ASA POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY SECTION NEWSLETTER FALL/WINTER 2025

STATES, POWER, & SOCIETIES

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Josh Pacewicz
Brown University

Like many of you, I spent the year watching American democracy backslide and wondering how far things would go. It's been especially poignant for us, because the Trump administration's initiatives disrupted a longstanding bipartisan consensus around the federal government's role in higher ed. What will happen next is anyone's guess. But whatever that is, I think it is useful to take stock of what we've already seen as a window of sorts into everyday authoritarianism in the United States — what routine governance under an unrestrained MAGA regime looks like, even in a rosy scenario where this administration's projects mostly fizzle from here.

One takeaway from this exercise points to the unique competencies of political sociology, the many ways that we can help to make sense of times like these. Consider four quick observations:

> Though popular commentators often present Trump as lawless, the administration's initiatives are arguably better read as an attempt to change what legal scholars term popular legal consciousness, or the commonplace schemas that shape how officials and the broader public interpret laws on the books. For example, the administration's attacks on higher ed have been premised on radical new interpretations of civil rights law. So-called "Compacts" with universities, which have no legal basis, are an apparent attempt to normalize governance by fiat.

> For all the administration's talk of draining the swamp, MAGA has left the core of the welfare state mostly untouched. The biggest federal programs, by far, are Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and Republicans have been reluctant to cut those, focusing instead on smaller agencies and programs —like those focused on consumer and environmental protection, civil rights, education, and foreign aid—alongside

IN THIS ISSUE

sustained efforts to co-opt the Justice Department and other enforcement agencies. Here again, the effort appears to be surgically altering and reorienting rather than gutting the state.

> Images of masked ICE agents on the streets call to mind Nazi jackboots or paramilitary death squads, but to paraphrase Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the effort is far weaker than it looks. The United States maintains a so-called delegated state, which means that federal agencies have limited street-level capacity. ICE has a workforce of 25,000, roughly equivalent to LA County's Sheriff's Department, and though recent legislation doubles that, the agency would remain many orders smaller than national police forces in comparatively centralized states (e.g., France's Ministry of Interior directs roughly 250,000 officers, though its population is one fifth that of the US). With such numbers, ICE and other federal agencies have the capacity to sow fear, especially by concentrating activities in a single city like Chicago, but lack the capacity to police at a national scale. To understand what an American police state could look like, we should look to pioneering work by sociologists and others on crimmigration, or cooptation of local law enforcement agencies and the intermingling of their routine functions with federal immigration enforcement (a long-term process that precedes the Trump administration).

> For all the focus on Trump, some of this year's worst civil rights abuses were initiated by copy-cat officials in state and local government, who have no evident ties to the White House. Higher education is again illustrative, with the most sustained efforts to reshape classroom curriculum occurring in Florida and Texas universities, which were never a Trump administration target (a Texas university also recently fired a tenured faculty member, apparently for expressing political views outside the classroom).

In sum, we are seeing the contours of authoritarianism refracted through the delegated and complex structure of the American state, and putting the pieces together requires competencies at which political sociology excels. Our subfield is centrally concerned with developing an organizationally sophisticated account of statecraft, an effort enriched by historical perspective and comparison to other nations in the global north and south. By virtue of dialogue with scholarship on social movements, culture, law, gender, and race and ethnicity, we are uniquely positioned to appreciate the blurry boundary between politics and everyday life, which should allow us to develop a vocabulary for pinpointing anticipatory compliance and overcompliance to the regime—or celebrating acts of everyday resistance when they occur. Whatever the future brings, we have much to contribute to a democratically resilient society. It's time to get to work.

Along these lines, your council has been at work on a program that reflects the exigencies of the times and the substantive, theoretical, and methodological diversity of our section—with no small assist from the nearly sixty section members who volunteered to help. Due to ASA's new means of assigning sessions, we expect to have more paper

sessions at this summer's meeting than ever before, which will spill over onto multiple days of the program—four paper sessions co-sponsored with other sections and nine political sociology sessions. Like last year, we will assemble sessions from an open call to allow topics to emerge organically from your interests. Keep an eye out also for two virtual panels, which we will announce shortly—one on "Global Lessons from Resistance to Authoritarian Regimes" and another on "Democratic Backsliding in the United States" (with special thanks to Nathan Katz, Jeba Humayra, Ben Kaplow, Shivani Choudhary, Irem Inal, and Carmen Brick for planning). And not least, section member Heba Alex has moved bureaucratic mountains and coordinated with four other sections to secure us a reception in New York City, where we can commiserate and compare notes over food and drink this summer. Looking forward to seeing you at ASA 2026.

2026 Annual Meeting Section Sessions

For the 2026 ASA Annual Meeting, the Section will sponsor the following panels. Submissions are open and will close on February 25, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern. Find full descriptions on the ASA website.

For those not aware, ASA has changed session allocation this year – ASA eliminated "regular sessions," reassigned regular session slots to sections, and created a new co-sponsored session category, which results in additional sessions for sections that jointly propose panels on topics of mutual interest. This ultimately gives sections more control over the program. The upside for our section is more sessions this year compared to previous years. Political Sociology has four sessions co-sponsored with other sections as well as eight open sessions out of which we will assemble panels, and the roundtables.

As with last year, Political Sociology is hosting open sessions as opposed to announcing themes ahead of time. For our open sessions, we will strive to create panels that reflect the diversity of our membership's substantive, methodological, and theoretical proclivities. Thank you to Josh Pacewicz and Mathieu H. Desan for organizing both the open sessions and the roundtables.

Co-sponsored session organizers will try to make decisions before Political Sociology session organizers decide on open sessions, so submitting to the former should not jeopardize your chances of acceptance for the latter. Please look for the co-sponsored sessions in the submission system.

Best of luck in completing your submissions and looking forward to ASA 2026.

Call for Political Sociology Awards 2026

The call for Award Nominations is open. The Political Sociology Section will present the following awards at the 2026 ASA Annual Meeting. Information about awards is available on the ASA website.

The Distinguished Career Award in Political Sociology
Deadline: March 15, 2026

The Distinguished Career Award recognizes and celebrates a lifetime of contributions to the area(s) of political sociology. Nominations will be judged on the depth and breadth of the scholar's impact on political sociology over the course of their career. Nominees must be at least a quarter of a century beyond graduating with their Ph.D. Section members may nominate a distinguished scholar by sending:

1. A letter (PDF or MSWord) of nomination, which outlines the candidate's scholarly contributions to the field and provides assurance of the candidate's willingness to be nominated;
2. A copy of the candidate's most recent curriculum vitae, and
3. The full contact information for the nominee (including email address),

to the nominating committee below with the email subject heading "2026 Political Sociology Career Award" :

Dana Fisher, American University (chair), drfisher@american.edu
Craig Calhoun, Arizona State University, craig.calhoun@asu.edu
Josh Pacewicz, Brown University, pacewicz@brown.edu

The winner will be notified and announced prior to the ASA Annual Meeting.

The Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Book Award in Political Sociology
Deadline: March 15, 2026

This award is given annually to an outstanding recent book in political sociology (edited books will not be considered for this award). To be eligible, submissions must have a 2025 publication date. A nomination letter is not necessary. The selection committee encourages either self-nominations or nominations of work by others but nominations from publishers will not be accepted. Please send a nomination email to the following committee members, with the email subject heading "2026 Political Sociology Book Award," along with either an electronic or hard copy of the book:

Hajar Yazdiha, chair (hyazdiha@usc.edu)
1970 N. Garfield Ave
Pasadena, CA 91104

Kate Pride Brown (k.p.brown@gatech.edu)
The School of History and Sociology
Georgia Institute of Technology
221 Bobby Dodd Way
Atlanta, GA 30332

Andrew Le (Andrewnle@asu.edu)
Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics
Arizona State University
PO Box 877203
Tempe AZ 85287-7203

Masoud Movahed (movahed@ucsb.edu)
University of California, Santa Barbara
Department of Sociology
Social Sciences & Media Studies Building, #3320
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

The winner will be notified and announced prior to the ASA Annual Meeting, allowing presses to advertise the prize-winning book.

The Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship for an Article or Chapter Award for Political Sociology
Deadline: March 15, 2026

This award is offered annually for an outstanding recently published article or chapter in political sociology. To be eligible, submissions must have a 2025 publication date. The selection committee encourages either self-nominations or nominations of work by others. (Please note that each author may have only one article nominated.) Please submit:

1. A brief nomination letter and
2. A copy of the paper, article, or chapter.

All materials should be sent to the chair of the selection committee at the chair's e-mail address below, with the subject heading "2026 Political Sociology Article Award":

Matheiu Desan (chair). University of Colorado. Mathieu.Desan@colorado.edu
Maria Arievitch. Brown University. maria_arievitch@brown.edu
Melanie Hughes. Pitt University. hughesm@pitt.edu
Wisam Alshaibi. New York University. wha221@nyu.edu

The winner will be notified and announced prior to the ASA Annual Meeting.

Best Graduate Student Paper Award
Deadline: March 15, 2026

This award is offered annually for the best graduate student paper in political sociology. Persons who were graduate students at any time during calendar year 2026 are invited to submit published or unpublished papers for this award. To be eligible, papers must be either single authored or co-authored by two or more graduate students. Articles co-authored by a faculty member and a student are not eligible. Please note that each author may have only one article nominated.

Please submit:

3. A brief nomination letter and
4. A copy of the paper, article, or chapter.

All materials should be sent to each selection committee member at the e-mail addresses below, with the subject heading "2026 Political Sociology Grad Student Paper Award":

Luciana De Souza Leão (chair), University of Michigan. lsleao@umich.edu
Emily Ruppel, University of California-Berkeley. emily_ruppel@berkeley.edu
Maria Ximena Davila, University of Texas. mxdavila@utexas.edu
Nathan Katz, Louisiana Tech University. nkatz@latech.edu

The winner will be notified and announced prior to the ASA Annual Meeting.

Featured Essay

Bourdieu and Political Sociology: Agendas, Questions, Objects, and Concepts

George Steinmetz
Professor, University of Michigan

Readers of this *Newsletter* tend to work in Political Sociology, a subfield in which Bourdieu has not figured centrally. Bourdieu's writings contain empirical investigations and theoretical analysis of public policymaking (Bourdieu 2005a), political parties (2000a), revolution (1962a, 1962b), political crisis (Bourdieu 1988c), democratic politics (Wacquant 2005), and other political topics and objects (Bourdieu 2008, 2010, 2015, 2023). I will argue here that political processes constitute a red thread running through all of his writing, that many of his questions remain unanswered, and that some of his ideas can fruitfully guide research in political sociology going forward.

Bourdieu's earliest publications on Algeria laid the foundations for later thinking (Steinmetz 2023), including his political sociology, I will argue here. Bourdieu's more developed political sociology was premised on his development of field theory, which provided the basis for his analysis of intellectuals, journalism, law, the state, and political parties. Neoliberal policies then became the main target of Bourdieu's political interventions in the last decade of his life. This led him to analyze the international field (Bourdieu 2005a: 223-232) and noncolonial forms of imperialism (Bourdieu 2025). After surveying this work, I will point to some of the questions raised by Bourdieu that can stimulate further work in political sociology.

Politics in the Algerian Writings

Bourdieu discussed political issues in all of his Algerian publications between 1958 and 1964. *Sociology of Algeria* (1958) was intended to be a "political" book "to undermine the schemas that the sociologists" at the university of Algiers were disseminating," and which undergirded French rule (Nouschi 2003: 32–33). Bourdieu calls attention to "the colonial policy of systematically induced disintegration" of the "tribal structure" (Bourdieu 1962a: 129, 59). The last chapter analyses the colonial "system" which had

"given rise to racism," creating "persons whom the colonists scornfully call 'natives'," while rationalizing "the existing state of affairs to as to make it appear to be a lawfully instituted order" (Bourdieu 1962a: 133-134).

Several suggestions in this text were developed further in Bourdieu's later writings on politics. At the most general level, Bourdieu argues that the colonial state inculcates the French and indigenous population with a "legitimate vision of the social world" and a "dominant discourse" (Bourdieu 2022: 22; 1998a: 29). This argument about the monopolization of symbolic violence is central to Bourdieu's later theory of the state.

The concept of habitus is the one that Bourdieu develops most systematically in his Algerian. According to Bourdieu and Sayad, "the peasant's being is above all a certain *manner* of being, a *habitus*, a permanent and general disposition before the world and others." Habitus, they argued in 1964, is both "corporeal" and mental. The "authentic peasant," in Kabyle, was the "*bu-niyya* peasant," one who exudes "*niyya*"—a word meaning "a certain manner of being and acting, *a permanent, general and transposable disposition* in the face of the world and other men" (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964: 88). This formulation is identical to Bourdieu's "mature" definition of habitus as "systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*" (Bourdieu 1972: 72; 1980: 53). The colonial situation presented "the relationship between structures and habitus" as "a theoretical problem" in "the form of a permanent discrepancy between agents' economic dispositions and the economic world in which they had to act" (Bourdieu 1979: vii). Habitus can survive changes in external conditions, as illustrated by their discussion of the "new villages" and camps created during the Algerian War by the French military. Some camp dwellers avoided taking "the most direct route" along the broad avenues "to get back to their houses," but instead took "the peripheral path," inventing "detours via the small alleys that ran between the houses" and walking "furtively, staying close to the walls" (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964a: 79, 112).

A related theme in these early writings with important consequences for current political analysis is the idea of *crisis*. The overarching theme of Bourdieu's Algerian writings is Kabyle society's crisis of reproduction due to colonialism, colonial capitalism, and colonial war. Colonialism had led to a state in which Algerians' unconscious "feel for the game" (habitus) and even "the game itself" were "called into question" (Bourdieu 2020: 81; 2023: 67). A crisis of this magnitude may "bring to light things that were previously hidden," Bourdieu observed, but crisis alone was not enough to "produce criticism," much less revolution (Bourdieu 2008: 171, 1996a: 241). Bourdieu subsequently extended his analysis to make sense of crises in more complex societies in which *sectoral crises* of reproduction combined in wider *general crises*. Significantly for political sociology, the general crisis Bourdieu analyzed in *Homo Academicus* was one in which logic of the political field permeated large swathes of social space, as other fields lost their relative autonomy and were "harmonized" (Bourdieu 1988, Ch. 5; Steinmetz 2025a).

Bourdieu's Algerian writings mapped a spectrum of divergent responses to colonialism ranging from "submissive resignation" to strategic "adaption" and "real revolutionary consciousness" (Bourdieu 1973: 85, 91; Bourdieu and Sayad 1964a: 79, 8). The Mozabites

responded to colonial interventions by continuously "adapt[ing] to new situations" (Bourdieu 1962a: 16, 54). Algerian women practiced veiling as a "symbolic form of negation" (1962b: 159). Bourdieu compared the temporal consciousness and revolutionary capacity of stably employed proletarians and the unemployed and underemployed. He found that the latter were prone to despairing forms of subjectivity and a "magic-mythical vision of the world" (Bourdieu 1963: 305; 1973: 90), while the stably employed were able to conceptualize and plan for the future both in their personal lives and with regard to the collective revolutionary project (Bourdieu 1979: vii). Bourdieu suggested that the success of Fanon's advocacy of a peasant-based "Chinese" model of revolution "among the proletarianized intelligentsia of Algeria" was a function of their unstable social situation (Bourdieu 1963: 312; 2008: 22). The new Algeria should be grounded in Algerians' "active, creative, and conscious participation in a common project" rather than a return to chimeric traditions that were now irretrievably lost (Bourdieu 2013: 114). These writings suggest a number of important questions for the political sociology of political resignation, irrationality, resistance, and revolution.

Bourdieu and Sayad also sketched a model of *state space* (Brenner 2004), arguing that the colonial state tried to reformulate Algerians' *habitus* by reterritorializing their *habitat*. The colonial army, they wrote, *stamped* its structures onto the terrain (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964a: 36), disciplining space in order to discipline human beings, just as Rome had "made a tabula rasa of the past by imposing the new framework on its conquests" by "mark[ing] eminent property rights" (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964a: 180, note 18). By reorganizing peasants' "habitat," the state attempted to break "the ties of familiarity that unite individuals to their environment" (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964a: 108-109). The resettlement program imposed "an identical organization of dwelling, even in the most remote regions" (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964a: 15). These studies could inspire a political sociology of colonial geography.

Bourdieu also discussed the relations between social science and political commitments in these early writings (Bourdieu 1963: 257-267). Bourdieu agreed with Émile Durkheim and Gaston Bachelard that sociology necessitated an initial break with "prenotions" and surface appearances. He argued that science has to concentrate on "what is hidden," and that "the science of society" was therefore "by its very nature critical," since "to describe is to denounce" (Bourdieu 1970: 19; 1963: 262). Scientific research "in the strict sense of the word poses a threat to the 'social order'" (Bourdieu 1970: 15). This argument, elaborated in detail over four decades, suggests that scientifically adequate sociology is necessarily critical.

Field Theory and Political Sociology

Beginning in the mid-1960s, Bourdieu analyzed social fields as semi-autonomous realms governed by competition over specific resources and divided between autonomous and heteronomous poles. I will focus the rest of my comments on the intellectual, scientific, sociological, political, journalistic, and bureaucratic fields, which are central to Bourdieu's analysis of politics, and which raise important questions for political sociology.

The intellectual and scientific fields

The intellectual field was the first microcosm Bourdieu analyzed as a field (Bourdieu 1966), and this topic was central to all of his political sociology. Bourdieu rejected the figure of the "total intellectual" who is "present in all areas of thought" and speaks "with authority far beyond the limits of their technical competence, especially in the area of politics" (Bourdieu 2008: 216, 2000a: 105, 1993a: 45; Mauger 2012: xii). Bourdieu also criticized the model of the "organic intellectual" who "bend[s] their reason to the will" of a "sectional interest," a state, a party, or a social movement (Bourdieu 2008: 219; Calhoun 2005: 357). Bourdieu also rejected the *moralizing intellectual* who engages in "virtuous exhibitionism," or virtue signaling (Bourdieu 1992: 147), the "*proletaroïd intellectual*" (Weber 1978: 507, 514) who is unable to "impose their wares in the scientific marketplace" and enters politics to exact "revenge against those who dominate the intellectual world" (Pudal 2018: 58; Bourdieu 2008: 381), the *policy intellectual* (Bourdieu 2000b), and the "*media intellectual*", characterized by "dependence on the journalistic field" and "its verdicts" (Bourdieu 1984: 98; Seiler 2018). Bourdieu argued that "fast thinkers" were becoming more powerful with the takeover by a heteronomous pole of journalism. In the intervening period new types of media intellectuals (e.g., "influencers") have become prevalent, raising important questions for the age of social media.

Bourdieu was more favorable to Michel Foucault's model of "specialized intellectuals" whose "particular competence" within a semi-autonomous field underwrites their authority. Because a single intellectual is too weak to effect social change, however, Bourdieu proposes bringing together many specific intellectuals as a *collective intellectual* "capable of defining by itself the topics and ends of its reflection and action" (2000b: 42).

This brings us to the topic of the *scientific field*. Without the specific characteristics of this field, it is unclear why the autonomous intellectual should figure so centrally in any theory of politics. Indeed, without the distinctive characteristics of the scientific field, Bourdieu's theory is susceptible to the charge of indifference to truth claims and inability to differentiate among contending social accounts.

Scientific fields have all of the features of other fields, he argues, including internal hierarchy and domination, gatekeeping, and ubiquitous struggle. How can such an agonistic space favor the production of more accurate knowledge (Bourdieu 2023: 183)? Bourdieu's answer is that science is a unique kind of game in which the "*libido dominandi*" is converted into a *libido scientifica* – "a pure love of truth" (Bourdieu 1991b: 375). Within an autonomous scientific universe, "in order to be a winner … you need to be right according to the current historical definition of Reason," to "have reasons that the worst opponent would have to accept" (Bourdieu 1996b: 121). These rules of validation do not characterize other spaces, especially not the political field, where "the force of ideas is mainly a function of the power of the groups that take them to be true" (Bourdieu 1991b: 376). This leads us to ask whether it is possible to configure the relationship between science and politics so that the peculiarities of the scientific field are not erased.

The hyper-politicization and loss of autonomy in many scientific fields in recent years due to a generalized politicization and other factors including

corporatization underscores the importance of Bourdieu's theory. Sociology, he argues, tends to have very porous boundaries vis-à-vis the political field. Indeed, many of the "most prevalent antinomies in sociology" owe their very existence "to homologous oppositions within the political field" (Bourdieu 1991b: 377). In mathematics, it is difficult to attack proofs or models as "right wing" or "left wing," but this sort of thing "still happens in sociology" (Bourdieu 1993c: 11). "Spontaneous" approaches to politics are ones that analyze politics politically. Instead, Bourdieu cautions, we should think "about politics without thinking politically" -- without adopting the categories governing political space (Bourdieu 1988a: 2).

The bureaucratic, political, and journalistic fields

Like Durkheim (1950), Bourdieu describes the state as the source of fundamental categories of thought, as the locus of a "viewpoint of the viewpoints" (Bourdieu 2024: 81, 2015: 53). The state is a *metafield* in which holders of different kinds of capital compete over the "management of state resources and the formulation of its categories and policies" (Georgakakis 2018: 131). The state has the "magical" power to performatively call into existence all sorts of social objects, persons, events, and statuses, and to assign specific values to each (Bourdieu 2024: 217). Because of the state's role in defining other fields and basic categories of thought, Bourdieu argues that analyzing the state is crucial to any project of political and/or epistemological change (Dubois 2018: 318).

Unlike Durkheim, Bourdieu describes the state as internally conflictual and subdivided into different polarized sectors or subfields. The state is "not a bloc, it is a field" (Bourdieu 2015: 20) or an assemblage of fields (Steinmetz 2014, 2017). Specific forms of bureaucratic habitus emerge over time within each of the state's sectors of subfields. Diverse subfields sometimes overlap and interlace, leading to the creation of policies (e.g., Bourdieu 2005a). By the same token, the internal differences between state sectors may account for some of the attacks on government functions by authoritarian governments, as the state's "right hand," obsessed with "the question of financial equilibrium," attacks its "left hand," where we find welfare and social sectors, education, and health functions (Bourdieu 1998a: 1-9; Fowler 2020).

The *political field* is a "relatively autonomous social world" – a world of parties and other political organizations -- that partly follows its own criteria of evaluation and obeys its own laws, which are distinct from those in the state field (Riutort 2012). Anyone who enters the political field has to "undergo a transformation, a conversion" (Bourdieu 2000a: 52). This field is organized around the pursuit of a specific form of reputational capital (Bourdieu 2000a: 64-65, 1991a: 176-177) and the development of a specific habitus. Explaining the actions of political agents requires establishing their "distance from or proximity to the more autonomous and more heteronomous poles of the political field" (Fritsch 2000: 22). The distinction between the political field and microcosms like art or science is that politicians' power depends on appealing to people outside the field (Bourdieu 1991a: 192; Champagne 1990). The heteronomous pole dominates, in other words (Bourdieu 2005b: 42).

The *journalistic field*, finally, is "doubly dependent" on the "law of the market" and "political power" (Champagne 1995: 215). This explains its ambiguous status as having "very powerful effects" on the world, including the political field, while being powerfully dominated by other fields (Champagne 1995: 216-217). Journalists contribute to "gatekeeping" the political field and reinforcing its closure, yet they are not "full-fledged members" of it (Bourdieu 2000a: 36, 38, 1998b: 4). Like politicians, journalists are subject to opinion polls and the pressure of immediate market success (Bourdieu 1998b: 23, 27). Journalism tends to relinquish control over its borders, subjecting itself to "plebiscitary" logics of external approval (Bourdieu 2004: 87). This is not the case for all journalists – some "have the potential to develop the most autonomous journalistic practices (analytical journalism, investigative journalism)" (Baisnée and Nollet 2019: 9, 12). Bourdieu argued that the "intelligent critique of television" – and *mutatis mutantis*, of online and social media – is "a prerequisite for any political work" (Bourdieu 2001: @ 2:12). That said, sociology "is the *conditio sine qua non* for … a fourth, purely critical estate" (1996c).

Conclusion

Bourdieu's lifelong analysis of intellectual and scientific fields, political fields, states, revolutions, and other fields such as journalism and law was part of a herculean effort to objectivate the political conditions of his own social world and to reveal the interests and the arbitrariness hidden behind supposedly natural power configurations. Bourdieu compared the sociologist to the engineer, who analyses the power of the laws of gravity in order to defy them, for example, when designing an airplane; like the engineer, sociology analyses the "laws" of society in order to help people defy those very laws (1996c). Such a sociological practice, he insisted, is inherently critical and political.

Political sociology has only started to investigate the many unfinished ideas left behind in Bourdieu's oeuvre. My comments here are part of a growing conversation of Bourdieu's political sociology, including Wacquant (2005), Swartz (2013), Mudge (2020), Fáber (2025), and Atkinson (2025). Bourdieu's ideas can invigorate the study of social movements (Mathieu 2012), states (Steinmetz 2008), international relations (Bigo 2011); empires (Charle 2006; Steinmetz 2007, 2017), democratic politics (Wacquant 2005), journalism and media (Benson and Neveu 2005), intellectuals (Charle 2018; Medvetz 2018), and political crisis (Sapiro 2022; Steinmetz 2025a).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An earlier, longer version of this paper appeared as Bourdieu's Political Sociology: From Imperialism to the State and Back Again" (Steinmetz 2025b)

REFERENCES

Atkinson, Will, ed. 2025. *For a New Political Sociology. The Relational Approach of Pierre Bourdieu.* London: Routledge.

Baisnée, Olivier and Jérémie Nollet. 2019. "Journalism as a Field." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication.*

Benson, Rodney and Neveu, Erik. 2005. *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field.* Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Abdelmalek Sayad. [1964] 2020. *Uprooting. The Crisis of Traditional Agriculture in Algeria.* Polity Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1958. *Sociologie de*

l'Algérie. Presses Universitaires de France.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1962a. *The Algerians.* Beacon Press.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1962b. "The Revolution within the Revolution." In Bourdieu, *The Algerians* (pp. 145-192). Beacon Press.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1963. "Étude sociologique." In Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Darbel, Jean-Paul Rivet, and Claude Seibel, *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie* (pp. 253-562). Mouton.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1970. "Pierre Bourdieu." Interview with Otto Hahn. *VH 101* No. 2: 12-21.
Bourdieu, Pierre. [1972] 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice.* Cambridge UP.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1973. "The Algerian Subproletariat." In Ira William Zartman, ed., *Man, State and Society in the Contemporary Mahgrib* (pp. 83-92). Praeger Press.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979. *Algeria 1960. Essays.* Cambridge UP.
Bourdieu, Pierre. [1980]. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Polity.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. "Le hit-parade des intellectuels français, ou qui sera juge de la légitimité des juges?" *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 52-53: 95-100.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1985a. "Résumé des cours et travaux." *Annuaire du Collège de France 1984 -1985* (pp. 559-562). Collège de France.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1988. *Homo Academicus*. Polity Press.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991a. "Political Representation: Elements for a Theory of the Political Field." In *Language and Symbolic Power* (pp. 171–202).Harvard University Press.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991b. "On the Possibility of a Field of World Sociology." In Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Coleman, eds., *Social Theory for a Changing Society* (pp. 373-387). Westview.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1992. "Towards a Policy of Morality in Politics." In W. R. Shea and A. Spadafora, eds., *From the Twilight of Probability. Ethics and Politics* (pp. 146-149). Science History Publications.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993a. "How Can 'Free-Floating Intellectuals' be Set Free?" In Bourdieu (1993d): 41-48.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993b. "The Sociologist in Question." In Bourdieu (1993d): 20-35.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993c. "A Science that Makes Trouble." In Bourdieu (1993d): 8-19.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993d. *Sociology in Question.*: Sage.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1996a. "Intellectuals and the Internationalization of Ideas. An Interview with M'hammed Sabour." The *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 33 (2): 237-253.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1996b. "Sociologie et histoire." In M. Juffé, ed., *Aux Frontières du savoir* (pp. 111-131). Presses de l'Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1996c. "Sozialwissenschaften und Demokratie. Die Unentbehrlichkeit der Gesellschaftskritik - Ein Plädoyer für die 'vierte Gewalt'." *Frankfurter Rundschau* January 9, 10.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998a. *Acts of Resistance. Against the Tyranny of the Market.* The New Press.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998b. *On Television.* The New Press.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 2000a. *Propos sur le champ politique*. Presses universitaires de Lyon.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 2000b. "For a Scholarship with Commitment." *Profession:* 40–45.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2001. "Grand Oral Sciences Po de Sociologie et Anthropologie à l'IEP Sciences Po Bordeaux." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNXItwv1u7Y.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2004. *Science of Science and Reflexivity*. Univ. of Chicago Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2005a. *The Social Structures of the Economy*. Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2005b. "The Political Field, the Social Science Field, and the Journalistic Field." In Rodney Benson and Eric Neveu, eds., *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field* (pp. 29-47). Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2008. *Political Interventions: Social Science and Political Action*. Verso.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2010. *Sociology Is a Martial Art: Political Writings by Pierre Bourdieu*. Gisèle Sapiro, ed. New Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2013. *Algerian Sketches*. Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2015. *On the State. Lectures at the Collège de France 1989-1992*. Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2020. *Habitus and Field: General Sociology*, Vol. 2. Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2023. *Politics and Sociology: General Sociology*, Vol. 5. Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2024. *The Interest in Disinterestedness. General Sociology*, Volume 6. Polity.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2025. *Imperialisms: The International Circulation of Ideas and the Struggle for the Universal.* Polity.

Brenner, Neil. 2004. *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood.* Oxford University Press.

Calhoun, Craig. 2005. "The Promise of Public Sociology." *The British Journal of Sociology* 56(3): 355-353.

Champagne, Patrick. 1990. *Faire l'opinion. Le nouveau jeu politique*. Minuit.

Champagne, Patrick. 1995. "La double dependance: Quelques remarques sur les rapports entre les champs politique, économique et journalistique." *Hermès* 17-18: 215-229.

Dubois, Vincent. 2018. "État." In Gisèle Sapiro, ed., *Dictionnaire international Bourdieu* (pp. 317-321). CNRS Éditions.

Durkheim, Émile. [1957] 1950. *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*. Routledge.

Fáber, Ágoston. 2025. *Pierre Bourdieu: Theory and Politics*. Routledge.

Fowler, Bridget. 2020. "Pierre Bourdieu on Social Transformation, with Particular Reference to Political and Symbolic Revolutions." *Theory and Society* 49: 439–463.

Fritsch, Philippe. 2000. "Introduction." In Bourdieu (2000a): 7-31.

Georgakakis, Didier. 2018. "Champ bureaucratique." In Sapiro (2018): 131-133.

Kauppi, Niilo. 2003. "Bourdieu's Political Sociology and the Politics of European Integration." *Theory and Society* 32(5/6): 775- 789.

Mathieu, Lilian. *L'espace des mouvements sociaux*. Éditions du croquant, 2012.

Mauger, Gérard. 2012. "La sociologie est une science politique." *Cités* 51: 33-46

Medvetz, Thomas. 2018. "Bourdieu and the Sociology of Intellectual Life'." In Thomas Medvetz and Jeffrey J. Sallaz, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Pierre Bourdieu* (pp. 454–478). Oxford U. P.

Charle, Christophe. 2006. "The Crisis of 'Imperial' Societies." In Roland Lardinois and Meenakshi Thapan, eds., *Reading Pierre Bourdieu in a Dual Context: Essays from India and France* (pp. 56-76). Routledge.

Charle, Christophe. 2018. "The Transdisciplinary Contribution of Pierre Bourdieu to the Study of the Academic Field and Intellectuals." In Thomas Medvetz and Jeffrey J. Sallaz, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Pierre Bourdieu* (pp. 327-343). Oxford U. P.

Mudge, Stephaie L. 2020. "States, Parties, and Expertise." In T. Janoski, C. de Leon , J. Misra, and IW Martin, eds., *The New Handbook of Political Sociology* (pp. 29-47). Cambridge University Press.

Nouschi, André. 2003. "Autour de *Sociologie de l'Algérie*." *Awal* 27-28: 29-35.

Pudal, Bernard. 2018. "Autodidaxie." In Sapiro (2018a): 58-59.

Riutort, Phillippe. 2012. "Le champ politique." In Frédéric Lebaron and Gèrard Mauger, ed., *Lectures de Bourdieu* (pp. 295-304). Ellipses.

Sapiro, Gisèle. 2022. "Structural Crises vs. Situations of (Political) Crisis." *Rassegna italiana di Sociologia* 63(2): 299-321.

Steinmetz, George. 2008. "The Colonial State as a Social Field." *American Sociological Review* 73(4): 589–612.

Steinmetz, George. 2014. "État-mort, État-fort, État-empire." *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 201: 112-119.

Steinmetz, George. 2017. "The Octopus and the *Hekatonkheire*: On Many-Armed States and Tentacular Empires." In Kimberly Morgan and Ann Orloff, eds., *The Many Hands of the State* (pp. 369-394). Cambridge UP.

Steinmetz, George. 2023. *The Colonial Origins of Modern Social Thought: French Sociology and the Overseas Empire*. Princeton: Princeton UP.

Steinmetz, George. 2025a. "Revisiting Sociology as a Crisis Science." Paper presented at the Presidential Panel "Crisis in History" at the 50th Annual Meeting of the Social Science History Association (November 20-23, Chicago).

Steinmetz, George. 2025b. "Bourdieu's Political Sociology: From Imperialism to the State and Back Again." In Atkinson (pp. 205-230).

Swartz, David. 2013. *Symbolic Power, Politics, and Intellectuals: The Political Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Univ. of Chicago Press.

Wacquant, Loic J. D., ed. 2005. *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics: The Mystery of Ministry*. Polity.

Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society*. Vol. 1. Univ. of California Press.

George Steinmetz *is the Charles Tilly Collegiate Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology at the University of Michigan and a Corresponding Member of the Centre de Sociologie européenne, Paris. He is a social theorist and a historical sociologist of states, empires, and social science.*

Q&A with 2025 Award Winners

Tomás Gold and Ann Mische*
Co-Winners, Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship for an Article

Committee: Mohammad Ali Kadivar, Hajar Yazdiha, A.K.M. Skarpelis, Kristopher Velasco

"Channeling Anti-Partisan Contention: Field Structures and Partisan Strategies in a Global Protest Wave (2008–2016)." American Journal of Sociology, 129(6), 1660–1719. https://doi.org/10.1086/730144

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

The project emerged quite organically from a shared interest with Ann in what we perceived as a potentially problematic drift toward anti-partisanship in politics. After the 2008 financial crisis, massive social movements emerged across multiple countries that targeted economic elites and mainstream partisan actors perceived as complicit in rising corruption and inequality. We had both been studying social movements in Latin America and had already noticed that contentious anti-partisanship was eroding trust in party politics, helping enable the rise of conservative outsider figures. This was not the intended outcome of the movements themselves, which made the pattern all the more puzzling and worth investigating.

When we met at Notre Dame, we decided to pursue a truly global study of how anti-partisan contention was reshaping political fields across different world regions. The task was daunting, so the project took a long time to develop—but I'm very glad we stayed with it. Receiving feedback from multiple colleagues, rethinking our scope conditions, and going through a long review process progressively helped us distill the paper's core theoretical insight: partisan actors respond to external challenges to the legitimacy of the partisan field by deflecting those critiques onto their partisan rivals. In other words, political actors can weaponize anti-partisanship in ways that ultimately benefit them, though they do so within the specific opportunities and constraints of the fields in which they operate. I believe this insight remains useful for understanding the contemporary political landscape—both in the U.S. and beyond.

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

I am currently developing a book project on conservative think tank advocacy. I am interested in understanding how this organizational form originally entered the Global South, and why conservative policy entrepreneurs were able to use it more effectively in some countries than others. The book is based on a

comparative-historical analysis of conservative think tank advocacy in Chile and Argentina from the 1950s to the present, and it offers broader lessons for understanding similar dynamics across the Americas—including the current moment in the United States.

This broader project also motivates a set of questions I am exploring in other articles: How do civil society organizations articulate political projects in contexts where parties are weak or fragmented? Why did neoliberal ideas become deeply rooted in powerful home-grown political movements in some countries but not in others? And when and why do partnerships between Northern philanthropic funders and Southern think tanks fail to produce the political change that these funders expect?

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?

One important direction—reflected in many of the papers awarded in recent years—is the internationalization of the subfield in the United States. This involves not only the growth of research on non-U.S. cases, but also a critical engagement with theories developed in the Global North to analyze key phenomena such as state formation, racial exclusion, bureaucratic capacity, legibility, militarization, and repression. I believe this comparative angle enriches the subfield while also contributing to public debate by highlighting where American political dynamics resemble or diverge from those elsewhere—effectively "provincializing" the U.S. case.

Another promising direction is the creative cross-fertilization between political sociology and other areas—knowledge, race and ethnicity, culture, gender, and more. While any subfield builds bridges to adjacent areas, political sociology has long emphasized classic topics such as state institutions, voting behavior, policy reform, political coalitions, and revolutions. Some of the work I find most exciting in recent years expands the boundaries of what we consider "political" and brings fresh conceptual tools to these long-standing debates. While translating these insights for broader audiences can be challenging, the payoff can also be substantial, offering new ways of understanding our contemporary political realities.

* SPS solicited responses from Tomás as Professor Mische is on sabbatical in Fall 2025.

Tomás Gold *is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at University of Southern California.*

Ann Mische *is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Peace Studies as well as a Faculty Fellow of the Kellogg Institute for International Affairs at the University of Notre Dame.*

Amanda R. Cheong

Co-Winner, Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship for an Article

Committee: Mohammad Ali Kadivar, Hajar Yazdiha, A.K.M. Skarpelis, Kristopher Velasco

"Racial Exclusion by Bureaucratic Omission: Non-Enumeration, Documentary Dispossession, and the Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar." Social Problems, spae003. https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spae003

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

My commitment to studying issues of citizenship and statelessness is inspired by very personal reasons. I am a second-generation Canadian with many family members who experienced citizenship exclusion, racial discrimination, and even statelessness in their home country of Brunei. Within humanitarian and international development discourse, stateless people are often described as "legally invisible" or "belonging nowhere." These tropes were admittedly confusing to me because the stateless (and formerly stateless) people I personally knew had very strong convictions about their roots, their heritages, and their civic identities—perhaps precisely because issues of legal status and citizenship played such huge roles in their lives.

I therefore initially entered the field in Yangon, Myanmar, hoping to investigate how stateless people articulate their political voice in the face of abject political exclusion, i.e. having no formal citizenship of any country in the world. I wanted to work with the Rohingya community in order to understand how they were responding to the dire human rights violations they have long been subjected to. What I found on the ground was that documents—seemingly mundane pieces of paperwork—were a major state tool for disenfranchising and legitimizing violence against the Rohingya. Strikingly, the dynamics I observed did not play out in the ways that classical theories about the bureaucratic dimensions of statecraft would expect. Instead, Myanmar state authorities deliberately forewent opportunities to register and therefore consolidate their administrative control over the Rohingya. In this article and other work, I develop the concept of "omission" to make sense of this strategy as an alternative mode by which the state's symbolic power can be leveraged. So while I've gone on quite the intellectual journey with this research, the article ultimately does stay true to its original purpose by also highlighting the incredibly creative and subversive forms of resistance engaged in by Rohingya activists, who generously let me into their lives and homes to document their vital political work.

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

I'm currently finishing up my book, Vital Omissions, which is an ethnography of how people go missing from civil registration and vital statistics in Malaysia, and why this matters for citizenship. It is an in-depth investigation into families' journeys to obtaining basic recognition and the papers to prove it, such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, and identity cards. With this book, I hope to offer a humanizing account of vital statistics and their sociopolitical—and even mortal—significance. Please stay tuned!

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?

I'm always excited when I see fellow political sociologists engaging in community-based and community action-oriented research. In this current political climate, it's more important than ever to be democratically sharing our capacities and platforms for scholarly knowledge creation and

mobilization. I'm hoping we can continue to see and position ourselves humbly as partners and facilitators in this regard, especially when it comes to working with politically marginalized communities.

Amanda Cheong *is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of British Columbia.*

Emily H. Ruppel
Co-Winner, Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship for a Paper by a Graduate Student Award

Committee: Lynette Ong, Mathieu Desan, Zheng Fu, Livio Silva-Muller

"How Work Becomes Invisible: The Erosion of the Wage Floor for Workers with Disabilities"

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

This project started as my master's thesis, and the empirical story stayed the same from my master's research through its publication. However, the framing changed a lot through the publication process. I was lucky to get excellent feedback from reviewers, and particularly from Neil Gong, who wrote to me afterwards and identified himself as the reviewer who pushed me towards the "delaborization" framing. Early drafts used the more general lens of depoliticization, but as I revised the paper, I focused on what it means to depoliticize work specifically, to invisibilize it as labor. Zeroing in on labor forced me to cut some empirical data irrelevant to the main story, which was pretty excruciating but ultimately improved the paper.

I'm grateful to my Ph.D. adviser, Michael Burawoy, for shepherding me through the R&R process. This paper defined my graduate school experience, by which I mean that conversations with Michael about the paper defined my graduate school experience. He must've read fifteen or twenty drafts, which is amazingly generous in and of itself, and more so considering the paper stretched to ninety pages at one point. I broke down crying in his office when he recommended a complete restructuring at the eleventh hour, but of course he was right, and it produced a much better paper. Michael was the best adviser imaginable, and I'm so lucky to have worked with him for seven and a half years before his sudden death last February. It's a huge loss for me personally, for political sociology, and for the academic left.

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

My work is rooted in Marxist feminism and broadly concerned with how dynamics of capitalism relate to embodied experiences, particularly experiences we understand through the lenses of gender, sexuality, and disability. Right now, I'm focused on the book version of my dissertation, which is about neoliberal initiatives to make disability profitable. The book combines historical research on disability employment policy, including some of the research presented in "How Work Becomes Invisible," with ethnographic fieldwork in two employment programs for workers with disabilities. One site places workers with mental illnesses in precarious, low-wage service jobs, while the other places autistic workers in tech jobs,

demonstrating how different disabilities are made profitable across different industries. Then I have a few side projects related to gender essentialism, one on the co-construction of gender and autism and one on emergent restrictions on abortion and gender-affirming care in the United States. I'm starting as an assistant professor at UC Davis next fall and am excited to bring new collaborators into these projects through my teaching.

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?

I can't answer this question exhaustively, but I know that as an American sociologist, I'll be trying to make sense of Donald Trump's election and presidency for many years to come. Much of my reading lately has focused on other authoritarian governments, like the Third Reich, to understand the Trump administration in comparative-historical context. One of the new projects I'm developing connects America's crackdown on women's bodily autonomy to broader political economic transformations, and that project is basically an attempt to make sense of the role of gender in Trumpist politics, influenced especially by Melinda Cooper's work. My department at Berkeley hosted a very generative teach-in on the Trump administration attacks on higher education last spring, where I learned a lot from both Dylan Riley and Cihan Tuğal's analyses and from the responses including Meriam Salem, Autumn Mitchell, Peter Forberg, and Yağmur Ali Coşkun. The Political Sociology section is another crucial home for these conversations.

Emily Ruppel *is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at UC Berkeley and incoming Assistant Professor at UC Davis (Fall 2026).*

María Ximena Dávila
Co-Winner, Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship for a Paper by a Graduate Student Award

Committee: Lynette Ong, Mathieu Desan, Zheng Fu, Livio Silva-Muller

"Building a Longed-for State: How Local Actors Shape the Meaning and Materiality of War-Aggrieved Institutions"

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

I started thinking about this project years ago, during my time as a women's rights lawyer in Colombia. An important aspect of my work involved collaborating with grassroots movements in war-affected regions, where I got to witness their work to prevent gender based-violence and promote sexual and reproductive rights. What perhaps struck me most was how these movements, and how women in particular, related to local institutions. I saw how their everyday claim-making actions and their constant interactions with state officials transformed weak bureaucracies into more responsive, caring, and efficient institutions. This experience sparked my curiosity about how

war-aggrieved institutions managed to perform complex welfare tasks, and the role local women's groups played in that process.

I devoted my master's degree and the first years of my PhD to following this idea, and I was fortunate to have the support of excellent mentors. I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Montes de María, a rural region in the Colombian Caribbean where I had previously worked. I worked with three grassroots women's groups, documenting their efforts to advance policies related to women's health and access to justice. I found that, while local institutions lacked the capacity to develop strong welfare policies, women's groups provided knowledge and capacity, and even extended the material and symbolic reach of the state. In the paper "Building a Longed-for State," I wanted to show the importance of local actors in pushing weak bureaucracies into action, providing institutional memory, and even enacting state responsibilities themselves. Through this argument, I tried to theorize the importance of temporality, permanence, and emotional attachments in state-making processes.

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

My research explores the politics of care, welfare, and reproduction in high-risk settings. I'm particularly interested in how different forms of risk—violence, poverty, environmental collapse—reshape family life and reproductive decision-making. My dissertation, for example, sees armed violence and environmental degradation as prisms to understand how these forces amplify gendered and reproductive inequalities, but also how women, families, and communities respond to and navigate them. I also look at whether and how legal and medical systems alleviate or perpetuate reproductive and family-related vulnerabilities in contexts of humanitarian and environmental risk. This has led me to questions that I'm still trying to answer, and I'm sure will shape my future research agenda: Why do women decide to have children or not? What social, cultural, and institutional factors shape those decisions? What's it like to become and be a mother under fragile contexts, and how do families balance care and risk in practice?

Ultimately, I believe these questions are about power: who gets to make decisions about reproduction and care, how institutions shape those possibilities, and how communities push back against (and transform) systems that fail them.

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 sociologists have gotten very good at dissecting how power operates and how institutions reproduce different forms of violence and inequality. That work is essential and needs to continue. However, I'd like to see the subfield moving towards a more serious engagement with transformation (and not only with dysfunction). We know what doesn't work (how domination persists), but we don't know enough about what works (how it gets interrupted or undone). There's already exciting work happening in this direction, and I want to continue reading (and writing) about problem-solving approaches in political sociology. This agenda is particularly relevant as we confront the urgency of the multiple crises of our time: climate collapse, democratic backsliding, wars, mass displacement, etc.

Thematically, I'm especially excited about the future of the political sociology of

reproduction. Abortion bans, climate change, poverty, violence, and criminalization have put reproductive rights under siege. Documenting how women and movements have responded to these threats around the world can teach us comparative lessons on how to promote reproductive justice in the present and future. Reproduction is also a lens that reveals how power operates at the most intimate scales while also allowing us to ask questions about sovereignty, citizenship, and state control. I think there's potential here to rethink classical political sociology questions about rights, governance, and collective action through the lens of the body.

Finally, I would also like to see the subfield engaging more with geographical diversity. Some of the most innovative and interesting political responses are taking place beyond the Global North, and I look forward to seeing these experiments and experiences at the center of our academic debates.

María Ximena Dávila *is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology at UT Austin.*

Q&A with New Council Members

Luciana de Souza Leão

Council Member // Assistant Professor, 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?

I am spending this academic year in Brazil on sabbatical, supported in part by a fellowship at the Center for Metropolitan Studies at the University of São Paulo. In collaboration with researchers there, I am developing two papers examining the long-term evolution of social protection regimes in countries from the so-called Global South. Additionally, I have recently submitted my first book for revision, and I am collecting preliminary data for my next major research project. The photo I am submitting for the newsletter shows me conducting fieldwork in the hinterlands of Ceará, in Brazil's Northeast, where most locations are accessible only by motorbike—I traveled by "moto-táxi," it was a lot of fun! What also brings me joy these days is working closely with my PhD students that keep doing such interesting and important work, despite the significant structural uncertainty facing higher education in the

United States. I am continually inspired by their creativity and perseverance.

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?

As an international scholar, I am attentive to how the current political climate is affecting international graduate students and faculty. During my tenure on the council, I am committed to ensuring that our initiatives reflect the needs and perspectives of our international community, while also highlighting the valuable insights international scholarship can bring to this political moment. For example, research on policy dismantling, authoritarian populism, and democratic backsliding—areas with robust international scholarship—offers important context for understanding today's political dynamics in the United States. Integrating these perspectives to the debates happening at our section not only strengthens our collective awareness of what needs to be done but also reinforces the global relevance of the work we do.

Elisabeth Anderson

Council Member // Associate Professor of Sociology, New York University Abu Dhabi

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?

Up until now, my research has been largely historical, but early this year I decided to switch gears. Extending my interest in the history of worker protection to the present, my colleague Sabino Kornrich and I are finishing up a paper on the role of regulation in today's welfare states. The welfare state is typically conceptualized in terms of social provision, that is, as government support for the consumption of goods and services. But it also serves an important role in regulating production, or the conditions under which people work for pay. We make a theoretical case for integrating "regulatory welfare" into the study of welfare states. We also created a dataset of 25 countries and use it to show that while some forms of social provision have increased, regulation has declined, particularly in the areas of employment protection and overtime premia. States are deregulating labor markets to promote flexibility; on the side of provision, they are doing more to support families and promote fertility without directly addressing the increasing insecurity that deregulation has brought.

Keeping up with US news from afar, I have been struck by how profoundly the Trump Administration is transforming American politics and social life, not least in the area of higher education. To better understand what is going on and to document this history as it happens, Neil Gross and I are leading a mixed-methods project on the impact of the Administration's policies toward colleges and universities. We're finishing up a national survey of university faculty and administrators, and we're about to start conducting interviews. We want to find out how research and teaching have been affected, how relations among various campus constituencies may have changed,

and what faculty think about how their institutions are responding to the pressure. We're particularly interested in understanding why different schools have responded differently to the Administration's policies, with many acquiescing but some showing clearer signs of resistance.

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?

In these uneasy times, it is important for the section to stay relevant. I look forward to helping plan and organize panels and events that help us better understand the causes and consequences of the current political situation in the US and other countries where the far right is ascendant. On a brighter note, I also look forward to serving on the awards committees and getting to better know the amazing work that our members are producing!

Gabriel Lévesque

Council Member (Student) // PhD Candidate in Sociology, McGill 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?

I study regulatory power, the politics of science and expertise, and the social construction of risk. My research is guided by two overarching questions: 1) How do organizational practices of knowledge formation and risk construction shape regulatory outcomes? and 2) how do struggles over the validity of knowledge claims shape public attitudes and mobilizations around regulatory change? In my dissertation, titled Structures of Latency: The Protraction of Regulatory Controversies over Toxic Substances, I investigate regulatory change and inertia with a focus on environmental and occupational exposures to toxics in the United States and Canada. I ask why there is often a large temporal gap between the initial discovery of toxic risks and their regulation. Each empirical chapter explores a structural barrier to better addressing regulatory problems. You can read my recent work in Theory and Social Inquiry, Public Understanding of Science or Administration & Society. This year, most of my time will be devoted to writing up my dissertation. I am also currently on the job market and will thus spend considerable time exploring future academic opportunities. I plan to attend the Eastern Sociological Society annual meeting in March and the ASA annual meeting in August. I hope to see many of you there!

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 grateful for the support of the political sociology section members in the last election, and I am excited to join the section council for the next 2 years. In these trying political times, I see this section as a vital

meeting hub for exchanging ideas and resources, as well as to collectively make sense of current events in the U.S. and elsewhere. I hope for increasing collaboration between our section and other sections to think through major challenges like climate change, democratic backsliding, or declining trust in science, to name a few. This is an opportunity for us to display the range of topics, methods and ideas that our work addresses, and hopefully to inspire solutions.

Guest Essay

Coming Soon to a State Capitol near You: The 1920s?

Benjamin Merriman
Associate Professor, University of Kansas

During the 1920s, many American state and local governments created homegrown policies asserting remarkably strong, direct control over economic life. Such efforts were commonly called "experiments." These were not, as we might understand the term today, thoughtful, controlled, collaborative searches for sound policy, but free exercises of political creativity. Some, like zero-interest state-backed mortgages or city-run gas stations selling fuel to drivers at wholesale cost have some appeal a century later.

Less appealing is the Kansas Court of Industrial Relations (KCIR), eponymous subject of my new book, The Kansas Court of Industrial Relations: Interwar America's Dangerous Experiment in Social Control (Cambridge University Press, 2025). Between 1920 and 1923, this improbable-sounding bench exercised almost top to bottom control over prices, wages, hours, contract terms, and work conditions in most of the Kansas economy; its rulings relied on unconstrained inquisitorial powers and heavy criminal sanctions. The KCIR was disastrous. It put many peaceful, principled labor leaders in jail; elicited from the US Supreme Court infamous decisions restricting the expressive rights of workers and the prudent regulatory power of states; discredited a class of policies—labor courts—so often used successfully in other countries; and gave Benito Mussolini ideas.

Over much of the intervening century, such ill-considered, sweeping state projects of societal engineering have been unthinkable: a number of changes in law and administrative practice made for a much more standardized, sedate policy environment that has foreclosed both good and bad possibilities. Today, many of the long-term drivers of policy uniformity are weakening or reversing. The Roberts Court has returned or may soon return important matters of law to their pre-New Deal condition. Political polarization also strongly disfavors uniformity. Such change creates hazards, but also possibilities to think afresh about many matters that have been locked onto a stable, suboptimal path of development. It is a remarkable opportunity for historically minded political sociologists and allied scholars in other fields.

American policy, especially about matters like working life and public ownership that

elicited such state ingenuity through the 1920s, moved far toward national standardization by mid-century. Some ideas, like the proto-fascist KCIR or the socialist experiments of North Dakota's Nonpartisan League, acquired the taint of political extremism. Congress took some matters out of state control; the most important piece of truly preempting, national legislation is the 1935 Wagner Act, which put much of industrial relations in the charge of the National Labor Relations Board. The 1946 Administrative Procedure Act, also copied by the states, fitted most of the working of government to a handful of specified forms of action. The growth of federal transfers to states from the 1920s, and to cities from the 1930s, created the long-familiar, quietly homogenizing intergovernmental dynamic of fiscal federalism.

As my next research project explores, a talented, tight-knit group of legal and administrative experts also built a set of cooperative institutions of horizontal federalism, which drew states and cities toward shared, uniform practice. The Uniform Commercial Code and the Restatements of law replaced America's dozens of homespun legal traditions with a single law of commerce and roughly agreed notions of evidence and procedure. The Council of State Governments and associated organizations of state officials sustained gradual, collaborative discovery and promotion of sound policy. A range of formal agreements developed by such groups ended an epoch of interstate confusion by enabling the quick dispatch of assistance in disasters, the reciprocal recognition of drivers' licenses, the routine execution of warrants, and the solution of dozens of kindred administrative problems, and also provided for the shared management of the water systems of the dry West.

Many of these cooperative arrangements are seriously strained. Fiscal federalism is in principle a largely voluntary relationship. As federal budgeting is used in an increasingly ideological, punitive fashion, many governments and public organizations may seriously consider what freedom they could win by walking away from federal funding, if they can survive the austerity this would impose. It is worth recalling that some of the most progressive states refused federal public health funds in the 1920s, and that many professors and universities maintained a principled opposition to federal research funding until at least the 1940s.

Polarization, whose effects were more prominent along the vertical axis of state-federal and state-local relations in the early Twenty-First Century, is now harming interstate arrangements. In 2025, some states walked away from the National Governors Association, certainly the most powerful interstate organization, and for much of its long history a picture of concord. Were it not for the strictures of the Dormant Commerce Clause, many ideologically inimical states would surely embroil themselves in what would be, in effect, trade war. A brute material fact—lack of water—has brought the most important interstate agreement, the Colorado River Compact, to the point of institutional crisis. These processes, which may prod states toward the old, independent model of policy action that was once common, have intensified by increments.

The sudden return of power to the states by judicial means is also conceivable. To take a scenario that is certainly thinkable, imagine the US Supreme Court, in the near future, deems the Wagner Act substantially unconstitutional and returns to states, for the moment, much of their historical responsibility in managing collective

bargaining and labor relations. What would happen next in any particular state?

Part of the answer would have to do with who currently governs a state, and who those officials listen to. It might also have much to do with what some legal scholars refer to as "zombie law"—unenforced state statutes, constitutional provisions, and case law reanimated by a sudden shift in federal court doctrine. With a few thoroughly studied exceptions, there are usually only a handful of active scholars who have a deep, sustained interest in how things tend to get done in any given state. There are often only one or two scholars who serve as the stewards of a state's constitutional and institutional traditions.

In many states, it is possible that nobody quite knows what law has slumbered since the passage of the Wagner Act. The KCIR's extraordinary powers, for instance, relied on distinctive, broad public interest doctrines developed by the Kansas Supreme Court. Future New Dealer Rexford Tugwell studied these Kansas cases carefully in 1922, but these decisions—forgotten but not, I believe, overturned—were reexamined only fitfully or in passing until I came upon them a century later.

One of my great recent intellectual satisfactions has been the growing number of sociologists actively studying the problems of public administration and the work of state governments. I append to the already-long agenda developed by those researchers one more urgent task: reconstructing state law and policy as it stood before the New Deal. The profuse variety of policy design that preceded the era of standardization may stir the imagination. Revisiting the problems and practices of the 1920s can also prepare us for what may return to the surface as the legal and administrative foundations of New Deal and post-War national policy erode.

Benjamin Merriman *is an Associate Professor of Sociology by Courtesy and Associate Professor of Public Affairs & Administration at the University of Kansas.*

Tales from the Field

Studying a Shifting Activist Landscape

Weijun Yuan

University of Chicago

I am a sociologist of social movements, networks, and organization. Motivated by the puzzles of how collective action could emerge, unfold, and lead to social change, I use digital trace data and computational methods to study the dynamics and outcomes of social movements.

My earlier work was driven by interests in historical episodes of contention, especially in the 20th century China, Latin America, and the United States, for which I developed a methodological expertise in building theory-informed political event datasets using archival data. An enthusiastic builder and user of event data, I was excited to see movements broken into analyzable units that allow us to track their ebbs and flows and quantitatively analyze protest rates and event occurrences. At the same time, I also feel a strong urge to look beneath the visible wave of protest events and study the organizing processes that sustain them.

In 2019, during my Ph.D. studies at the University of California, Irvine, millions of Hong Kong residents surged into the streets to challenge the government's proposed extradition bill amending the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance. The protests lasted for months and became the largest pro-democracy mobilization in Hong Kong's history. While I was tracking events in Hong Kong, I came across a whole ecosystem of social media platforms and organizational accounts. I started following them closely. What I saw was a trove of protester-generated data that documented the day-to-day dynamics of how activist groups communicated, coordinated, and adapted in real time. It was hard to look away.

The challenge of studying an ongoing movement is twofold. First, the phenomenon itself is fluid and constantly changing: new actors emerge, tactics shift, and coordination moves across platforms faster than researchers can track. Second, it is easy to be misled by journalistic narratives or to let breaking news drive the research agenda and affect the interpretation of findings.

That being the case, the project created opportunities for me to theorize the micro-dynamic interactions between actors and to contrast scholarly findings with popular accounts. My dissertation ended up with three papers on the inter-factional dynamics, consensus formation, and coalitional resilience of the activist groups in Hong Kong. They leverage original inter-organizational endorsement network, organization-event sponsorship network, semantic network, and political event datasets extracted from over 700,000 posts from Telegram broadcasting channels as well as other sources. Contrary to what many news accounts and activists themselves emphasized, for example, I find that the moderate and radical factions did not form a collective identity—the boundaries between them remain salient. Cross-factional endorsements are transient, and are more of instrumental performances aimed at different audiences than emotive expressions of solidarity. Short-term events such as interactions with institutional actors, brief windows of institutional openness, elite endorsements, and international attention alter political access and the scope of potential audiences, in turn affecting the images that movement actors sought to project to insider versus outsider audiences.

Moreover, when I examine how activist groups reach consensus on their claims, I find that it is not the largest or most established organizations that initiate or drive the most prominent claims, nor is it the fringe effects of radical groups or mass media's amplification of radical demands. Instead, the early stage of the movement is a chaos of ambiguous claims. Activist groups learn from one another through commenting on, revising, and integrating each other's ideas, and through this interactive process they collectively crystalize the claims they eventually endorse.

As I am working on turning my dissertation papers into journal publications, I am conducting pilot studies for my next big project, which sits at the intersection of collective action, networks, and culture. An overarching question I ask is: how do social relationships and relational events shape memories about revolutions? One of the empirical studies focuses on the personal memories of China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This study relies on University of Pittsburgh's Cultural Revolution in Memories archive, which is an oral history project to which I have contributed. Another study from this project centers on the formation of collective memories about revolutionary events. Using Wikipedia data and computational methods, I examine how memories of revolutionary events vary in their degree of modularity and contestation. Drawing on backend data on how administrators and users edit, debate, and resolve disputes over page content, I analyze processes of consensus formation. I am open to collaboration on these ongoing projects.

***Weijun Yuan** is an Assistant Instructional Professor of Sociology in the Master of Arts Program in Social Sciences at the University of Chicago. She researches the dynamics and outcomes of collective action.*

New Publications

Academic articles or chapters

Acosta, Laura. 2025. "Fabricating Communists: The Imagined Third That Reinvented the National Fault Line in Mid-Twentieth-Century Colombia's Civil War." American Sociological Review 90(6):947-84. doi: 10.1177/00031224251371066.

Alex, Heba. 2025. "Fuzzy Boundaries: A Mechanism for Group Accumulation of Advantage." Sociological Theory 0(0):07352751251378516. doi: 10.1177/07352751251378516.

Díaz Pinzón, Florencio and Paul Almeida. 2025. "Profile: Multi-Sectoral Alliances in National Mobilizations against Extraction in Panama." Social Movement Studies:1-8. doi: 10.1080/14742837.2025.2562887.

Elcioglu, Emine Fidan. 2025a. "Seeding the Divide: John Tanton, the Sierra Club and the Struggle over Us Environmentalism." Race & Class. doi: 10.1177/03063968251371957.

Elcioglu, Emine Fidan. 2025b. "Red Pills, Blue Books: Youth Political Consciousness and the Epistemic Struggle between Youtube and the University." Critical Sociology 0(0):08969205251348946. doi: 10.1177/08969205251348946.

Guo, Weirong. 2025a. "Echoes of Silence: How Student Migrants Navigate Political Taboos across Borders." Social Forces. doi: 10.1093/sf/soaf144.

Guo, Weirong. 2025b. "From Engagement to Detachment: Divergent Cosmopolitanisms among Transnational Chinese Students." Social Problems. doi: 10.1093/socpro/spaf056.

Guo, Weirong and Qing Tingting Liu. 2025. "Privilege or Marginalization: How Chinese Youth from Divergent Class Backgrounds Make Sense of Racism in the U.S. And Australia." Ethnic and Racial Studies:1-19. doi: 10.1080/01419870.2025.2519807.

Hussain, Mushahid. 2025. "Through the Prism of Community Development: Decolonization and the Cold War Politics of Agrarian Modernization in East Pakistan." Social Science History 49(4):883-907. doi: 10.1017/ssh.2025.21.

Jiang, Ann. 2025. "Book Review: In Our Interest." International Migration Review. doi: 10.1177/01979183251370704.

Kim, Jessica, Elizabeth A. Henry, Jerrid Carter and Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal. 2025. "Globalization, Populism, and Climate Skepticism: Untangling Varieties and Pathways." Environmental Sociology:1-23. doi: 10.1080/23251042.2025.2536342.

Kim, Joonsik and Sida Liu. 2025. "About the Patient Named Taiwan: The Rise of Doctors in Party Politics." Journal of Contemporary Asia:1-21. doi: 10.1080/00472336.2025.2488904.

Knight, David Jonathan. 2025. "Contesting the State: Embodied Threat and the Emergence of Prisoner Mobilization." American Sociological Review 90(4):658-89. doi: 10.1177/00031224251340401.

Le, Andrew Nova. 2025. "The Way of Migrant Brokers: Power, Competition, and the Misconversion Capital." Social Problems. doi: 10.1093/socpro/spaf031.

Lee, Gracia J. 2025. "From Equality to Economic Development: Culture, Intersectionality, and Justifications for Women's Entrepreneurship Policy in the United States, 1973–1988." Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society. doi: 10.1093/sp/jxaf012.

Marom, Oded. 2025. "Banal Radicalism: Free Spaces and the Routinization of Radical Practices in Far-Right Movements." The British Journal of Sociology 76(4):767-78. doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.13213.

Melcher, Cody R., Joseph van der Naald, Christopher Torres and Spencer C. Lindsay. 2025. "Class, the Welfare State, and Redistributive Attitudes: A Methodological Intervention." The Social Science Journal:1-21. doi: 10.1080/03623319.2025.2582481.

Mellon, Greer. 2025. "Competence over Partisanship: Party Affiliation Does Not Affect the Selection of School District Superintendents." American Sociological Review 90(4):561-93. doi: 10.1177/00031224251346993.

Morosin, Alessandro and James Everett Hein. 2025. "Organizing against Mining Companies during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Frames, Tactics and the Digital Divide in Southern Mexico." Globalizations:1-23. doi: 10.1080/14747731.2025.2525034.

Movahed, Masoud. 2025. "Working-Class Structural Power, Associational Power, and Income Inequality." Journal of Industrial Relations 0(0):00221856251326670. doi: 10.1177/00221856251326670.

Perry, Samuel L. 2025. "Secularism, Sorting, and Americans' Political Knowledge." Social Forces. doi: 10.1093/sf/soaf150.

Rohr, Benjamin and John Levi Martin. 2025. "The State and the Emergence of the First American Party System: Roll Call Voting in the New York State Assembly during the Early Republic." American Sociological Review 90(4):726-54. doi: 10.1177/00031224251344574.

Rossi, Federico M. 2023. "Democracia Y Movimientos Sociales (Temas De La Democracia, 45; Mexico: Conferencias Magistrales - Instituto Nacional Electoral)."

Seida, Kimberly, Candice Shaw, Jessica Kim, Sam Shirazi and Kathleen M. Fallon. 2025. "Adopting Gender-Based-Violence Legislation, 1980–2015: The Role of Norm Cascades, Women's Movements, and Level of Development." Sociology of Development 11(4):309-40. doi: 10.1525/sod.2025.2607832.

Shi, Mary. 2025. ""Until Indian Title Shall Be … Fairly Extinguished": The Public Lands, Indigenous Erasure, and the Origins of Government Promotion of Infrastructure in the United States." Politics & Society 53(4):570-602. doi: 10.1177/00323292251338129.

Somers, Margaret. 2025. "Toward a Predistributive Democracy: Polanyi and Piketty on Capitalism, Moral Economy, and Democracy in Crisis." Journal of Law and Political Economy 5(3):508-607. doi: doi.org/10.5070/LP60065484.

Stallone, Jessica. 2025. "Aging in Nationhood: Everyday Nationalism and Belonging among Seniors in Old-Age Homes in Québec." The British Journal of Sociology. doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.70042.

Thomas, Jacob. 2025. "Art as a Channel and Embodiment of Symbolic Interaction between Migrants and Non-Migrants." Symbolic Interaction 48(3):410-40. doi: https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.1219.

Tuncer-Ebetürk, Irem, Jessica Kim and Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal. 2025. "The Global Rise in Children's Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Prevalence: A Macro-Sociological Explanation." Social Forces. doi: 10.1093/sf/soaf153.

Vachuska, Karl and Masoud Movahed. 2025. "The Causal Effect of Gun Violence on Everyday Mobility Patterns across Us Neighborhoods." Spatial Demography 13(1):7. doi: 10.1007/s40980-025-00139-1.

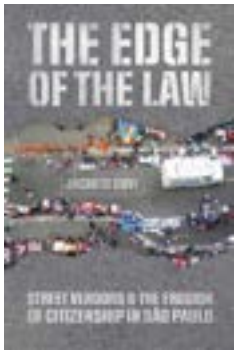
Zhang, Yinxian and Di Zhou. 2025. "One Sentiment, Multiple Interpretations: Contrasting Official and Popular Anti-Americanism in China." Sociological Science 12:511-36.

Books

Bereni, Laure. 2025. *Managing Corporate Virtue: The Politics of Workplace Diversity in New York and Paris*: Oxford University Press.

A major tenet of contemporary capitalism holds that what is good for business can align with what is good for society. Efforts toward more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces epitomize this rising ideology, termed responsible capitalism. An increasingly common managerial mantra is "diversity means business." But how does it play out in the daily life of organizations? Drawing on interviews with diversity managers, a historical review of practitioner literature, and observations from organizations in New York City and Paris, Managing Corporate Virtue goes beyond the rhetoric of diversity initiatives to uncover the concrete challenges faced by those tasked with implementing them. This book reveals the persistent fragility of diversity efforts, which are often sidelined; subject to the variations of the legal, social, and political environment; and require constant efforts to sustain managerial support. Practitioners must prove their programs are neither merely virtue signaling nor the Trojan horse of political, legal, or moral pressures that would unsettle the corporate order. Ultimately, by exploring the day-to-day work of diversity managers in the United States and France, the book exposes the contradictions lurking beneath the neoliberal promise of harmony between profit and virtue.

Cuvi, Jacinto. 2025. *The Edge of the Law: Street Vendors and the Erosion of Citizenship in São Paulo*: University of Chicago Press.

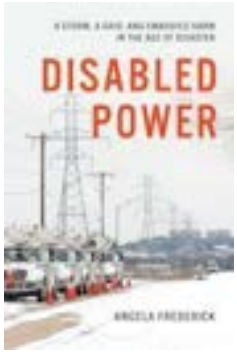


With a little initiative and very little startup money, an outgoing individual might sell you a number of delights and conveniences familiar to city dwellers—from cold water bottles while you're sitting in traffic to a popsicle from a cart on a summer afternoon in the park. Such vendors form a significant share of the workforce in São Paulo, Brazil, but their ubiquity belies perpetual struggle. Some have the right to practice their trade; others do not. All of them strive to make it—or stay afloat.

In The Edge of the Law, sociologist Jacinto Cuvi introduces us to the world of street vendors and teases out the relationship between the construction of

legality and the experience of citizenship. As São Paulo's city government undertakes a large-scale plan to cancel street vending licenses and evict street vendors, Cuvi reveals how the rights of informal workers can be revoked or withheld and how the lines can be redrawn between work that is "legal" and work that takes place under constant fear of law enforcement. Alongside the mechanics of disenfranchisement, Cuvi captures the lived experience of criminalization, dissecting the distribution of (shallow) rights among vendors who continually reinvent strategies to eke out a living while dealing with the constraints and pressures of informal citizenship at the edge of the law.

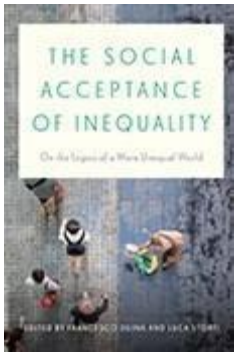
Frederick, Angela. 2025. *Disabled Power*: A *Storm, a Grid, and Embodied Harm in the Age of Disaster*: NYU Press.



Every disaster is a disability disaster, argues Angela Frederick. Disabled Power tells the stories of Texans with disabilities who endured the 2021 Texas power crisis, which forced millions of Texas residents to endure a dayslong winter storm without heat or water. Based on 58 in-depth interviews with disabled Texans and parents of disabled children, Frederick highlights how disabled people and those with chronic health conditions are uniquely harmed when basic infrastructure such as power and water systems fail. She argues that the vulnerability people with disabilities experienced during this disaster was not an inevitable consequence of individual disabled bodies. Rather, disability vulnerability was "produced" by policies that "disabled" vital infrastructure.

Frederick also emphasizes another meaning of the phrase "disabled power:" the individual and collective resilience and creativity Texans with disabilities exercised to survive the disaster. Despite common perceptions of people with disabilities as passive victims, Frederick shows how many found strategies to survive and to provide and receive care within their communities. Ultimately, the implications of this disaster extend far beyond Texas and underscore our increased vulnerability to infrastructural failures as extreme weather events become more common. Disabled Power offers a blueprint for reimagining vulnerability and resilience to center people with disabilities in disaster research and emergency response.

Duina, Francesco and Luca Storti, eds. 2025. *The Social Acceptance of Inequality*: *On the Logics of a More Unequal World*: Oxford University Press. Retrieved 12/12/2025 (https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197814499.001.0001).



The world has staggering levels of inequality. Most people worry about this. Some, however, accept or even approve of those inequalities. Why? The Social Acceptance of Inequality offers the first comprehensive analysis of the logics people use in support of economic inequalities. Turning to case studies from across the globe, it examines four primary logics. Market and economic logics see people accept and even approve of economic inequalities because of the positive material outcomes for

societies with which they are purportedly associated. Moral logics see people thinking of inequalities as fair according to "higher" or ethical principles, such as meritocracy. When relying on cultural and institutional logics, people view economic inequalities as consistent with established or emerging outlooks, policies, or organizational arrangements. Using group and ethnic logics, people justify inequalities on the basis of hierarchical distinctions between "superior" and "inferior" collectivities. These logics do not exist in isolation: They often interact with each other and inevitably function in particular political, economic, and cultural contexts. With contributors from across the world and the social sciences, evidence comes from North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Attention goes not only to those in positions of privilege but also to those in vulnerable positions who, despite their conditions, look favorably on inequalities. With original analyses employing a wealth of methodological approaches, The Social Acceptance of Inequality offers a compelling investigation of the logics of acceptance, their variations and intersections, and how we may move toward a less unequal world.

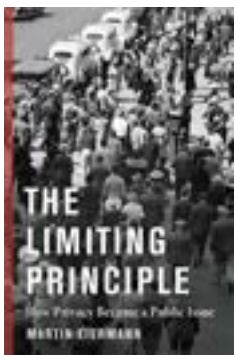
Durham, Simone N and Angela Jones. 2025. *Black Lives Matter: A Reference Handbook*: Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

This multifaceted reference work surveys the history, development, leadership, and priorities of Black Lives Matter (BLM), including the group's efforts to raise public awareness of police violence in communities of color.

Beginning with the infamous incidents of police brutality that spurred the creation and growth of BLM, this book goes on to profile leading and influential activists and organizations, such as the NAACP, movement co-founder Alicia Garza, and civil rights activist and athlete Colin Kaepernick.

Readers will gain an understanding of important organizational priorities, as well as criticisms of and controversies surrounding the group. A broad range of personal essays explore the persistent problems of police violence and racial discrimination in America. Governmental data and excerpts of primary documents are also included, and an annotated bibliography of related books, news articles, reports, podcasts and more supports readers in conducting further research into BLM, police violence, and racism in American society.

Eiermann, Martin. 2025. *The Limiting Principle: How Privacy Became a Public Issue*: Columbia University Press.



The concept of privacy is central to public life in the United States. It is the fulcrum of countless conflicts over reproductive rights and consumer protection, the power of tech companies and the reach of state surveillance. How did privacy come to take on such import, and what have the consequences been for American institutions and society?

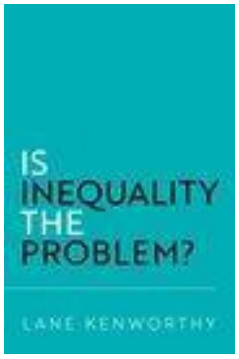
Martin Eiermann traces the transformation of privacy from a set of informal cultural norms into a potent political issue. Around the turn of the twentieth century, in a nation that was searching for order amid rapid change and frequent moral panics about the ills of modern life, privacy spoke to emerging social problems and new technological realities. During this tumultuous period, political mobilization and judicial contestation shaped a legal, institutional, and administrative privacy architecture that has partly endured into the twenty-first century. Eiermann rebuts the claim that technological change renders privacy obsolete, demonstrating that the concept became increasingly capacious when it was applied to the social problems and political disputes of the information age. And he shows that it is often the selectivity—not the ubiquity—of governmental and corporate data collection that should elicit our concerns.

Drawing on rich archival materials and computational research methods, The Limiting Principle provides a deeply original sociological account of the history, social significance, and limitations of privacy in the modern United States.

Janoski, Thomas. 2025. *Rethinking Symbolic Interactionism*: Edward Elgar Publishing.

This discerning book critically analyzes the key principles of symbolic interactionism, outlining their strengths and examining current weaknesses. Thomas Janoski provides novel insights into the theory, rethinking some of its foundations while adhering to its basic symbolic principles of the self.

Kenworthy, Lane. 2025. *Is Inequality the Problem*?: Oxford University Press.

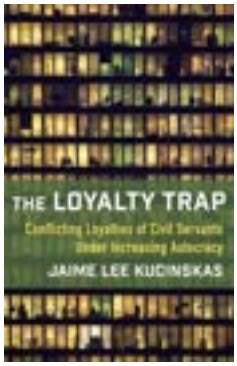


Increasing economic inequality is now one of the most studied subjects in the social sciences. The general view is that while its increase represents a bad social outcome in and of itself, its negative impact extends into numerous other realms of social life: declines in living standards for those in the lower deciles of the income ladder, worse health outcomes, reductions in happiness, and less opportunity for most.

In Is Inequality the Problem?, Lane Kenworthy draws from a vast trove of research on the rich democracies to argue that while inequality is normatively a problem and we should therefore work to reduce it, the evidence from wealthier countries does not show that income inequality has contributed much at all to the other social ills it is associated with, like poor health outcomes. The effects vary from society to society, but typically the key contributors to negative trends like this one are factors other than inequality. Instead of trying to improve living standards, democracy, opportunity, health, and happiness indirectly via reduction in income inequality or wealth

inequality, policy makers are more likely to make progress by pursuing these goals directly.

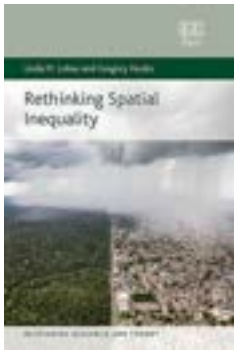
Kucinskas, Jaime Lee. 2025. *The Loyalty Trap: Conflicting Loyalties of Civil Servants under Increasing Autocracy*: Columbia University Press.



Donald J. Trump took office threatening to run roughshod over democratic institutions, railing against the federal bureaucracy, and calling for dismantling the administrative state. How do civil servants respond to a presidential turn toward authoritarianism? In what ways—if any—can they restrain or counter leaders who defy the norms of liberal democratic governance?

The Loyalty Trap explores how civil servants navigated competing pressures and duties amid the chaos of the Trump administration, drawing on in-depth interviews with senior officials in the most contested agencies over the course of a tumultuous term. Jaime Lee Kucinskas argues that the professional culture and ethical obligations of the civil service stabilize the state in normal times but insufficiently prepare bureaucrats to cope with a president like Trump. Instead, federal employees became ensnared in intractable ethical traps, caught between their commitment to nonpartisan public service and the expectation of compliance with political directives. Kucinskas shares their quandaries, recounting attempts to preserve the integrity of government agencies, covert resistance, and a few bold acts of moral courage in the face of organizational decline and politicized leadership. A nuanced sociological account of the lessons of the Trump administration for democratic governance, The Loyalty Trap offers a timely and bracing portrait of the fragility of the American state.

Lobao, Linda M and Gregory Hooks. 2025. *Rethinking Spatial Inequality*: Edward Elgar Publishing.

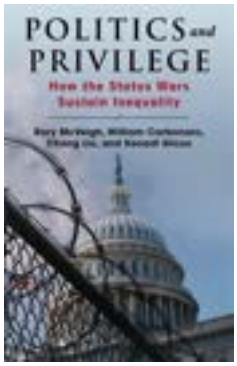


Leading scholars Linda M. Lobao and Gregory Hooks adopt an organizing framework that speaks to the concept of spatial inequality, how it forms a lens on societal disparities, and how it gives rise to work with underlying commonalities across different social science disciplines. With this scaffolding, the authors consider spatial inequality across spatial scales, places, and populations, including the subnational scale, so often missing in inequality research. Illustrative cases center on poverty, public service provision and austerity policies, environmental justice, and war and conflict. The book concludes by advancing an integrative social science agenda to guide future emancipatory research on inequality.

Rethinking Spatial Inequality is a vital resource for students and scholars of inequality across the social sciences including sociology, human geography, development, regional,

urban, and rural studies, demography, and political science. Policymakers and practitioners in public service provision will also benefit from this perceptive book.

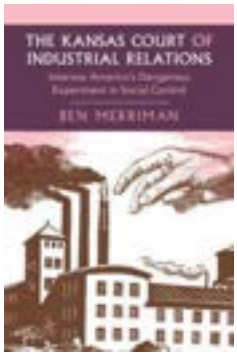
McVeigh, Rory, William Carbonaro, Chang Liu and Kenadi Silcox. 2025. *Politics and Privilege*: *How the Status Wars Sustain Inequality*: Columbia University Press.



In the United States, the bottom 50 percent of households hold only 1 percent of the nation's wealth. Scholars and commentators have long viewed democracy as the antidote to economic inequality, but US electoral politics bears little resemblance to a struggle between the haves and the have-nots. What makes extreme disparities of wealth and income so persistent, and why has the political process failed to address the problem?

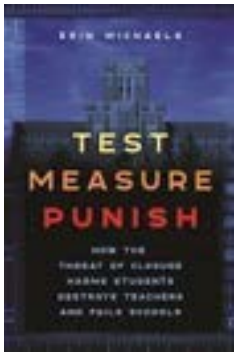
Based on data from an innovative experiment, this book presents a bold new theory that shows why American politics revolves around status differences, not class conflict. Analyzing a sample of nearly 2,600 participants, the authors investigate whether Americans are more likely to support a social-change organization if it explicitly opposes racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and religious bigotry or if it focuses exclusively on economic equality. Drawing on the results, they argue that privileged groups' desire to preserve their status is the primary obstacle to forming progressive alliances. Status hierarchies are at the heart of political polarization, which stalls legislative efforts to reduce economic inequality or tackle pressing issues such as climate change, gun violence, and access to health care. Rigorous and timely, Politics and Privilege demonstrates why an agenda that simultaneously addresses economic and status inequalities is essential to progressive politics today.

Merriman, Ben. 2025. *Kansas Court of Industrial Relations*: *Interwar America's Dangerous Experiment in Social Control*: Cambridge University Press.



The Kansas Court of Industrial Relations, founded in 1920, was the lone US trial of a labor court – a policy design used almost everywhere else in the industrialized world during the interwar period. What led Kansas to establish the KCIR when no other state did? And what were the consequences of its existence for the development of economic policy in the rest of the country? Ben Merriman explores how the KCIR's bans on strikes and lockouts, heavy criminal sanctions, and unilateral control over the material terms of economic life, resulted in America's closest practical encounter with fascism. Battered by the Supreme Court in 1923, the KCIR's failure destroyed American interest in labor courts. But the legal battles and policy divisions about the KCIR, which enjoyed powerful supporters, were an early sign of the new political and intellectual alignments that led to America's unique New Deal labor policy.

Michaels, Erin. 2025. *Test, Measure, Punish: How the Threat of Closure Harms Students, Destroys Teachers, and Fails Schools*: NYU Press.



In the last two decades, education officials have closed a rising number of public schools nationwide related to low performance. These schools are mainly located in neglected neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty. Despite this credible threat of closure, relatively few individual schools threatened with closure for low performance in the United States are actually shut down. Yet, as Erin Michaels argues, the looming threat is ever present. Test, Measure, Punish critically shifts the focus from school shutdowns to the more typical situation within these strained public schools: operating under persistent risk of closure.

Many K-12 schools today face escalating sanctions if they do not improve according to repressive state mandates, which, in turn, incentivize schools to put into place nonstop test drills and strict student conduct rules. Test, Measure, Punish traces how threats of school closure have distorted education to become more punitive which disproportionately impacts—even targets—Black and Latinx communities and substantially hurts student social development. This book addresses how these new punitive schooling conditions for troubled schools reproduce racial inequalities.

Rossi, Federico M., ed. 2023. *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Social Movements*: Oxford University Press. Retrieved 12/11/2025 https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190870362.001.0001.

Since the redemocratization of much of Latin America in the 1980s and a regional wave of anti-austerity protests in the 1990s, social movement studies has become an important part of sociological, political, and anthropological scholarship on the region. The subdiscipline has framed debates about formal and informal politics, spatial and relational processes, as well as economic changes in Latin America. While there is an abundant literature on particular movements in different countries across the region, there is limited coverage of the approaches, debates, and theoretical understandings of social movement studies applied to Latin America. In The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Social Movements, Federico M. Rossi presents a survey of the broad range of theoretical perspectives on social movements in Latin America. Bringing together a wide variety of viewpoints, the Handbook includes five sections: theoretical approaches to social movements, as applied to Latin America; processes and dynamics of social movements; major social movements in the region; ideational and strategic dimensions of social movements; and the relationship between political institutions and social movements. Covering key social movements and social dynamics in Latin America from the late nineteenth century to the twenty-first century,

The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Social Movements is an indispensable reference for any scholar interested in social movements, protest, contentious politics, and Latin American studies.

Schenoni, L. 2024. *Bringing War Back In: Victory, Defeat, and the State in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*: Cambridge University Press.

Bringing War Back In provides a fresh theory connecting war and state formation that incorporates the contingency of warfare and the effects of war outcomes in the long run. The book demonstrates that international wars in nineteenth-century Latin America triggered state-building, that the outcomes of those wars affected the legitimacy and continuity of such efforts, and that the relative capacity of states in this region today continues to reflect those distant processes. Combining comparative historical analysis with cutting edge social science methods, the book provides a comprehensive picture of state formation in nineteenth-century Latin America that is compelling for readers across disciplines, breathes new life into bellicist approaches to state formation, and offers a novel framework to explain variation in state capacity across Latin America and the world.

Yavaş, Mustafa. 2025. *White-Collar Blues: The Making of the Transnational Turkish Middle Class*: Columbia University Press.

Consider the lucky few. They studied hard and aced high-stakes tests, survived demanding schooling and extracurriculars, graduated from top colleges and immediately landed high-pay, high-status corporate positions in tall buildings. What happens after this middle-class dream of fast-track careers comes true?

White-Collar Blues follows the Turkish members of the global elite workforce as they are selected into, survive within, and opt out of coveted employment at transnational corporations. State-employed doctors, lawyers, and engineers were long seen as role models until Turkey followed the global tide of neoliberalism and began to embrace freer circulation of capital. As world-renowned corporations transformed Istanbul into a global city, Turkey's best and brightest have increasingly sought employment at brand-name firms. Despite achieving upward mobility within and beyond Turkey, however, many Turkish professionals end up feeling disappointed, burned out, and trapped in their corporate careers. Highlighting the trade-off between freedom and financial security, White-Collar Blues reveals the hidden costs of conflating the quest for socioeconomic status with the pursuit of happiness.

Section Information

Chair Josh Pacewicz, Brown University
Chair-Elect Stephanie Mudge, University of California-Davis
Past Chair Dana Fisher, American University
Secretary-Treasurer Nicholas Occhiuto, Hunter College, CUNY
Council Members
Luciana de Souza Leão, University of Michigan (2028)
Elisabeth Anderson, New York University Abu Dhabi (2028)
Lynette Ong, University of Toronto (2027)
Mathieu Desan, University of Colorado Boulder (2027)
Hajar Yazdiha, University of Southern California (2026)
Mohammad Ali Kadivar, Boston College (2026)
Council Members, Student
I-Lun Shih, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Gabriel Lévesque, McGill University
Communications Director Jennifer Dudley, Columbia University
Newsletter Editors
Alphonse Opoku, University of South Florida
Cho Han, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Umair Rasheed, University of Illinois, Urban-Champaign
Website Editor
Pengfei Liu, University of California, Davis

polsocnews@gmail.com on bsky: @asapolisoc.bsky.social