

# STATES, POWER, & SOCIETIES



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Caroline Lee  
Lafayette College

I write this from Easton, PA, during a fragile truce in the Israel-Hamas conflict that exploded this October, to be followed in November by the shocking far-right election victories of Javier Milei in Argentina, and Geert Wilders's Party for Freedom in the Netherlands. Closer to home, three Palestinian students visiting Burlington, VT, were shot and wounded this week. My own 2700-student campus is being investigated along with five other colleges and universities by the U.S. Department of Education for alleged antisemitism and Islamophobia. As news consumers and concerned citizens, we are awash in

heartbreaking photojournalism, opinion, and social media commentary about these developments and their many ripple effects, much of which aims to capture cresting emotions of rage, terror, shock. What does the often slow, carefully-researched, below-the-surface work of political sociology have to offer in times like these?

I have been carried through this tumultuous fall by my deep conviction that the political research you all do helps us to break with the unremitting media cycle and make better sense of war and conflict, populism and autocracy, repression and justice in their larger historical contexts. My appreciation of political sociologists is enhanced by knowing that many of us are also helping students understand day to day what is happening locally and globally, while we try to be responsible civic actors in the communities to which we belong. Some of us spend a great deal of time working to engage and educate all students in the rights and responsibilities

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of democratic governance and dialogue across difference. By belonging to this section, I receive regular reminders of the terrific scope of activity on these fronts that you are carrying out, none more

welcome than this newsletter, which brings a symposium on democracy outside the West, methodological reflections from junior scholars in the field, and Q&As with our new officers and wonderful award winners. So thanks to our newsletter editors and our stalwart members for all you do every day to move our collective understanding forward, even and especially when you feel this work is overshadowed by the sheer scale of our global political challenges.

Your Political Sociology Section Council has been hard at work planning a membership drive and virtual events on elections in 2024 for the Spring. We have also been getting ready for ASA in Montreal, where we will have lots of exciting options for section members and will be repeating our successful mentoring event following our roundtable session. One of my main priorities as Chair has been to highlight the diversity of perspectives in our section, while building bridges with other sections. To that end,

Cihan Tugal and I are working to plan a joint reception with the Section on Global and Transnational Sociology in Montreal. We will have section sessions in August on Diaspora Politics (Co-sponsored by the Section on International Migration), the Politics of Artificial Intelligence (Co-sponsored by the Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology), the Rise of the Far Right, and New Developments in Political Sociology: Reimagining State Power.

I encourage all of you to submit papers to our sessions and roundtables, in addition to the fascinating political-sociology-relevant topics occurring throughout the conference in Regular Sessions and other Section Sessions. More information on our sessions can be found at:

<https://www.asanet.org/2024-annual-meeting/call-for-submissions/papers-extended-abstracts-2/section-sessions/>

Most importantly, please consider nominating yourself, a colleague, or a

student for one of the four section awards, including the Distinguished Career Award, which we now offer every year, thanks to past Chair Paul Almeida.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.asanet.org/communities-and-sections/sections/section-award-nomination-calls/#politicalsociology>

When I visited Easton for a campus interview in December 2005, I was tickled by the 106-foot steel tower that is the centerpiece of the city during the holidays, excitedly billed as “America’s Largest Non-Wax Candle” (sadly, Guinness only tracks wax candles). Eighteen years later, I appreciate that Easton’s Peace Candle is a non-denominational symbol of hope, duly installed each year by volunteers from Iron Workers Local 11, as our Rust Belt valley’s contribution to the unifying aspiration for light in dark times. May the New Year bring you peace, hope, and light.



## 2024 Annual Meeting Section Sessions

For the 2024 ASA Annual Meeting, the Section will sponsor the following panels. Submissions are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday, February 2, 2023. Find [full descriptions on the ASA website](#).

- Diaspora Politics, co-sponsored by Section on International Migration (organizer Prema Ann Kurien, Syracuse University)
- New Developments in Political Sociology: Reimagining State Power (organizer Lynette H. Ong, University of Toronto)
- Politics of Artificial Intelligence, co-sponsored by Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology (organizers Atef S. Said, University of Illinois at Chicago & Paolo Parra Saiani, University of Genoa)
- Rise of the Far Right (organizers Alessandro Giuseppe Drago, McGill University & Sakeef M. Karim, New York University)
- Political Sociology Section Refereed Roundtables

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## Tides and Struggles of Democracy and Constitutionalism

Building on a vibrant session from the ASA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, this newsletter's symposium assembles scholars tackling the waxing and waning of democracy and its values on the global scale. -Eds.

### Infringing on Freedom in the Name of Freedom: Why the “Liberal” West’s Greatest Enemy is Itself

Jessica Kim

WZB Berlin

What is the future of democracy in the world, and what does it look like? Many scholars have expressed [doubts](#) about [Western democracy's](#) capacity to [withstand](#) the current [illiberal turn](#).

This is not particularly surprising, given the sustained global [decline of democracy](#) over the last 16 years. Previous scholars, including [myself](#), have attributed this to the durability of authoritarian and hybrid regimes, which [strategically](#) and [superficially](#) endorse democracy to [obscure](#) their continued

oppression, avoid external [criticism](#), and [preserve](#) authoritarian rule.

For instance, when Turkey's infamous President Erdogan first came to power in 2002, he did so with the [promise](#) of democratization, yet has continued to [silence](#) critics and media, attack the [LGBTQ+](#) community, and consolidate executive [power](#). Nevertheless, Erdogan has continued to emphasize his commitment to democratic principles thanking voters after his 2023

Presidential [victory](#) for proving “the strength of our democracy.”

This approach—endorsing democratic norms but violating them in practice while invoking them to justify behavior—has become a critical mainstay in the hybrid regime [toolkit](#). We know this, and we know it contributes to democratic [decline](#).

Yet what is perhaps less clear is that **this same approach is also being used by the West, and to a far greater detriment of democracy.** Although authoritarian regimes have slowly and surely chipped away at the foundations of democracy, it is resoundingly clear that the West *itself*—the quintessential global champion of human rights, democracy, and freedom—has jeopardized democracy’s future in the last few years more surely and swiftly than any hybrid regime ever could. **Through the hypocritical and illiberal application of liberal principles, the West is eating itself from the inside out, undermining the legitimacy of Western democracy and the liberal international order.**

I am certainly not the first to [recognize](#) the [internal tensions](#) of the liberal international order, or how the “[rot within democracies](#)” is contributing to its decline. [Mearsheimer](#), for instance, makes a compelling case explaining why the West was bound to fail, emphasizing everything from geopolitics and globalization to nationalism and economic inequality. Here, I offer an additional dimension: *liberal norm subversion* by the West.

This could perhaps be no better epitomized than by the current crisis in Gaza.

Although Western hypocrisy is nothing new, the case of Gaza is particularly significant here. It shows, in no uncertain terms, the

West’s categorical abandonment of its own proclaimed system.

Take Germany, for instance: a country perhaps most beholden to call out nondemocratic violations of human rights; a country whose modern history has been defined by the Holocaust and the atrocities it will “[never again](#)” allow. Even here, democracy is disintegrating.

In its place stands a bastardization of the Holocaust’s legacy wherein Germany will not condemn [genocide](#) committed by Israel because of its historical guilt. This exploitation of the Holocaust’s legacy to justify modern genocide in the country created as the *direct result* of one is perhaps the most chilling indication of how far the West has fallen.

Nevertheless, Germany continues to double down. In a recent [speech](#) by German Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck, for example, Habeck invoked a long-held German notion that Israel’s security is Germany’s “raison d’état,” feeling that despite the “moral clarity” of such arguments, it was [not his place](#) as a German politician to criticize Israel. Reports abound of [police violence](#), [detention](#), [censorship](#), and use of [excessive force](#) against [activists](#) expressing their fundamental democratic right to free expression. I myself hesitated to write this piece, fearing as an academic living in Germany that if it was brought to the attention of my administration, I would be “McCarthy’ed” out of a job.

On a global scale, the director of the New York office of the UN [High Commissioner](#) for Human Rights—perhaps one of the premier global authorities on liberal norms—[resigned](#) in protest against what he calls a “[textbook case of genocide](#).” And yet, core Western nations, including the [US](#), [the UK](#), [France](#), [Italy](#), and [Germany](#), among others, continue

to unconditionally support Israel—despite its clear violation of international law and “damning evidence” of war crimes reported by [Amnesty International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), and the [UN Human Rights Council](#).

Simply put: the West can no longer claim to be the fundamental upholder of liberal values. Rife with contradictions, it infringes on fundamental democratic freedoms both within and beyond their own borders in the name of those same principles it alleges to espouse. In disgrace to the [very real](#), very concerning [rise](#) in [global antisemitism](#), the West has [weaponized antisemitism](#), [deploying western values](#) of tolerance and acceptance to deflect criticism of its illiberal actions and substantiated claims of genocide—whether domestically, through [academic silencing](#) or [arresting](#) peaceful protestors, or internationally, by [providing military aid to](#) Israel in support of its extermination of the Palestinian people.

Sound familiar?

It’s a classic hybrid regime move; it’s democratic backsliding with a Western, transnational flair. Democratic hypocrisy, directly from the source.

Never in the post-WWII era has there been such a unified, collective Western rejection of liberal principles. In its wake lies the foundations of democracy, significantly cracked. Yet this trajectory is not completely set in stone; [social movements](#) within and beyond Western nations, including Jewish [civil society organizations](#), do recognize and [condemn](#) the atrocities committed in Gaza and the [West’s selective](#) and [disingenuous use](#) of the Holocaust to [justify](#) violence.

So, have we truly reached the point of no return? Only time will tell.

*The views expressed here are my own and do not reflect those of my employer or any affiliated organizations.*

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### **Social Movements and Europeanisation in Times of Multiple Crises**

Donatella della Porta, Scuola Normale Superiore; Louisa R. Parks, University of Trento; and Martín Portos, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Social movements have played a key role in the development of European integration. They have contributed to a process of politicization which, according to some, has slowed the pace of Europeanisation. At the same time, however, they have created ‘subaltern’ public spheres in which a critical European public has emerged, specifically

around questions of democratic deficit and the accountability of EU institutions. Like political parties and governments, social movements vary greatly in their assessments of both the depth and the type of EU integration, as we set out to explore in the article “Social Movements and the European Union: Framing ‘Responsibility’ and

'Responsiveness' in Times of Multiple Crises", which we presented at the 'Tides and Struggles of Democracy and Constitutionalism' panel of the Section on Political Sociology during the 118th ASA Annual Meeting. By and large, progressive social movements have tended to criticize negative integration in the name of cosmopolitan values and call for a social Europe. On the regressive side, opposition to the EU has focused on the defense of exclusive nationalism with calls for national sovereignty. The contrast is most visible on the issue of borders, as the EU is criticized as 'Fortress Europe' on the Left and considered as jeopardizing national borders and cultures on the Right.

As the European Union level political opportunities for social movements closed down around the Great Recession, with a centralisation of decision making and a stress on economic competition, public opinion data point to evidence of an estrangement from EU institutions among citizens on the Right. On the Left, citizens' limited support for integration resonates with the critical Europeanism of progressive social movements, which moved from low-to-mild supportive positions (compared with the Right) at the turn of the Millennium, dipped with the austerity crisis, and regained some ground in more recent years. These fluctuations in public opinion tally broadly with the evolution of frames in movement organizations on the far-Right and Left.

In addressing the evolution of movement frames, we cover three critical moments of transnational activism that positioned the EU as a central actor for the Left and Right, respectively: 1) the beginning of the Millennium; 2) the Great Recession/the migration and refugee crisis; and 3) climate/Covid-19 pandemic mobilization campaigns. We find that while movements on

both sides have criticized the lack of electoral accountability of EU institutions, they differ very much in how they construct the meaning of responsibility, as the Right calls for a narrow definition in defense of the 'nation' while the Left calls for a broad definition in defense of humanity. The EU's institutions are thus criticized by both, but based on different claims and normative positions.

Our analysis shows that far-Right groups at the turn of the Millennium framed globalization and processes of European integration as a threat to national, conservative, values, yet saw Europe as a potential way to defend member states from international threats. With the migration and refugee crisis and more so with the pandemic, these positions hardened into an absolute refusal of European integration, expressed in nativist and sovereignist frames and references to international conspiracies by various 'global elites'. Frames in left-wing milieus have also evolved over time, but in very different directions. In the global justice movement of the early 2000s, frames centered around the idea that 'another Europe is possible' – one built around social justice rather than neoliberal capitalism. During the Great Recession, criticism of neoliberal policies increased in accusations related to the imposition of austerity, colonialism, and the linked rise of nationalism and far-Right parties. Here, Europe was seen as part of the problem, able to play a positive role only as a space in a broad global network of mobilization and solidarity from below. This is further elaborated by climate justice movement groups which see the locus of a substantive democracy in global networks of bottom-up struggle, and the EU as lacking ambition and drive to fight climate change.

In short, the Right has radicalized its positions and claims over time, shifting from

Eurosceptic to EU-refusal during the pandemic. The Left is more firmly anchored in a critical Europeanism, though referring to the EU less frequently over time in favor of calls for a responsible stance beyond Europe at the global scale.

**Donatella della Porta** is Professor of Political Science and founding dean of the Faculty of

Political and Social Sciences at the Scuola Normale Superiore. **Louisa R. Parks** is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Trento. **Martín Portos** is Ramón y Cajal Fellow in Social Sciences at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

### **Democracy in historical times**

Sergio Galaz García

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Recent political developments, it turns out, have not behaved according to the plan that the end of the twentieth century had envisioned for them. While the 1990s famously hosted a profusion of expert commentaries that projected tame political developments for the beginning of the two-thousands, the past 15 years brought instead stormy political waters stirred by a wide array of political shocks. From the Orange Revolution in Ukraine to the George Floyd protests in the US, from Brexit in the UK to the unexpected victories of Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro and Javier Milei in the American continent, and from Greece's politico-economic crisis to the Indignados movement in Spain, current times have witnessed the comeback of political unsettledness—to use Ann Swidler's evocative term—with a strength not seen since perhaps the 1960s.

For research on political opinion and political behavior, current political unsettledness and its contrast with the relatively still quality of the period that preceded it is a powerful reminder of the need to develop an explicitly historicized view of how we study, research and evaluate contemporary democracies and their social basis. By this I mean exploring the

possibility that social and political forces might achieve explanatory concretion not by simply sliding through the abstract, crisp and water-tight surfaces of presentist causal time, but by traversing sticky, meaning-filled historical times that might condition, at least, the strength of their influence.

Take, for example, class gaps in political engagement—one of the oldest, more robust and more systematic findings in the literature of political behavior. Although strong support for the existence of these gaps dates back to at least the 1950s, we still know very little on how its magnitude has changed over time. A quick empirical look at available data from Western Europe suggests that these changes exist and might be historically conditioned. For Western Europe, Eurobarometer surveys offer since the 1970s high quality data on sustained political engagement in the form of a categorical variable measuring whether people talk never (for ease of interpretation, 0), sometimes (1) or frequently (2). For founding EU country members with more than one million people, the gap between people with and without college experience, a class indicator commonly used in the literature, was 0.519 in 1973. In the year 2000, this gap descended to 0.33 in 2000. Twenty

years later, in 2019— at the wake of COVID—it had jumped again to 0.40.

Of course, nothing of much depth can be said from only inspecting loose data points on descriptive statistics. Nevertheless, the numbers I just presented suggest several interesting indicative takeaways. First, class gaps in political discussion might have undergone strong historical variations: in the 2000, this gap was a third smaller than its 1973 figure. Second, these historical variations hint at differences in democratic quality. Since wider class gaps in political engagement are likely to make a democratic system more prone to elite capture (Berinsky 2004; Schlozman, Brady and Verba 2018; Bartels 2008; Althaus 2003), the numbers presented above suggest that 1973 is a time where West European elites might have yielded more disproportionate influence than at the end of the twentieth-century. Third, the historical distribution of the sizes of political discussion suggests puzzling empirical questions. Why was political discussion in the early 1970s, a time that still coincided with political arrangements concurrent with political moderation, economic growth and the development of the welfare state in most of Western Europe, less equally distributed? And why did 2000, when the neoliberal economic reforms that have been credited for increasing social inequalities and the arrival of managerial discourses of political expertise, perform better with respect to class inequalities in political talk? And, last but not least, what made political inequalities jump again by the end of the 2010s?

Identifying insights similar to the ones above for political engagement and other foundational political dispositions and researching them in detail is likely to yield high rewards to the literature in terms of theory building and methodological development, and of equal importance, in our assessment of how close or far democracies are from generating better constituted polities, and how resilient their social foundations are to the political shocks like the ones abounding in current times. Key for the attainment of this objective is complementing the presentist analytical takes on political behavior that are standard in the literature with another view recognizing historical contexts not as residual explanatory forces, but as an environmental stimulus actively conditioning behavioral and interpretive schemes for politics.

Althaus, Scott M. 2003. *Collective Preferences in Democratic Politics: Opinion Surveys and the Will of the People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bartels, Larry M. 2008. "The irrational electorate." *Wilson Quarterly* 32(4): 44-50.

Berinsky, Adam J. 2004. "Can We Talk? Self-Presentation and the Survey Response." *Political Psychology* 25: 643-659. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00391.x>

Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Henry E. Brady. & Sidney Verba. 2018. *Unequal and Unrepresented: Political Inequality and the People's Voice in the New Gilded Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**Sergio Galaz Garcia** is Juan de la Cierva Postdoctoral Fellow at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid and Instituto Carlos III-Juan March.

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## Q&A with 2023 Award Winners



**Maria-Fátima Santos**

### **Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship for an Article**

Committee: Nella Van Dyke (chair),  
Lauren Duquette-Rury, Maro Youssef

“Modernizing Leviathan: Carceral Reform and the Struggle for Legitimacy in Brazil’s Espírito Santo State.” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 87(5) 889–918.

**SPS: How did you start working on the research project that led to the article? How did the project evolve over time?**

“Modernizing Leviathan” is an article based on my master’s work in graduate school. I found Espírito Santo’s recent and dramatic carceral reform to be a useful case to clarify the importance of carceral administration to state legitimacy. I conducted fieldwork and collected data in Espírito Santo (interviews, tours of carceral facilities, archival research) to understand how this especially swift case of carceral state-building took place in just over a decade, and to understand the implications of this process for political authority and inequality. Carceral state-building requires resources, political will, and expertise, and all of these conditions

were present in Espírito Santo, but my fieldwork also more clearly spotlighted other key dynamics. Rationalizing and bureaucratizing carceral administration entailed authorities employing various coordinated coercive tactics toward incarcerated people to impose this regime of more totalizing state control. It also involved many performative strategies (even contradictory ones for different audiences). I wrote up my findings as two separate articles, but something seemed incomplete. After stepping away for a bit I saw more clearly the significance of analyzing the relationship between these two dimensions, which led to my key finding: the types of coercive practices from which modern state rulers seek to distinguish their authority are not antithetical to modern state rule; rather they are constitutive of the very process of modernizing administration—which in turn more effectively naturalize the use of penal practices along unequal lines to legitimize state power (that is, in the eyes of influential segments of the populace).

**SPS: What do you see as the core questions motivating your research going forward?**

My research most centrally focuses on how states develop, orient and naturalize their ability to routinely exercise coercion along unequal lines, especially along economic and ethno-racial divisions. I specifically focus on the penal domain, which is one of the most central and routine modes by which state rulers exercise their coercive capacity. My current research spotlights the significance of local court actors to penal state power. In particular, my book project examines a taken for granted actor in many of today’s courtrooms: legal aid professionals who

counsel poor people facing state prosecution. Empirically, I analyze public defenders in two Brazilian cities amid broader processes of democratization, state-building and the most dramatic transformation in the country's penal procedures in two centuries. I probe the distinct social trajectories, motivations and work practices of public defenders in these contrasting jurisdictions to clarify the broader forces that shape legal aid professionals' relationship to inequality, penal power, and state transformation.

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

Political sociology is extremely vast, so I will focus on two analytic moves I think are important to gain even greater leverage from existing contributions and generate new questions about state power and violence. I also believe they are important for contributing to academic and public debates about both the history and contemporary manifestations of violence exercised or conditioned by state rulers. First, I would like to see greater analytic exchange and broader synthesis of scholarship that examines different dimensions, logics and effects of coercion. A constellation of different modes of coercion and violence are connected to inequalities, the movement of peoples across geographic space, and political power (warfare, armed internal and jurisdictional conflict, genocide, penalty). Situating our empirical cases within these dynamics in the broader global field of power will allow us greater purchase on our analyses to advance sociological concepts and debates on various questions, from inequality, to race-making and ethno-racial conflict, migration, democracy, and empire.

Second (and somewhat relatedly), another next step is to advance more systematic inquiry about the relationship between practical and symbolic dimensions of coercion and violence. We know that states do not have a full monopoly over legitimate violence, but their legitimacy depends on their ability to project this in select spaces and domains. This is as much a practical as symbolic feat. Much work in the field has advanced our understanding of these two dimensions. Greater analysis of the relationship between them will be useful to uncover the more pernicious logics of how states exercise coercion in ways that shape unequal social orders and conflict—that is, not just in cases explicitly denounced as illegitimate violence, but also practices that come to be projected as culturally acceptable and legitimized models of when, how and toward whom coercion “should be” exercised.

*María-Fatima Santos is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.*



**Celene Reynolds**

**Honorable Mention, Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship for an Article Award**

Committee: Nella Van Dyke (chair), Lauren Duquette-Rury, Maro Youssef

“Repurposing Title IX: How Sexual Harassment Became Sex Discrimination in American Higher Education.” *American Journal of Sociology* 128(2): 462–514.

**SPS: How did you start working on the research project that led to the article? How did the project evolve over time?**

In my first year of graduate school at Yale, I took a job in one of the offices responsible for implementing Title IX. Immediately, I was struck by how the administrators talked about Title IX—almost exclusively in terms of its application to sexual harassment and assault. I had always (incorrectly) understood Title IX as the law that mandated gender equity in school sports.

I quickly learned that, in 2011, students and alumni filed a federal Title IX complaint against Yale for failing to address its sexually hostile environment. This helped explain why administrators seemed so preoccupied with the issue. The complaint was a harbinger of the wave of mobilization against campus sexual misconduct that would soon sweep across the country. Much of this mobilization centered around Title IX. But because the wave was only just building when I started in that office at Yale, this use for the law still seemed unusual—or what Robert K. Merton would call “anomalous.” I spent the next 10 years trying to understand it.

My first step was to review all the federal policies implementing Title IX and all the lawsuits using Title IX to confront sexual harassment in education. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that this use for the law originated at Yale in the late 1970s. Through my archival work on the Yale case, it became clear that Women Organized Against Sexual Harassment at Berkeley also played an enormously consequential role in the repurposing of Title IX. I added the Cornell

case last, although it came first chronologically, to better understand the forces that produced this new interpretation of the law.

There is also a big quantitative component of the project. I built a database of all the federal Title IX complaints filed against colleges and universities from 1994 to 2019. In my forthcoming book, *Unlawful Advances: How Feminists Transformed Title IX* (Princeton UP), I use these data to understand the continuing impact of the events at Yale and Berkeley on the social life of Title IX in more recent decades.

**SPS: What do you see as the core questions motivating your research going forward?**

I remain deeply interested in how and why we come to understand and use laws differently over time. I’m particularly interested in this question as it applies to laws that seek to enhance equity. One surprising discovery from my dataset of federal Title IX complaints is that more than 30 percent of claims over the historical period allege discrimination against men. I did not expect this number to be so high. This trend is the jumping off point for my next book project. When and under what conditions are laws that were enacted to foster equal educational opportunity for the historically underrepresented mobilized on behalf of relatively overrepresented or dominant groups? How has this particular use of antidiscrimination law changed over time and diffused throughout the world? These are crucial questions to understand in today’s global political landscape.

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

There is a new wave of political sociologists studying threats to liberal democracy. These threats include populism, ethnonational autocracies, and so on. But there is still precious little on how law fits into the story—specifically how social movements, policymakers, and others use laws that were designed to protect core features of liberal democracies to instead erode them. Fundamentally, these are political conflicts over the meaning of the text of the law, and, in the US, they arise most frequently around the Constitution. Does the Fourteenth Amendment protect “privileges and immunities” that are not explicitly enumerated in the Constitution? In his concurring opinion on *Dobbs*, Justice Clarence Thomas intimated that it does not. These interpretive struggles can completely redefine rights, citizenship, equality, and more. This is why we need to study them, especially in our current sociohistorical moment.

**Dr. Celene Reynolds** is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Indiana University.



**Wendy Y. Li**

**Winner, Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship for a Paper by a Graduate Student Award**

Committee: Daniel Laurison (Chair), Bart Bonikowski, Jennifer Triplett, Pei Palmgren

“Regulatory Capture’s Third Face of Power.”  
*Socio-Economic Review* 21(2): 1217-1245.

**SPS: How did you start working on the research project that led to the article? How did the project evolve over time?**

Before graduate school, I was a political staffer and briefly a holdover between the Obama and Trump Administrations. During that time, I observed huge shifts, both rhetorically and substantively, in the U.S. trade policy agenda. As I started research for my master’s thesis, however, I realized that while the Trump Administration was perfectly happy to blow up some norms and institutions in international trade law, other regulatory areas like digital trade remained stable. My fieldwork documented how lobbyists for tech companies reacted to the shock of the Trump Administration by extending cultural schemas and further embedding themselves into the U.S. trade policy network, making sure their interests and objectives were resonating not only with higher-level political appointees, but also staff-level regulators and trade negotiators.

I then got involved with an initiative through the Tobin Project and the Social Science Research Council on regulatory capture. In a 2014 edited volume, Dan Carpenter and David Moss lay out a set of conditions, based on observable conflicts, through which we can diagnose capture. I also happened to be taking my political sociology preliminary exam around the same time, and as I read their work, I couldn’t help but see the first and second faces of power glaring at me. I realized that my master’s thesis could speak to the third face of regulatory capture.

**SPS: What do you see as the core questions motivating your research going forward?**

After this project, I wanted to dive deeper into the micro-level cultural and relational dynamics of political elites. In DC, the revolving door between corporate lobbying and government is ubiquitous. My dissertation articulates a theoretical framework and methods for operationalizing and measuring revolving door careers and the networks that emerge from them. For this project, I used several methods, including sequence analysis, interviews, network analysis, and content analysis of government records. I am also developing a book project that is primarily ethnographic, but also draws on these other forms of data, to trace the revolving door's impacts, from individual career decisions to interest group behavior, and ultimately the structure of the state.

Moving forward, I have many lingering research questions that link back to classic questions in the study of elites. Does an 'old boys club' persist? How have the demographics of elites changed over time and across policy issues? How do revolving doors affect elite cohesion or fracturing? Beyond corporate lobbying, what other revolving doors exist in and out of government? What does that say about the relative power or influence of various interest groups or organizations? How might revolving door networks explain specific policy outcomes? Although my dissertation starts by mapping out the U.S. trade policy network, I plan on expanding this into a longitudinal, multi-issue study of revolving door networks that is comparative, relational, and historical.

**SPS: Where do you see the political sociology subfield heading? What do you think are some of the key ways that political**

**sociology can contribute to current academic and public debates?**

Political sociology is such a broad subfield, and I see it heading in so many different directions depending on which (sub-sub-)subfields you're looking at. In my corner of things, I'm super excited about the work being done on political elites in the U.S. and globally. Some of this is really careful qualitative work, some of this is computational, tracing political networks and career trajectories, some of this is historical, archival analysis. A lot of this work is breaking away from statist, formal theories and instead thinking about specific people, relationships, and culture. I think it goes to show that politics isn't its own planet with its own laws of gravity. We can use theories of occupations, organizations, the life course, culture, collective action, etc. to study political elites like we study any other population.

*Wendy Y. Li is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.*



**Lynette H. Ong**

**Co-Winner, Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Book Award**

Committee: Kiyoteru Tsutsui (chair), Irene H.I. Bloemraad, Caroline Lee, Elisabeth Anderson

*Outsourcing Repression: Everyday State Power in Contemporary China*. Oxford University Press.

**SPS: How did you start working on the research project that led to the book? How did the project evolve over time?**

The start of the project was incidental. I began the project in 2012 with the intention of understanding the political economy of urbanization in China, which is the empirical context of my book. But I was inundated with tales of thuggish harassment and threats during my field interviews with the Chinese citizens who had undergone land grabs and housing demolition. It was compelling and sufficiently novel in China that I decided to investigate the – prevalent yet understudied – roles of hired violent actors (thugs) in the implementation of government policies. In the book, I contrast the violent actors with non-violent actors, namely community volunteers and enthusiasts, who are mobilized by the state to persuade citizens to comply with eviction orders. The motivation of the two types of non-state actors is distinct – one is hired agents who are paid for their violent service, while the other is mobilized on ideological grounds and their willingness to contribute to the perceived public goods. Nevertheless, their complicity in state's actions – by threatening citizens to part with their land or leave their homes, or “persuading” recalcitrant households to sign consent papers using relationship traps – serve to augment state power in implementing challenging everyday policies. With the capacity to outsource repression, the book thus invites readers to reimagine the contours of state power.

**SPS: What do you see as the core questions motivating your research going forward?**

As a scholar of China and authoritarian countries in general, I often think about access to the field and availability of data. As the political environment in China gets tougher and is likely to remain tightly controlled in the near future, scholars have to think about new ways of collecting data. I remain interested in the question of state power, but I am open to exploring other dimensions of power – when repression becomes considerably more difficult to study.

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

Political sociology is an exciting subfield within sociology. It sits right at the intersection of sociology and political science, speaking to important literature in both disciplines. My own work on repression speaks to state power and contentious politics – how the state controls society, and societal responses. Sociology is traditionally focused on society, and political science tends to be preoccupied with the state and its institutions. But, to understand the implications of state policies and their discourse, it is critical, in my view, to look at the interactions and synergies between them. This is an exciting direction the political sociology subfield is heading!

*Dr. Lynette Ong is Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto.*



**Elizabeth Popp Berman**  
**Co-Winner, Distinguished Contribution**  
**to Scholarship Book Award**

Committee: Kiyoteru Tsutsui (chair), Irene  
 H.I. Bloemraad, Caroline Lee, Elisabeth  
 Anderson

*Thinking like an Economist: How Efficiency  
 Replaced Equality in U.S. Public Policy.*  
 Princeton University Press.

Look for this interview in the  
 Spring/Summer 2024 issue!

**Dr. Elizabeth Popp Berman** is Richard H. Price  
 Professor and Director of Organizational  
 Studies and Professor of Sociology (by  
 courtesy) at the University of Michigan.

## Q&A with New Council Members



**Dana R. Fisher**

Chair-Elect // Director, Center for  
 Environment, Community, & Equity and  
 Professor, School of International Service,  
 American University

**SPS: Please tell us about your work and your  
 plans during these unusual and uneasy  
 times. How will you be spending your time  
 on research and teaching this year?**

My new book comes out early in 2024. [Saving  
 Ourselves: from Climate Shocks to Climate  
 Action](#) synthesizes the research I have  
 conducted on climate politics and climate  
 activism over the past 25 years (along with  
 new data) to think through how we will be  
 able to get to the other side of the climate  
 crisis. The findings from the book  
 encouraged me to focus on more actionable  
 research around how we can create and  
 cultivate both social and environmental  
 resilience in our communities. I am currently  
 working with a number of Federal agencies to  
 understand how they are working to do that.  
 Since I just moved from UMD to AU, I am not  
 currently teaching but look forward to  
 teaching in the future.

**SPS: What are you looking forward to doing  
 on the council? What do you think are some  
 of the priorities for the section going  
 forward?**

I am looking forward to working with other political sociologists to build more community around research and practice. I hope to contribute to the ways the Council connects us all and our research and to organizing panels that are both scholarly rigorous and focused on political topics that are currently relevant.



### **Mohammad Ali Kadivar**

*Council Member // Assistant Professor of  
Sociology and International Studies,  
Boston College*

**SPS: Please tell us about your work and your plans during these unusual and uneasy times. How will you be spending your time on research and teaching this year?**

This year, I'm balancing my research with teaching responsibilities. I instruct courses in social theory, political sociology, and social movements. In addition to my teaching, I am deeply immersed in two interconnected research projects. The first project investigates the factors driving recent anti-government protests in Iran. In collaboration with my peers, we are investigating the impact of online coordination on the spread of offline protests, especially in a context where a high level of repression hinders the emergence of traditional social movement organizations. Another aspect of this project focuses on the

effects of oil production on anti-government protests triggered by sudden spikes in fuel prices. We argue that oil extraction creates grievances by polluting the environment and reshaping the local economy, often leading to protests when fuel prices skyrocket.

In the second project, I'm delving into the long-term repercussions of revolutionary and wartime mobilization at the subnational level in Iran.

**SPS: What are you looking forward to doing on the council? What do you think are some of the priorities for the section going forward?**

During my tenure on the council, I am eager to contribute to and advocate for scholarship that spotlights political issues in the global south. This broader concern extends to the field of American sociology, including political sociology. While the majority of the world's population resides outside the United States and Western Europe, most of the attention within American sociology has been centered on these regions. Recent years have witnessed growing calls for the decolonization of sociology. In my view, one of the most straightforward ways to embark on this path is by creating space to study and scrutinize issues concerning populations beyond the Western sphere. This approach not only enriches our theoretical frameworks in political sociology but also fosters greater inclusivity within our discipline. It's an essential step toward broadening our horizons and fostering a more holistic perspective on global political dynamics, which aligns with my priorities during these unusual and challenging times. My aim is to continue my research while simultaneously advocating for a more diverse and inclusive approach within the council, ultimately advancing the field of political sociology.



### **Hajar Yazdiha**

Council Member // Assistant Professor of  
Sociology, University of Southern  
California

**SPS: Please tell us about your work and your plans during these unusual and uneasy times. How will you be spending your time on research and teaching this year?**

I've been spending much of my time in the exciting throes of sharing my new book, *The Struggle for the People's King: How Politics Transforms the Memory of the Civil Rights Movement*. At the same time, I have a number of projects I'm eager to get out into the world including one with Blanca Ramirez (UCLA) on the effects of Voter ID laws on immigrant-serving organizations' strategies, which feels especially urgent with the 2024 election coming up. Another project centers on Gen Z activism coming out of the pandemic and the ways students configure imagined futures. I will say, so many young people are taking the worst possible hand we could have dealt them and are thinking so creatively and radically about how to do things differently.

I'm also working on a number of projects that think about the politics of solidarity and coalition-building. What are the conditions under which different groups come to understand their linked fates? What are the

social forces that keep analogous groups apart? These are the questions that are keeping me up at night.

I'm returning to the classroom in January after a research leave, and I've been thinking a lot about how difficult the world is right now and how to best support students who are processing all this while still working through the traumas of the pandemic. I hope these are also discussions we can have collectively as a section and discipline at large.

**SPS: What are you looking forward to doing on the council? What do you think are some of the priorities for the section going forward?**

I'm looking forward to working with section leadership to broaden the reach of this section. I have been inspired by the generative work emerging from a new generation of political sociologists expanding our conceptions of the relationship between power, the state, and society. I'd love to see us drawing in, supporting, and amplifying this emergent work, building infrastructures to support and grow our community of political sociologists, whether by building stronger cross-section networks or sustained mentorship structures. For interested members, it would also be great to expand our reach and accessibility to media, policymakers, and publics.



**Valentina Cantori**

Council Member (Student) // PhD  
 Candidate in Sociology, University of  
 Michigan

**SPS: Please tell us about your work and your plans during these unusual and uneasy times. How will you be spending your time on research and teaching this year?**

During these uneasy times, I am writing my dissertation titled “Imagining Inclusion: How American Muslim Advocates Craft Public Images in U.S. Civic Life.” Admittedly, the task has been daunting given the many current sources of worry originating both from national and international politics – I am sure others can relate! Fortunately, research and writing have always been ways for me to personally cope with chaos, so I will spend the academic year finding refuge in the written words of my dissertation. In my work, I explore how American Muslim advocates craft public images of Islam and Muslims for circulation in American public life with the aim of projecting cultural membership in a society that continues to ostracize Muslims

from civic participation and exclude them on religious, racial, and ethnic grounds from national narratives of belonging. With the genocide in Gaza unfolding, the heightened incidents of hate crime against Muslims in the U.S., and the racialized tropes of Muslims as dangerous and supporting terrorism that are pervading mediatic narratives, questions of Muslim representation, civic engagement, and inclusion have become even more urgent to address. I hope my research will further contribute to advancing the amazing works carried out by fellow political sociologists on Muslim advocacy and activism.

**SPS: What are you looking forward to doing on the council? What do you think are some of the priorities for the section going forward?**

This year, I am very honored to be serving on the Political Sociology Section’s council as a Graduate Student Representative. I plan to use this opportunity to help increase graduate students’ presence and participation in the section. I have served on other ASA councils in the past, and these experiences have taught me that sections can and should serve as community hubs for graduate students that can thus connect, meet, work together, and sustain each other in their PhD journey. The Political Sociology Section has already been promoting incredible initiatives for graduate students, and I plan on joining these ongoing efforts and help deepen the connection of the section with graduate students across the country.



## Tales from the Field

### Chance Encounters

Gilad Wenig

University of California, Los Angeles

What happens when you arrive at an archive only to find nothing? Null results, to borrow the phrase, are undoubtedly familiar to those of us who use historical data in our research, but often the answer is more epistemological than practical. Since the preservation of historical materials is influenced by a variety of factors, both deliberate and coincidental, we are often encouraged to read against the grain of the archive, finding insights in what is omitted as well as what is included. But this advice can require us to reframe our original research question. It might even merit an entirely different focus. So what is a researcher in the field supposed to do if they do not want to change paths so definitively?

This is the position I found myself in as I began preliminary research for my dissertation at the National Archives in the UK. Keen to understand how colonial powers built up militaries across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), I set out for the records of military academies. Such records existed for other regions – particularly southeast Asia – so I was hopeful I might find something similar for the MENA region, where a number of states had been subjected to British rule. It was to no avail; the records were simply not there. Because local archives in the MENA were also not a viable source given restrictive policies, I was uncertain how to proceed.

In one sense, I was in a fortunate position. I had timed this fieldwork so that it would coincide with writing my dissertation prospectus, which meant I had a degree of

flexibility in terms of my project. I was not yet locked into a particular approach. In another sense, however, this placed me at something of a disadvantage. Prospectuses are, by their very nature, subject to change and chance, and my efforts had closed off certain possibilities. I could not propose the impossible.

Informed by a separate project I was working on, which charted post-colonial purges of the state elite in Egypt, I changed tack.<sup>1</sup> Instead of looking for organizational records, I scaled down to the level of individuals, mining the histories of one case (Egypt) to locate even the vaguest reference to the name of a British military instructor. My intention was to see if these officers had perhaps maintained personal archives and retained relevant records after retiring. This process took some time and I eventually found some names. But in search of these fragments of imperial rule, I came away with an entirely new source of data on the military organization of the British Empire: a regularly published register of its army officer corps.

We are often told that theory should precede empirics, and perhaps this is true in an ideal world. Yet in pursuit of basic facts, I landed on the basis for an even broader project on the workings of empire. With this resource, I could reconstruct not only military missions in Egypt and the broader MENA region, but the imperial army elite as a whole. For those of us who make use of archives, serendipity is

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<sup>1</sup> See “Purging to Transform the Post-Colonial State: Evidence from the 1952 Egyptian Revolution” (with Neil Ketchley), *Comparative Political Studies*, forthcoming.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140231209966>

an inescapable part of our work, and defines both the limits and possibilities of research.

*Gilad Wenig is a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research examines the dynamics of elite politics, with a focus on the British Empire and the modern Middle East and North Africa.*

**Why are you hopping and chanting  
with those Colombian hooligans?  
Political organizing amid war and  
peace**

Nicolás Torres-Echeverry  
The University of Chicago

Iván\* is jumping over a thin stadium railing behind me. His chest is shirtless and full of tattoos, as are those of his two friends jumping and chanting next to him. They are holding a flag at least thirty meters long that hangs from the back of the stadium downwards to where we are, waving the colors of Once Caldas, the Manizales City soccer team. I'm hanging out with la barra (organized soccer supporters in Colombia akin to hooligans) as I carry out fieldwork for my dissertation *Between War and Peace: Political Organizing in Twenty-First Century Colombia*. Having no major interest in soccer and planned no role for it when I set out to do fieldwork, it was utterly strange that I was there, jumping and chanting.

In January 2022, during the first of two rounds of fieldwork, I set up to follow the presidential election in four mid-size Colombian cities: two where former insurgents that had demobilized in the 1990s had managed to win local elections over several cycles and two others where this had not happened. The project's first stage aimed to interview local actors in the political field and observe the presidential election of 2022,

while mapping the associational terrain and the organizations that had developed left-wing identities in the cities. It was there that I ran into the surprising initial finding that several barras had been in an accelerating process of political organizing. The more time I spent with barras, the more interesting they appeared. Timmermans and Tavory's work (2014) and a supporting committee helped me acknowledge the relevance of this initial finding to dig deeper and enjoy it.

My two conservative cities—Manizales and Bucaramanga—had experienced war in a form that aligned them with a militaristic stance. Such a backdrop represented a deep aversion against anything that was interpreted to be “left”, which circumscribed the growth of organizations like unions and student movements. Barras were not interpreted to have a political role, much less a leftist one, and so could mobilize new sectors of the population. Barras had been coming together in both cities, as in the rest of the country, since the end of the 1990s. Young, anarchic, defiant, and violent, they had organized through trial and error their involvement in politics. Even though they had started as an organization of middle-class kids, they had quickly grown to incorporate poor youngsters from the city.

Barras had not formed to be a political space, and yet as the peace process with FARC advanced over the 2010s, barristas began discussing their political positions. They began linking state violence against them with the violence of Álvaro Uribe's right-wing presidential period (2002-2010), which had executed young people and falsely presented them as guerrillas killed in combat, commonly referred to as false positives.

Barristas had endured state violence, constantly present against them in stadiums

and in other realms, like in their experiences of conscription and in the 2019, 2020, and, particularly, the 2021 protests cycles. In a Simmelian move, they had come to understand that if the right had been against them, then, they were left. Valentina, an advocate for women within these organizations of machos, came to the following structural equivalence, syllogistic argument: “The left is against the police; I am against the police; hence, I’m left.” Barras activated fully politically around the election of former left-wing insurgent Gustavo Petro in 2022, engaging in cross-generational political influencing of their elders, most of whom admired the project of Álvaro Uribe.

It was in this way that barras became part of a cluster of other unexpected associations that developed left-wing identities and that are present in my dissertation project. It was

also in this way that a non-soccer fan became quite interested in soccer and ended up jumping with Iván over that thin stadium railing.

\*I use pseudonyms to protect anonymity in accordance with my IRB protocol.

Tavory, Iddo & Stefan Timmermans. 2014. *Abductive analysis: Theorizing qualitative research*. University of Chicago Press.

**Nicolás Torres-Echeverry** is a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at The University of Chicago. His dissertation explores the co-existence of peace and war efforts in parallel, and not as two independent domains, by studying the political articulation of civic associations in Global South contexts. His recent research has been published at *Theory and Society*. For more information: <https://voices.uchicago.edu/nte/>

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## New Publications

### Academic articles or chapters

Albanese, Anthony. 2022. "Book Review: Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism." *Critical Sociology* 48(3): 538-539.

Almeida, Paul & González Márquez, Luis Rubén. 2023. "Interpreting Repressive and Economic Threats: Música contestataria and Collective Resistance in Central America." *Latin American Perspectives* 50(3):134-156. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X231194310>

Bakker, H.I. 2018. "Piketty and Patrimonialism." In *Twenty-First Century Inequality & Capitalism: Piketty, Marx and Beyond*, eds. Lauren Langman and David A. Smith.

Bradlow, Benjamin H. 2024. "Urban social movements and local state capacity." *World Development*. 173: 106415.

Cheong, Amanda R. 2023. "Theorizing Omission: State Strategies for Withholding Official Recognition of Personhood." *Sociological Theory*. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/07352751231206838>

Cheong, Amanda R. Forthcoming. "Racial Exclusion by Bureaucratic Omission: Non-Enumeration, Documentary Dispossession, and the Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar." *Social Problems*. Preprint: <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/dt4ec>

Foertsch, Steven, Rudra Chakraborty, and Paul Joosse. 2023. "Asymmetric conflation: QAnon and the political cooptation of religion." *Politics and Religion*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048323000275>

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Kamenou, Nayia. 2023. "Queer in Cyprus? The LGBTIQ Movement, Normativity, and Resistance in a Changing (Trans)national Landscape." *Social Sciences* 12(7): 419. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12070419>

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Khani, Saber & Kadivar, Mohammad Ali. 2023. "Sanctuaries or Battlegrounds? State Penetration in Places of Worship, University Campuses, and State Bureaucracy for Pro-Government Mobilization: Evidence from Iran (2015–2019)." *Comparative Political Studies*, OnlineFirst. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140231194914>

Khutkyy, Dmytro, and Eduardo Astudillo Laureda. 2023. "Internet Voting for Policy Proposals: Amplifying Open Government in Chile and Colombia." *JeDEM - EJournal of EDemocracy and Open Government* 15(1): 48–72. <https://doi.org/10.29379/jedem.v15i1.791>.

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Khutkyy, Dmytro, Matveieva, Olga, and Diana Mirza-Grisco. 2023. "Voting in online surveys on open government policies in Moldova and Ukraine." *Internet Policy Review* 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.14763/2023.2.1712>.

Kim, Sunmin, and Taeku Lee. 2023. "Making Opinions Public: Polling and Democratic Responsiveness in South Korea" *Politics & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323292231181766>

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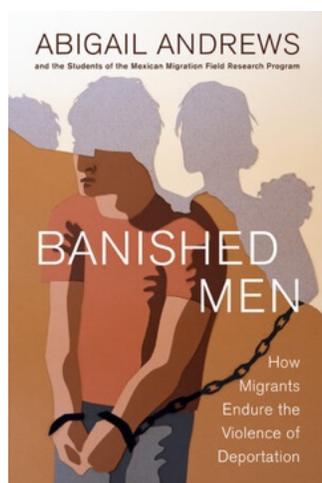
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Luft, Aliza. 2023. "The Moral Career of the Genocide Perpetrator: Cognition, Emotions, and Dehumanization as a Consequence, Not a Cause, of Violence." *Sociological Theory* 41(4): 324-351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07352751231203716>

Leader Maynard, Jonathan and Aliza Luft. 2023. "Humanizing dehumanization research." *Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology* 4:100102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cresp.2023.100102>

Torres-Echeverry, Nicolás. 2023. "Social media, meet old politics: preservation and innovation in Colombian presidential elections, 2010–2018." *Theory and Society* 52: 425-461. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-022-09509-w>

## Books

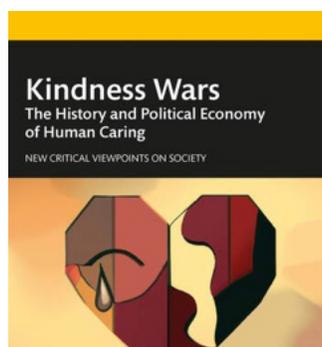


### **Banished Men: How Migrants Endure the Violence of Deportation**

Abigail Andrews and the Students of the Mexican Migration Field Research Program. 2023. University of California Press. Open access via the UC Press website.

What becomes of men the U.S. locks up and kicks out? From 2009 to 2020, the U.S. deported more than five million people—over 90 percent of them men. In *Banished Men*, Abigail Andrews and her students tell 186 of their stories. How, they ask, does expulsion shape men's lives and sense of themselves? The book uncovers a harrowing carceral system that weaves together policing, prison, detention, removal, and border militarization to undermine migrants as men. Guards and gangs beat them down, till they feel like cockroaches, pigs, or dogs. Many lose ties

with family. They do not go "home." Instead, they end up in limbo: stripped of their very humanity. Against the odds, they fight for new ways to belong. At once devastating and humane, *Banished Men* offers a clear-eyed critique of the violence of deportation.

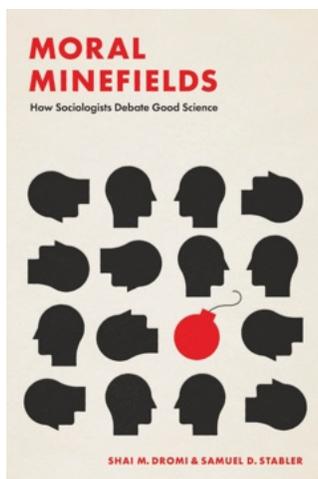


### **Kindness Wars: The History and Political Economy of Human Caring**

Noel Cazenave. 2023. Routledge.

*Kindness Wars* rescues our understanding of kindness from the clutches of an intellectually and morally myopic popular psychology and returns it to the stage of big ideas, in keeping with the important

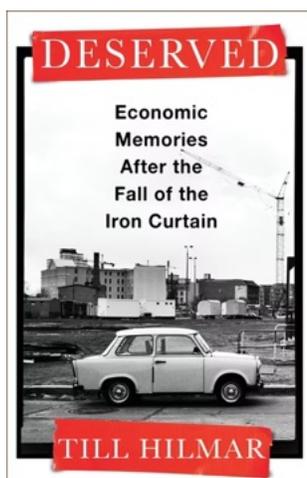
Enlightenment-era debates about human nature and possibilities. Cazenave conceptualizes kindness not just as a benevolent feeling, a caring thought, or a generous action but as a worldview, a theory, or an ideology that explains who we are and justifies how we treat others. Here “kindness wars” refer to the millennia-old “kindness theory” and ideological conflicts over what kind of societies humans can and should have. The book’s title denotes the two types of kindness wars it analyzes, conflict over (1) whether to be kind or not (i.e., the conflicts between kindness and other societal values and ideologies) and (2) what it means to be kind (i.e., the wars within kindness over different ideas as to what it means to be kind and to whom). Using a conflict theoretical perspective, *Kindness Wars* examines the history of the kindness concept; its many struggles with opposing notions of our true nature and possibilities; and what the lessons of that history and those battles offer us toward the development of a large, robust, and politically engaged conceptualization of kindness.



### **Moral Minefields: How Sociologists Debate Good Science**

Shai M. Dromi and Samuel D. Stabler. 2023. University of Chicago Press.

Few academic disciplines are as contentious as sociology. Sociologists routinely turn on their peers with fierce criticisms not only of their empirical rigor and theoretical clarity but of their character as well. Yet despite the controversy, scholars manage to engage in thorny debates without being censured. How? In *Moral Minefields*, Shai M. Dromi and Samuel D. Stabler consider five recent controversial topics in sociology—race and genetics, secularization theory, methodological nationalism, the culture of poverty, and parenting practices—to reveal how moral debates affect the field. Sociologists, they show, tend to respond to moral criticism of scholarly work in three ways. Rather than suggesting that sociologists adopt a clear paradigm that can guide their research toward neatly defined moral aims, Dromi and Stabler argue that sociologists already largely possess and employ the repertoires to address questions of moral virtue in their research. The conversation thus is moved away from attempts to theorize the moral goods sociologists should support and toward questions about how sociologists manage the plurality of moral positions that present themselves in their studies. Moral diversity within sociology, they show, fosters disciplinary progress.

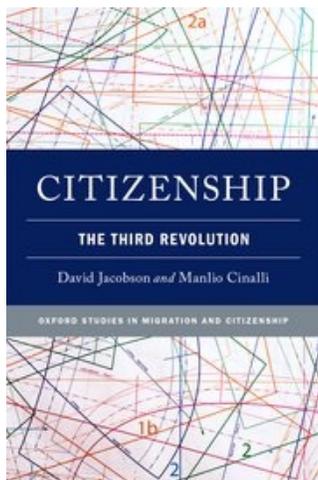


### **Deserved: Economic Memories after the Fall of the Iron Curtain**

Till Hilmar. 2023. Columbia University Press.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, people across the former socialist world saw their lives transformed. How did people who found themselves living under state socialism one day and capitalist democracy the next adjust to the changing social order and its new system of values? Till Hilmar examines memories of the postsocialist transition in East Germany and the Czech Republic to offer new insights into the power of narratives about economic change. Despite the structural nature of economic shifts, people often interpret life outcomes in individual terms. Many are deeply attached to the belief that success and failure must be deserved.

Emphasizing individual effort, responsibility, and character, they pass moral judgments based on a person's fortunes in the job market. Hilmar argues that such frameworks represent ways of making sense of the profound economic and social dislocations after 1989. People craft narratives of deservingness about themselves and others to solve the problem of belonging in a new social order.



### **Citizenship: The Third Revolution**

David Jacobson and Manlio Cinalli. 2023 Oxford University Press.

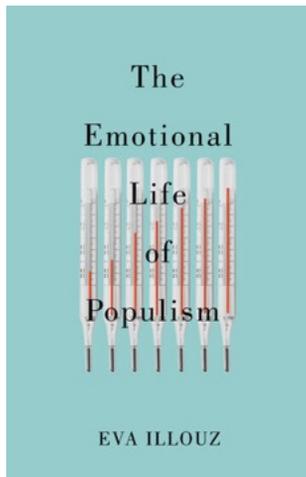
The emergence of citizenship, some 4,000 years ago, was a hinge moment in human history. Instead of the reign of blood descent, questions regarding who rules and who belongs were opened up. Yet purportedly primordial categories, such as sex and race, have constrained the emergence of a truly civic polity ever since. Untying this paradox is essential to overcoming the crisis afflicting contemporary democracies. Why does citizenship emerge, historically, and why does it maintain traction, even if in compromised forms? How can citizenship and democracy be revived? *Citizenship: The Third Revolution* considers three revolutionary periods for citizenship, from the ancient and classical worlds; to the flourishing of guilds and city republics from 1,000 CE; and to the unfinished revolution of human rights from the post-World War II period. Through historical enquiry, this book reveals the underlying principles of citizenship—and its radical promise. Jacobson and Cinalli demonstrate how the effective functioning of citizenship depends on human connections that are relational and non-contractual, not transactional. They illustrate how rights, paradoxically, can undermine as well as reinforce civic society.



### **The Color of Asylum: The Racial Politics of Safe Haven in Brazil.**

Katherine Jensen. 2023. University of Chicago Press. Discount code: UCPNEW

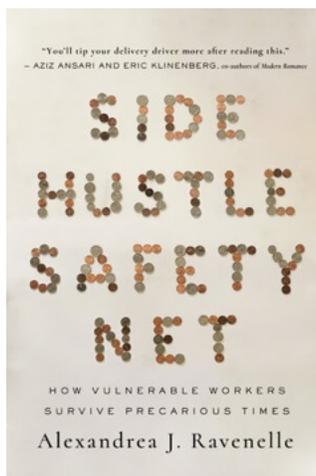
Brazil has been widely lauded as the best place in the world for refugees. Yet its celebrated policies veil how racism shapes the everyday politics of asylum. *The Color of Asylum* follows asylum seekers as they navigate the refugee regime—from how they arrive in Brazil, through the steps of applying for asylum and seeking assistance, to their lives after refugee status. It shows how bureaucratic practices produce racialized hierarchies, as the state variably incorporates refugees into the racial political order. In the process, refugees learn what it means to be black—or not—in Brazil. With its rare ethnographic access inside the state, *The Color of Asylum* garners new insights into bureaucracies and state racial projects, the dynamism of racial states, immigration governance, and the limits of refugee status.



### **The Emotional Life of Populism: How Fear, Disgust, Resentment, and Love Undermine Democracy**

Eva Illouz. 2023. Polity Press. Discount code: P2023

Throughout the world, democracy is under assault from various populist movements and ideologies. And, throughout the world, the same enigma: why is it that political figures or governments, who have no qualms about aggravating social inequalities, enjoy the support of those whom their ideas and policies affect and hurt the most? To make sense of this enigma, the sociologist Eva Illouz argues that populist politics rests on four key emotions: fear, disgust, resentment, and love for one's country. It is the combination of these four emotions and their relentless presence in the political arena that nourishes and underpins the rise and persistence of populism around the world.

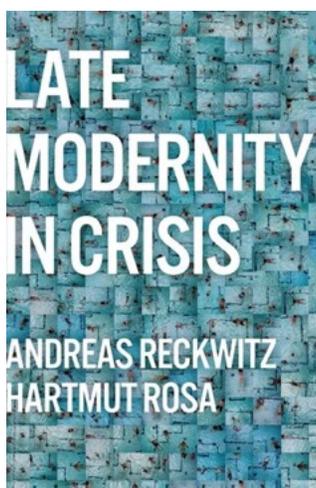


### **Side Hustle Safety Net: How Vulnerable Workers Survive Precarious Times**

Alexandrea Ravenelle. 2023. University of California Press.

The first major study of how the pandemic affected gig workers. This is the story of what the most vulnerable wage earners—gig workers, restaurant staff, early-career creatives, and minimum-wage laborers—do when the economy suddenly collapses. Side Hustle Safety Net builds on interviews with nearly two hundred gig-based and precarious workers, conducted during the height of the pandemic, to uncover the unique challenges they faced in unprecedented times. This book looks at both the officially unemployed and the “forgotten jobless”—a digital-era demographic that turned to side hustles—and reveals how they fared.

CARES Act assistance allowed some to change careers, start businesses, perhaps transform their lives. However, gig workers and those involved in “polyemployment” found themselves at the mercy of outdated unemployment systems, vulnerable to scams, and attempting dubious survival strategies. Ultimately, Side Hustle Safety Net argues that the rise of the gig economy, partnered with underemployment and economic instability, has increased worker precarity with disastrous consequences.

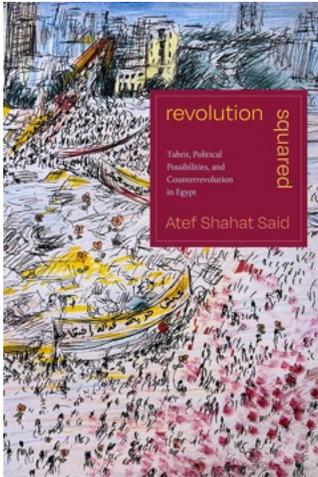


### **Late Modernity in Crisis: Why We Need a Theory of Society**

Andreas Reckwitz and Hartmut Rosa, transl. Valentine A. Pakis. 2023. Polity Press. Discount code: P2023

In this book, Andreas Reckwitz and Hartmut Rosa join forces to examine the value and the limits of a theory of society today. They provide clear and concise accounts of their own theories of society, explicate their key concepts – including “singularization” in the case of Reckwitz, “acceleration” and “resonance” in the case of Rosa – and draw out the

implications of their theories for understanding the multiple crises we face today. The result is a book that provides both an excellent introduction to the work of two of the most important sociologists writing today and a vivid demonstration of the value of the kind of bold social theory of modern societies that they espouse.

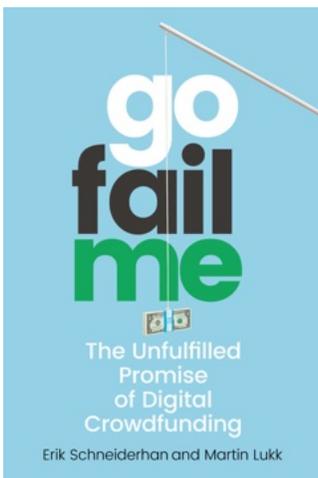


**Revolution Squared: Revolution Squared: Tahrir, Political Possibilities, and Counterrevolution in Egypt**

Atef Shahat Said. 2023. Duke University Press.

In *Revolution Squared* Atef Shahat Said examines the 2011 Egyptian Revolution to trace the expansive range of liberatory possibilities and containment at the heart of every revolution. Drawing on historical analysis and his own participation in the revolution, Said outlines the importance of Tahrir Square and other physical spaces as well as the role of social media and digital spaces. He develops the notion of lived contingency—the ways revolutionary actors practice and experience the revolution in terms of the actions they do or do not take—to show how Egyptians made sense of what was possible during the revolution. Said

charts the lived contingencies of Egyptian revolutionaries from the decade prior to the revolution's outbreak to its peak and the so-called transition to democracy to the 2013 military coup into the present. Contrary to retrospective accounts and counterrevolutionary thought, Said argues that the Egyptian Revolution was not doomed to defeat. Rather, he demonstrates that Egyptians did not fully grasp their immense clout and that limited reformist demands reduced the revolution's potential for transformation.



**GoFailMe: The Unfulfilled Promise of Digital Crowdfunding.**

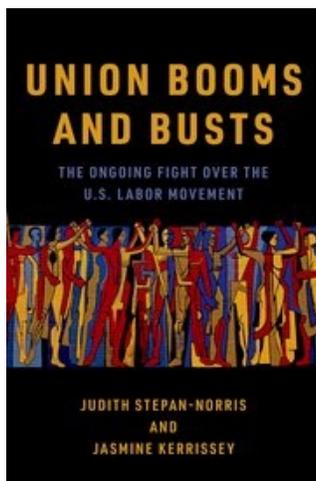
Erik Schneiderhan and Martin Lukk. 2023. Stanford University Press.

Discount code: GOFAILME20

The gaping holes in the U.S. and Canadian social safety nets mean that many people live in a state of financial precarity that can instantly become untenable in the face of another big expense, such as a large medical bill or damaged property. Historically, people have turned to their communities, neighbors, families, and loved ones for help in these situations. Today, asking for money on the internet through crowdfunding is among the most popular ways of seeking and donating to charity, and for-profit enterprises have realized that tapping into this instinct for helping is extremely good business. GoFailMe reveals how

these sites, most notably GoFundMe, enjoy massive revenue, without providing the help they promise. They fail most of their users while putting them through an emotional rollercoaster and using sneaky tactics to obscure that reality. With unprecedented access to interviews, surveys, and hundreds of thousands of crowdfunding cases across North America, Erik Schneiderhan and Martin Lukk take on pressing questions with critical insight: When do we turn to others for help? Who succeeds and who fails in the digital crowd? Whom do these sites benefit? Ultimately, the

failure of GoFundMe and others is emblematic of the inability of the for-profit sector and Big Tech to engineer an end to social inequality.

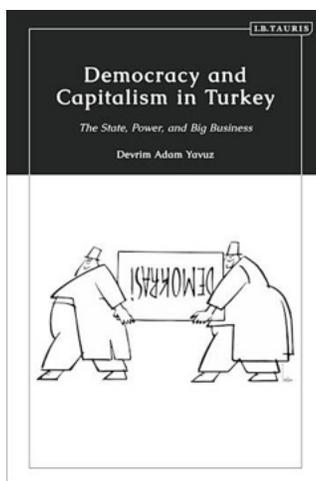


**Union Booms and Busts: The Ongoing Fight Over the U.S. Labor Movement**

Judith Stepan-Norris and Jasmine Kerrissey  
Oxford. Discount code: ASFLYQ6

*Union Booms and Busts* takes a bird's eye view of the shifting fortunes of U.S. workers and their unions on the one hand, and employers and their organizations on the other. Using detailed data, this book analyses union density across 11 industries and 115 years, contrasting the organizing and union building successes and failures across decades. With attention to historical developments and the economic, political, and legal contexts of each period, it highlights workers' and their unions' actions, including strikes, union elections, and organizing strategies as well those of

employers, who aimed to disrupt union organizing using legal maneuvers, workforce-based strategies, and race and gender divisions. By demonstrating how workers used strikes, elections, and other strategies to win power and employers used legal maneuvers, workforce-based strategies, and race and gender divisions to disrupt unions, the authors reveal data-driven truths about the ongoing history of unionization.



**Democracy and Capitalism in Turkey: The State, Power, and Big Business.**

Yavuz, Devrim Adam. 2023. I.B.Tauris.

While a positive correlation between capitalism and democracy has existed in Western Europe and North America, the example of late-industrializing nations such as Turkey has demonstrated that the two need not always go hand in hand, and sometimes the interests of business coincide more firmly with anti-democratic forces. This book explores the factors that compelled capitalists in Turkey to adopt a more pro-democratic ideology by examining a leading Turkish business lobby (TÜSIAD) which has been pushing for democratic reform since the 1990s,

despite representing some of the largest corporation owners in Turkey and having supported the state's authoritarian tendencies in the past such as the military coup of 1980. Drawing on roughly 70 interviews with influential members of TÜSIAD and individuals close to them, the book reveals that business leaders were willing to break away from the state due to the conflict between their evolving economic needs and power with a political elite and state that were unwilling to cater to their demands. In so doing, the book provides a rich account of business-state relations in Turkey as well as providing a case study for the wider study of democracy and capitalism in developing nations.

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