnational community development and electoral politics on both sides of the border. Our analysis highlights the continuing significance of territorial identifications and state policies – particularly those of the sending state – in cultivating and sustaining transnational connections and practices. In contrast to high-profile warnings of the dangers to national cultures and political institutions brought about by long-distance nationalism and dual citizenship, we demonstrate that, far from undermining loyalty and diminishing engagement in U.S. political life, the practice of dual citizenship by Mexican migrants actually provides a sense of empowerment that fosters migrants' active civic engagement in U.S. as well as Mexican politics.

Noel Cazenave, Impossible Democracy: The Unlikely Success of the War on Poverty Community Action Programs (SUNY Press 2007).

Explores how community action programs used federal funds to sponsor social protest—based community reform. *Impossible Democracy* challenges the conventional wisdom that the War on Poverty failed, by exploring the unlikely success of its community action programs. Using two projects in Manhattan that were influential precursors of community action programs—the Mobilization for Youth and the Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited-Associated Community Teams—Noel A. Cazenave analyzes national and local conflicts in the 1960s over what the nature of community action should be. Fueled by the civil rights movement, activist social scientists promoted a model of community action that allowed for the use of social protest as an instrument of local reform. In addition, they advanced a more participatory view of how democracy should work, one that insisted local decision making not be left solely to elected officials and other powerful people, as traditionally done.

Lane Kenworthy, Jobs with Equality (Oxford University Press 2008).

Economic and social shifts have led to rising income inequality in the world's affluent countries. This is worrisome for reasons of fairness and because inequality has adverse effects on other socioeconomic goods. Redistribution can help, but government revenues are threatened by globalization and population aging. A way out of this impasse is for countries to increase their employment rate. Increasing employment enlarges the tax base, allowing tax revenues to rise without an increase in tax rates; it also reduces welfare state costs by decreasing the amount of government benefits going to individuals and households. The question is: Can egalitarian institutions and policies be coupled with employment growth? For two decades conventional wisdom has held that the answer is no. In *Jobs with Equality*, Lane Kenworthy provides an assessment of the experiences of rich nations since the late 1970s. The comparative experience suggests reason for optimism about possibilities for a high-employment, high-equality society.

Lane Kenworthy and Alexander Hicks, eds., Method and Substance in Macrocomparative Analysis (Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

Macrocomparative researchers use a variety of methodological approaches. This book features analyses of a single substantive topic, comparative employment performance in affluent countries, using three of the most common macrocomparative techniques: pooled cross-section time-series regression, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), and small-N analysis. The chapters assess the strengths and weaknesses of these three approaches. They also examine important questions of causal inference, such as selection bias. Contributors include prominent methodologists and comparative researchers from sociology and political science.

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Christopher Howard, *The Welfare State Nobody Knows: Debunking Myths about U.S. Social Policy*, (Princeton Univ. Press, 2007).

This book challenges a number of myths and half-truths about U.S. social policy. The author argues that the American welfare state is in fact larger, more popular, and more dynamic than commonly believed. Nevertheless, poverty and inequality remain high, and this book helps explain why so much effort accomplishes so little. Drawing on diverse literatures and sources, it analyzes the politics of a wide range of social programs over many decades. Ambitious and timely, *The Welfare State Nobody Knows* asks us to rethink the influence of political parties, interest groups, public opinion, federalism, policy design, and race on the American welfare state. Named an Outstanding Academic Title for 2007 by *Choice* magazine.

Daniel Chernilo, *A Social Theory of the Nation State: The Political Forms of Modernity beyond Methodological Nationalism* (Routledge 2007).

This book construes a novel and original social theory of the nation-state. It rejects nationalistic ways of thinking that take the nation-state for granted as much as globalist orthodoxy that speaks of its current and definitive decline. Its main aim is therefore to provide a renovated account of the nation-state's historical development and recent global challenges via an analysis of the writings of key social theorists. This reconstruction of the history of the nation-state is divided into three periods: classical (K. Marx, M. Weber, E. Durkheim), modernist (T. Parsons, R. Aron, R. Bendix, B. Moore), and contemporary (M. Mann, E. Hobsbawm, U. Beck, M. Castells, N. Luhmann, J. Habermas). For each phase, it introduces social theory's key views about the nation-state, its past, present and future. In so doing this book rejects methodological nationalism, the claim that the nation-state is the necessary representation of the modern society, because it misrepresents the nation-state's own problematic trajectory in modernity. And methodological nationalism is also rejected because it is unable to capture the richness of social theory's intellectual canon. Instead, via a strong conception of society and a subtler notion of the nation-state, *A Social Theory of the Nation State* tries to account for the 'opacity of the nation-state in modernity'.

Mabel Berezin, *Illiberal Politics in Neoliberal Times: Democracy, Security and Populism in the New Europe* (Cambridge University Press 2008)

This book views the emergence of the *right populist moment* in the 1990s in various European venues as a *historical surprise*, rather than an expected event. It asks whether there would be a *right populist moment* in the absence of Maastricht and the subsequent intensification of cultural and economic Europeanization? This formulation suggests compelling contextual issues that a single minded focus upon xenophobia and immigration elides. Right populism poses a challenge to prevailing social science and commonsense assumptions about trans-nationalism and cosmopolitanism. In a multicultural Europe of acknowledged social and political integration and increased cultural contact, right populism represents a recidivist contraction and turning inward that is puzzling. Unraveling this puzzle requires historical, that is contextual, exegesis that is methodologically innovative and looks primarily at *national public events*, and secondarily at individual and collective actors. The center of this book is a case study of the French National Front. By analyzing the National Front in relation to the broader context of Europeanization and globalization, this book attempts to first, unpack the political and cultural processes that evoke the *thin* commitments that characterize citizen support, and to second, signal that we cannot make sense of right populism independently of the historical legacies and practices, both national and international, within which it arises. It also puts forth a novel theoretical proposition about the relation between democracy and perceptions and realities of political and social security.

Thomas Keil, *Romania's Tortured Road Toward Modernity* (Columbia University Press 2006).

The monograph is a study of the form and nature of the changes Romania has been undergoing since the fall of the Ceausescu regime in 1989. It is argued that the post-1989 reconstruction of Romania has taken place not only within the legacy of state socialism but also within the context of even more general and inter-related historical, political, and economic legacies and problems. These legacies and problems have to be understood within the geopolitical context in which Romania has been and is situated; the continuing struggle in Romania over social and economic inequalities; the struggle to build capitalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and again in the late 20th century without the presence of a strong bourgeoisie; the lack of historical experience with democracy; the problems posed by Romanian nationalism; and, finally, the struggles Romania has had with state building.

Harland Prechel, *Politics and Neoliberalism: Structure, Process and Outcome* (Research in Political Sociology, Elsevier Press 2007)

The articles in this volume directly or indirectly examine central tenets of neoliberalism: interference with market mechanisms is the cause of poor economic performance, and returning to market fundamentalism will restore prosperity. Despite these bold claims, scholars have not examined the extent to which neoliberal policies result in positive outcomes or

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whether economic successes are explained by neoliberalism. This volume of *Research in Political Sociology* assesses these neoliberal claims. The introductory article compares classical liberalism to neoliberalism, and summarizes the political-legal changes in corporations' environment and the redistribution of income and wealth from the mid-1970s to the present in the United States. The first part of this volume examines the effects of neoliberal policies on higher education in the state of Missouri and workers' health in Canada, and whether neoliberalism can explain changes in social service provisions and economic development initiatives by local U.S. governments. The second part of this volume examines how the politics of neoliberal reforms affected policies of racial redress in Fiji and Tanzania, and the capacity of neoliberalism to explain economic development and change in the organization of business enterprises in China and India. Together, these articles find little support for the claims of neoliberalism, which suggests that liberalism is better understood as an ideology than as a theory.

Tina Fetner, How the Religious Right Shaped Lesbian and Gay Activism (University of Minnesota Press 2008).

While gay rights are on the national agenda now, activists have spent decades fighting for their platform. At the same time, the religious right has continuously and effectively opposed the efforts of lesbian and gay activists, working to repeal many of the laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and to progress a constitutional amendment "protecting" marriage. In this accessible and grounded work, Tina Fetner uncovers a surprisingly complex relationship between the two movements—one that transcends political rivalry. Fetner shows how gay activists and the religious right have established in effect a symbiotic relationship in which each side significantly affects the evolution of its counterpart. As lesbian and gay activists demand an end to prejudice, inclusion in marriage, the right to serve in the military, and full citizenship regardless of sexual orientation, the religious right has responded with anti-gay planks in Republican party platforms and the blocking of social and political change efforts. Fetner examines how the lesbian and gay movement responds to opposition by changing rhetoric, tone, and tactics and reveals how this connection has influenced—and made more effective—the evolution of gay activism in the United States. Fetner addresses debates that lie at the center of the culture wars and, ultimately, she demonstrates how the contentious relationship between gay and lesbian rights activists and the religious right—a dynamic that is surprisingly necessary to both—challenges assumptions about how social movements are significantly shaped by their rivals.

Almeida, Paul D., Waves of Protest: Popular Struggle in El Salvador, 1925-2005 (University of Minnesota Press 2008).

Providing a compelling analysis of the massive waves of protests from the early twentieth century to the present in El Salvador, Paul D. Almeida fully chronicles one of the largest and most successful campaigns against globalization and privatization in the Americas. Drawing on original protest data from newspapers and other archival sources, Almeida makes an impassioned argument that regime liberalization organizes civil society and, conversely, acts of state-sponsored repression radicalize society. He correlates the ebb and flow of protest waves to the changes in regime liberalization and subsequent de-democratization and back to liberalization. Almeida shows how institutional access and competitive elections create opportunity for civic organizations that become radicalized when authoritarianism increases, resulting at times in violent protest campaigns that escalate to revolutionary levels. In doing so, he brings negative political conditions and threats to the forefront as central forces driving social movement activity and popular contention in the developing world.

Linda Lobao, Gregory Hooks, and Ann Tickamyer, editors, The Sociology of Spatial Inequality (The State University of New York Press 2007).

This volume examines *who gets what where*—the study of spatial inequality. It showcases recent studies that attend to power, poverty, and prosperity across a range of territorial settings within the United States, addressing spatial inequality as a thematically distinct body of work that spans sociological research traditions. The first set of chapters takes stock of sociology's conceptual treatment of space, place, and inequality, denoting its missing links. The second set details examples of spatial approaches to topics including welfare reform, health and mortality, poverty, community service provision, and migration, at different geographic scales. The final set of chapters reflects upon sociologists' efforts to build a more coherent field of spatial inequality. Contributors are: scholars bringing in a spatial perspective to political sociology and economic sociology; scholars working from more spatially-oriented fields such as urban sociology, rural sociology, and demography; and geographers.

Jon Shefner, The Illusion of Civil Society: Democratization and Community Mobilization in Low-Income Mexico (Penn State University Press 2008).

Much has been written about how civil society challenges authoritarian governments and helps lead the way to democratization. These studies show that neoliberal economic policies have harmed many sectors of society, weakening the state and undermining clientelistic relationships that previously provided material benefits to middle- and low-income

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citizens, who are then motivated to organize coalitions to work for greater social justice and equality. Recognizing this important role played by civil society organizations, Jon Shefner goes further and analyzes the variegated nature of the interests represented in these coalitions, arguing that the differences among civil society actors are at least as important as their similarities in explaining how they function and what success, or lack thereof, they have experienced. Through an ethnographic examination extending over a decade, Shefner tells the story of how a poor community on the urban fringe of Guadalajara mobilized through an organization called the Union de Colonos Independientes (UCI) to work for economic improvement with the support of Jesuits inspired by liberation theology. The organizations' activities reveal how social hierarchy interacts with economic need to determine the outcomes of democratization. The UCI's alliance with NGOs and their common work toward democratization avoided the fragmentation and isolation typical of clientelistic politics in Mexico, achieving an important change in the politics of the urban poor. Yet Mexico's successful formal democratic transition won with the elections in 2000 was followed by the dissolution of the coalition. Neither political access for the urban poor, nor its material wellbeing, has increased with democratization. The unity and even the concept of civil society thus turned out to be an illusion.

Ivan Ermakoff, *Ruling Oneself Out. A Theory of Collective Abdications* (Duke University Press 2008).

This book explores the etiology, significance and implications of collective abdications, defined as the decisions to surrender power and to legitimate this surrender. Common sense invites us to believe that such actions are the products of coercive pressures, actors' miscalculations, or their contamination by ideologies at odds with group interests. Probing the presuppositions and accuracy of this common sense of abdication through a close examination of two paradigmatic events, Ivan Ermakoff shows that the collective, voluntary and unconditional surrender of power challenges our basic conception of political rationality. In March 1933, the German parliament transferred its constitutional authority to Hitler, assuring the collapse of the Weimar Republic. In June 1940, an overwhelming majority of French parliamentarians voted to relinquish power to Marshal Pétain, whose Vichy regime quickly committed itself to a policy of collaboration with Nazi Germany. Coercion, miscalculation or ideology prove to be either misleading or crucially incomplete explanations of these renunciations of democracy. This critical examination informs a theory of abdications that specifies different mechanisms of collective alignment, analyzes the cognitive and interactive underpinnings of these mechanisms, and discusses the conditions affecting their likelihood. Integrating hermeneutics, primary historical research, formal analysis and quantitative assessments, *Ruling Oneself Out* demonstrates that an in-depth and analytically informed exploration of subjective orientations and patterns of interactions highlights processes as different in terms of scale as the problem of preference instability, the paradox of self-deception, or the make-up of historical events as highly consequential.

EDITOR'S NOTE AND CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Thanks to all the contributors to this issue. Please keep the dissertation and book abstracts coming!

In the next issue, I would like to have a symposium on "The Relations and Boundaries Between Political Science and Political Sociology." I invite submissions on this theme. If you have a perspective on how political sociology and political science relate to each other, complement each other and/or divide the labor, I would be glad to include your view.

Finally, please feel encouraged to contribute anything you have to say to the section on politics, political sociology or sociology in general. I'd be glad to publish provocative commentary and interesting debate. If you have a letter to write in response to the newsletter, I'll publish that as well. Submissions should be sent to my email below. Best regards,

Dave Brady

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Call for Submissions: "Relations and Boundaries Between Political Science and Political Sociology"