

STATES, POWER, & SOCIETIES



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

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I write this in early June, in the midst of a series of unexpected and depressing events. From my window on lower Broadway in New York City I have witnessed night after night of police attacks on peaceful demonstrators. The police massed to stop the marches and used their clubs to push back the protesters. At the same time, the police made no effort at all to stop the small minority of demonstrators who turned down side streets

and onto the neighboring avenues to break windows and loot stores. Perhaps the first night's unimpeded destruction could be attributed to miscalculation on the part of the police, but when the police used the same tactics each night, leaving all streets except those with marches unpatrolled, it seems obvious that the vandalism and looting were the desired outcome. For the police, each broken window and looted store serves the double purpose of delegitimizing the demonstrators and building fear among the city's residents that, the police hope and expect, will lead to calls for 'unleashing' the police and increasing their budget.

We will see if the police strategy is successful, in New York or in the country at large. So far there is less public support than there was in the 1960s for bringing in

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the army to suppress protests. Trump's efforts to fan the flames are failing for the moment. He will see, even if he never absorbs, the reality that voters blame incumbents for disorder. Barring new developments in the coming months, Trump will suffer the fate of Lyndon Johnson. However, it is unclear if Americans will draw broader lessons from the murder of George Floyd. I hope but doubt these events will spur deeper reflection and action against the legacy of slavery and continuing racism in the United States.

The demonstrations are an abrupt change from the two months of silent and deserted streets brought on by the lockdown to stem the spread of Covid-19. New York City was both beautiful and creepy with the lack of pedestrians. The silence from the absence of cars reminded me of the day after a blizzard, albeit with no snow. A different sort of silence entered into our professional lives. I, like many or most of you, am teaching online. I find it alternately an alienating and uplifting experience, although for me now it is one of the main ways to retain human contact. Our annual ASA meeting has been cancelled. We will have to work hard and creatively to sustain our enthusiasm for teaching and research. At this point it remains unclear when we will be able to see our students and each other in person.

Covid-19 has been a medical and economic disaster for the US and for much of the world. We as political sociologists have much to analyze. World leaders range from the few who combine optimal policies with just the right tone in speaking to their citizens (Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand) to the too many who combine hate mongering, buffoonishness, and personal corruption along with gross and deadly incompetence. (This is one category in which Trump has made the US number 1). We will have the opportunity to figure out how much a country's leader is an accident (New Zealand hasn't produced other prime ministers of Ardern's quality) and how much is merely a sign of a nation's corrupt and sclerotic politics. Some heads of government surprise, and not in a good way: on April 15 French president Macron joined Trump and Bolsonaro in promoting the quack corona virus 'cure' of combining the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine and the antibiotic azithromycin. This came after studies showed chloroquine, while ineffective against Covid-19, causes heart failure. Evidently, they don't teach science or even scientific thinking at Sciences Po.

In the realm of efforts to mitigate the economic effects of the quarantines imposed in much of the world, governments are for the most part true to form. Thus, the Scandinavian governments, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, and France all were able to quickly provide massive income support for workers forced to stay at home. At the same time, the Netherlands and Germany blocked efforts to use the EU or the European

Central Bank to provide relief for the countries of southern Europe. Sweden's refusal to impose severe restrictions on its citizens combined with (so far) a middling death rate and the potential to achieve herd immunity before any other country will deserve both epidemiological and sociological study.

The US has a huge advantage over every other country in the world for dealing with the economic crisis: the 'exorbitant privilege' of the dollar as world currency. The Fed can, and is, creating trillions of dollars, essentially monetizing the \$2 trillion relief package and all the following rounds of relief. However, that money is being funneled through America's fragmented and perversely back-assed social welfare system. Thus, the supplemental unemployment is distributed by state-based agencies utterly unable to respond to unprecedented numbers of applicants. Big corporations are getting access to virtually unlimited loans without having to do much to keep their employees on payroll. Small businesses are having to deal with complex and shifting rules to get loans that will be forgiven if they keep their workers on payroll, but it seems likely that the deadlines will pass or the limited money in both the first and second rounds will run out before most of those applications can be processed.

Meanwhile, hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks were given to the rich and to favored industries which have shrewdly provided campaign funds in good years and bad and keep armies of lobbyists in Washington at all times to be ready for sudden moments of crisis (9/11, the 2008 financial crisis, and now Covid-19) when the doors to the Treasury swing open and Congress and Federal agencies quickly write rules. In such extremely fast-moving openings the winners are not the masses who don't have time to mobilize and who lack the knowledge of where to bring pressure and what to demand. Instead, the spoils go to those who have prepared themselves by buying access to executive and legislative officials, and who have hired lawyers and lobbyists with the expertise to present quickly written (or, in many cases, long-ago prepared) laws and regulations designed for their particular benefit even as they are justified by the exigencies of the moment. The mechanisms of relief vary across countries and reflect their quite durable political structures. Thus, our comparative studies of the Covid-19 sparked economic crisis will allow us to see how the enormous pressures of this crisis flow through existing forms, and when and how those pressures break existing arrangements, either through systemic collapse or by sparking mass mobilizations or geopolitical conflicts.

Our study of this crisis is important in itself. Much of the best work in political sociology comes from our study of extraordinary moments: revolutions, wars, mass movements. However, global warming almost certainly will produce repeated disasters with death tolls and economic destruction on the scale of this pandemic. Thus, our analyses of this crisis can yield important theoretical understandings that will help us track the political consequences of climate change. That, in turn, will allow us to identify the most fruitful strategies and pressure points through which popular forces can challenge elites' unending efforts to profit from mass misery.

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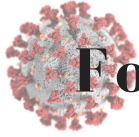
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Forum on Social Responses to COVID-19

Theorizing Social Response to COVID-19 in the U.S.

BY JEFFREY BROADBENT,
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Nearly 90 percent of Americans are under stay-at-home and organizational closure orders from their state governors or city mayors (Washington Post, April 2, 2020). These orders may carry legal weight, but have rarely been strictly enforced by police. Yet as of March 30, 53 percent of individuals were complying (CNN Ipsos poll, April 1). By April 7, 87% practiced social distancing (Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, April 17); 80% supported social distancing even if it damaged the economy (Politico poll, *Star-Tribune*, April 18).

As empty streets mutely testify, the bulk of the population has suddenly changed behavior patterns from active social engagement to sheltering in place and avoiding gatherings. Compliance likely varies by region, age, class, socio-economic status, health status, beliefs, ideology, and other factors. But still,

a dramatic shift in collective behavior has just occurred. How can we explain it? Which among sociology's theories of social order and social change meet or fail this test?

Theories that emphasize institutionalized routine in thought and behavior, the laws of economic profit, obedience to political authority, or functional requisites lack purchase here. They don't adequately account for the sudden, largely voluntary mass changes in social behavior observed in response to the coronavirus. If not these, what social theory or concept could adequately explain the sudden changes? Economic, educational, religious, and other social activities have reoriented, moved onto alternative virtual platforms, or ceased to operate. To comply with distancing, many people suffer significant financial hardships.

This change in activity displays acute human agency, a capacity to shift behavior suddenly. What drives this agency? Perhaps foremost is fear. People fear illness and death from COVID-19, so they self-isolate. But people also fear a loss of income and livelihood due to such self-isolation:

low-wage workers have no savings; small businesses teeter on bankruptcy. Two material terrors—health and economics—drive us in contrary directions. Responding to either, people optimize personal benefits and costs, as individual rational choice theory argues. According to Mead’s theory of action, when new problematic circumstances undermine interests, people consciously re-assess and produce new behavioral patterns. Habits readily crumble. For now, rational responses to fear for health predominate.

But selfish rationality alone is not a sufficient explanation. Many people also seem to be acting rationally for non-selfish reasons, as Etzioni stresses. People often rationally discipline their behavior to achieve goals dictated by higher ideals, not immediate self-protection. Weber identified this as value-rationality. For instance, people may want to keep others—family, friends, and people in their communities—from contracting the virus. Most poignantly, front-line medical professionals and workers in essential services put their health at risk to take care of others.

However, selfish and selfless rationality is still not the whole explanation. For most people, the virus threat is not immediate. Instead, most people are responding to their own beliefs about its severity. Political leaders, mass media, and internet bloggers

circulate contradictory assertions. How do people choose what to believe? Their pre-existing ideologies—identity-defining values—intervene. Networks of friends and media confirm initial preferences. One cluster of ideologies disparages experts, places faith in a higher power, sees government action as a threat to individual freedom. Such beliefs lead people and leaders to dismiss epidemiological evidence, vacillate, refuse to sequester, and demand rapid reopening. In contrast, an alternate cluster of ideologies respects scientific conclusions and government orders as the best guide for action. Such ideologies support a kind of group pragmatism, leading people to sequester willingly. Surprisingly, given national polarization, group pragmatism has generally prevailed. Mounting economic dislocations, though, may induce further shifts.

In summary, then, what lessons does the American response to the COVID-19 virus hold for social and political theory? U.S. society suddenly reorganized its seemingly habitual and institutionalized collective routines; it suddenly changed its most essential function from one of economic activity to one of health protection. The sudden general transformation casts doubt on structural, systemic, functional, and institutional explanations of social order and change. Rather, it indicates that social order is a function of both selfish and selfless rational behavior springing from

beliefs about how the world works, what society needs, and who to follow. The world often gives considerable latitude to believe in different ideologies. Material, organic feedback is rarely so evident as in the case of COVID-19. The fact that medical science has become widely trusted and social distancing broadly practiced, often even by those initially skeptical, indicates an influential underlying culture of American pragmatism. But frustrated by prolonged sequestration, a mounting conservative backlash is demanding “freedom” and reopening, even if it will cause a huge second wave of disease and death. In theoretical terms, these findings suggest a crucial causal interplay between material threat and cultural content in the construction of social order and change.

Pressure Exposes the Cracks in our Society

BY JACK A. GOLDSTONE,
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Jeff Broadbent hails the compliance of most Americans with the severe social distancing and business and school closures imposed to halt transmission of the SARS-2 coronavirus. I wish I could share his optimism about an underlying "culture of American pragmatism."

Instead, I fear that America's response to the pandemic, looked at today (May 7), reveals a society wracked by ideological polarization and severe economic inequality that has created at least four distinct responses to the crisis.

First, yes, a majority of Americans have complied with shelter in place guidelines. But that is largely because they were given legal force by governors and mayors, with wide publicity that fines and even jail awaited those who defied these orders (the case of a hair salon operator jailed in Texas is only the most visible). Where there were breaks in the rules—beaches open in Florida and California, parks in NYC, states that never locked down, states that re-opened—people took immediate advantage of the "all clear" to drop social distancing (in Georgia, when restaurants opened cell-phone records show people from neighboring states flocked there). The motivation for compliance was fear, yes, but also good citizenship: when laws were enacted and made clear, there was regard for the rules, and acceptance of the responsibility of living in a law-bound society. Pragmatism may have led some to comply even more strictly than rules required (which may have helped Florida avoid an early explosion of cases). But most followed the law because they believed that was the right thing to do.

Second, a large number of Americans were true heroes, revealing the self-reliant and community-oriented sacrifice characteristic of Americans since de Tocqueville first noted it. Medical professionals from across the country came to NYC to help with that immense crisis; nurses, EMTs, doctors, and hospital staff, police, grocery and delivery workers, all stayed at their jobs (even returning after sickness) because they believed in serving their communities. Ordinary people donated masks to hospitals, money and food to help those in need, and even business leaders sought to bring in PPE to their community when the federal government did not do so.

These are the positives. But there are two far more negative responses that we must also acknowledge. First is the anxiety—not only among GOP officials but also among local businesspeople, conservatives, and "freedom advocates"—to stop the social distancing and business closures as too costly. Admitting these actions save lives, they argue that lives have to be lost if the alternative is continued economic hardship; and that moreover it is wrong ('tyrannical') for the government to tell them to shut their business or even wear a mask. There is in fact no material basis for this view: it is not clear that the economy will revive if death tolls keep rising, so opening up may just kill thousands more people with little economic benefit.

Moreover, the U.S. can easily afford to spend two or even three months in lockdown—US GDP is \$21.4 trillion per year; if one half of all that income was lost (and currently unemployment is 'only' 20%) for three months, it would cost just \$2.7 trillion to replace the lost income, less than the \$3 trillion the government has already spent. (The reason that social costs remain so high while the government is spending so much is that the spending plan is mainly oriented to saving businesses—which have borrowed many times their earnings—from failing, rather than to preserving earnings for workers). So the impulse behind this "open up now" movement is mainly ideological. The creed is that "Democrats (not the virus) are causing us pain by insisting we hide from the virus; they are wrong to do that. We must be set free to manage our own affairs; and if there are costs in lives we will manage." This response elevates private freedom above public health, above civic responsibility, and above normal considerations of the rule of law. As with seat belts, speed limits, smoking, the public carry of automatic weapons and other cases of asserting individual freedom above any regard for public well-being, this too is a very American response.

Which brings us to the fourth, and most tragic response. America has always placed an unfair burden on the poor and minorities. The response to the coronavirus is no different. Those able to continue

working from home—those with the lowest rates of infection and death—are overwhelmingly white and well off. Those most exposed to the virus, and unable to distance, are those who work low paid service jobs or live in neighborhoods with less space, poorer public health, and who suffer from more pre-existing health conditions, especially high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity. Nothing is being done to prevent the racial and class inequalities of American society from reflecting and exacerbating themselves in the costs of the epidemic. The reaction of our leaders—Donald Trump and Jared Kushner—is, unsurprisingly, the response of a slumlord to his tenants: "I am not responsible for the lives or health of the people who live in my buildings, but they are responsible for paying me rent." Thus for Donald Trump, the "cost of the cure cannot be worse than the cost of the disease," even though the cost of the cure is borne mainly by investors, stockholders and businesses while the cost of the disease is overwhelmingly on the elderly, the poor, and minorities. Thus too, Jared Kushner's assertion that the national stockpile of life-saving equipment is not for the states, "it's our stockpile." Thus the recent government actions to require meatpacking plants to re-open despite massive incidence of COVID-19 among their workers, or Mitch McConnell's insistence that no more federal assistance can be forthcoming unless businesses are granted immunity from liability for

the spread of the disease among their workers or customers. In this crisis that should bring us together, we are instead divided by a national government led by a party that places the recovery of profits above minimizing the loss of American lives. With 75,000 Americans already dead, and tens of thousands more likely to perish, I hope that at some point, American pragmatism will revive and prevail. But at this moment, the outlook is bleak.

Social Responses to COVID-19 in the U.S.: Comment

BY LYN SPILLMAN,
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Thanks to Jeffrey Broadbent for initiating here an important discussion which is sure to engage social theorists and political and cultural sociologists for some time to come. How can we explain the "dramatic shift in collective behavior" we see in sudden conformity to stay-at-home orders and social distancing? Institutionalized routines, economic interests, political authority, and functional demands do not, he argues, "account for the sudden, largely voluntary mass changes" we have seen in weeks of COVID-19 confinement. Neither are social-psychological assumptions about self-interest or altruism sufficient.

The best account, he suggests, will be grounded in a pragmatist social psychology emphasizing the agency to adapt to new circumstances, and will involve a “crucial causal interplay between material threat and cultural content.” Identity-forming ideologies channel selection of variable cultural content.

I think we can provisionally endorse all of these claims, but we should also go further, and going further may mean circling back to debates about institutions and authority. Certainly, many individuals changed their behavior suddenly, adapting to new cultural norms triggered by the public diffusion of the social recognition of a material threat. Yet thinking of this change as (aggregate) change in individual behavior makes it seem too voluntaristic, whatever the underlying social psychology we endorse. When universities and other workplaces mostly migrated interactional occasions online, when cafes were closed and performances cancelled, most of us were necessarily restricted in our “voluntary” choice to stay home. Unlike in France, where every excursion required a new “*attestation de déplacement derogatoire*,” many Americans probably faced little direct sanctioning if they chose to continue in their old ways (although images of police patrolling park entrances certainly provided a sad reminder). But relational settings may themselves induce some

involuntary degree of conformity to others’ behavioral changes (cf. Spillman 1995). Conversely, health care workers and grocery store employees could not simply choose confinement, and even where they had clear reason to quarantine, their absences required, at the very least, explanation or negotiation.

So, I would argue that what many of us thought as individual actors did not actually matter that much for our conformity. (Though of course, our attempts to make sense of the new situation—framing anew our personal interests, considering how to help others, considering how to adapt our daily routines—certainly felt quite momentous to ourselves, and affected our experience of the change.) This is another reason why social psychological assumptions about interests, or their mirror-image, altruism, do not get us very far in understanding our surprising (short-term) shift in collective behavior. And a pragmatist theory of action also falls short unless we investigate the situation or field within which action is re-oriented. Rather, we need to move beyond questions about individual change and conformity to consider how our fields of action were reconstituted (Spillman and Strand 2013).

To do this, as Jeff Broadbent also suggests, we certainly need to understand more about cultural forms or clusters of beliefs available for interpreting the changed circumstances. We should pay

particular attention to the exercise of discursive and performative power-triggering, and making sense of our conformity even as relational power left some of us without meaningful alternatives (Reed 2013).

But, perhaps especially for political sociologists, this will take us back to questions about the power of institutions and political authorities. At a minimum, we should be interested in how organizational managers and experts wielded the authority to change whether and how we met, worked, shopped, and entertained ourselves. Beyond that, many interesting questions are emerging every day about variations in policy responses, both between different American states and cross-nationally.

Even now, armchair comparativists are having a field day: public commentary abounds on topics like “California vs. New York?” “Midwest vs. South?” “Germany vs. UK?” “Spain vs Greece?” “Norway vs Sweden?” “Australia vs. New Zealand?” and so on. Variations in health outcomes are the main focus of these comments, and demography and timing also matter. But the comparisons also highlight important differences in institutionalized policy responses and institutionalized policy experience. These are surely relevant for understanding why and how organizations and political authorities changed the coordinates of our lifeworlds, and whether they did so effectively.

So, in addition to asking what best accounts for our ability to suddenly change habitual practices, political sociologists should ask about how organizations and policy institutions triggered that change. I propose that the rich research agenda which will certainly be emerging from the current crisis should include, in addition to the questions Jeff Broadbent raises, attention to subtle forms of essentially cultural power embedded in organizations and policy institutions. It should also attend to comparative and historical institutional difference.

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Who is Primed for COVID Anxiety?

BY JAMES M. JASPER
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Thanks to Jeff Broadbent for raising a number of good questions about COVID's impact on social life. There is a lot we don't yet know (about the virus, and even more about the social response to it), but I would like to suggest several ways that our pre-existing lives, habits, and ideologies may influence our different reactions to the new virus.

The obvious pre-existing factor is political ideology. If you trust Trump, you are less likely to take coronavirus seriously. Likewise, if you mistrust experts and the entire scientific enterprise. This leads to a sensible question: are we overreacting? Hence the desperate attempts to insist that this new virus is much like the seasonal flu viruses, about which we are—year after year—notoriously nonchalant. If, on the other hand, you have concluded that Trump lies about everything and always insists that his policies are successful, you will worry about the coronavirus. Thanks to the country's geographic polarization this is largely a regional effect. Only Republican governors are reopening their states' economies contrary to expert recommendations.

Reactions also seems to be gendered. Macho men find in the pandemic a chance to perform their contempt for bodily risk, display their robust health, and show their confidence in their own ability to assess data, whatever the so-called experts say. Not to mention going to Tea-Party style rallies fully armed. And this despite the higher death risk for men who catch the virus compared to women.

We might expect women, on the other hand, to feel greater compassion for the old and sick who are at great risk these days. In its heyday, I recall, the animal rights movement was composed of eighty or ninety percent women, also based on compassion for other beings. It is easier to broadcast images of suffering animals than of COVID patients on ventilators, but their pain and indignity are not hard to imagine.

Since the 1980s, risk analysis has tried to explain why we are more anxious about some threats than others. Is it under our personal control and choice? Can we see the source of the threat? Is the threat capable of decimating entire communities all at once? Will it be around for thousands of years? Much of this research explains why COVID has scared the crap out of most of us: we can't see it coming, but we can see the body bags piling up. We can't control it much, even with those cute home-made masks everyone is wearing. It viciously

attacks weak members of the community in painful, dramatic ways. On the other hand, it does not destroy entire communities, and it will probably be under control in a few years. There is plenty of ammunition for both sides in the debate over whether we are acting appropriately or overreacting. Remember the lessons of risk research: it is almost impossible to say that one set of competing reactions is irrational, no matter how much we disagree with it.

Reasons to be hopeful?

BY KATE NASH, GOLDSMITHS,
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Writing this from lockdown, as one of the lucky ones, Covid-19 has changed everything: from a new focus on simple pleasures of home and neighborhood to the validation of medics and other key workers, life in lockdown feels like a celebration of co-operation and even—strangely—of ordinariness, in contrast to the usual daily round of competition, stress, and the expectation that each of us must somehow be exceptional.

What Covid-19 certainly changed, practically overnight, was the justification of state interference in markets. In the US and UK, which often lead the way when it comes to neoliberalism, there was astonishingly little hesitation about

introducing a package of measures, provided by or underwritten by the state, to protect wages and businesses during the pandemic. These include direct government loans to large companies and loan guarantees, as well as income support schemes that top up (in the US) or pay 80% of salaries (in the UK) so that workers can stay at home. Similar steps have been taken elsewhere.

Of course, these measures are intended to keep the economy in shape and allow a return to normal once the pandemic has passed. And criticism of their intentions and their realization is justified—they are very far from perfect, perhaps not even adequate. Nevertheless, what they demonstrate beyond any doubt are the massive capacities of the state to gather and distribute resources where there is the political will. And this after decades of neo-liberalism, which began with the slogan ‘rolling back the state.’ The state has not been ‘rolled back,’ neither in reach, nor expenditure, though it has changed shape to support public-private partnerships, changes in corporate and public sector management, transfers to manage the increasing precarity of employment contracts, and aging populations. In 2018, government spending was at 35% in the US and 38% in the UK, which is actually slightly higher than in 1980 in the US, when it was 34%, though down somewhat in the UK from 47.5%.

What has happened is that the necessity of continuous state regulation, investment and distribution to any functioning capitalist economy—including one tilted towards practices of neo-liberalism—has become obscure. As Suzanne Mettler demonstrated in *The Submerged State* (Chicago 2011), social spending is invisible to Americans even when they are the direct beneficiaries of policies designed to help mitigate the worst effects of inequality. In the US, even social security and Medicare recipients often do not see themselves as affected by government policies (in part because they are often administered by private agencies).

What will happen after the pandemic? Will the heroic emergence of the 'social state' be forgotten—appropriate to a crisis, but excessive in normal life? Will the massive increase in government debt mean a reprisal of the 'politics of austerity' that accompanied the bailouts of banks after the financial crisis? Following 2008, to deal with the deficit, government spending was slashed—and inequalities worsened. Or will there be a new politics of taxation to pay for the relief we all felt—even those of us not directly affected—at the state stepping in to provide a measure of social security for all?

A lot depends, of course, on how successful the measures will be in

keeping the economy going. Perhaps too a lot also depends on how far the authoritarian powers of the state overreach protection. Clearly, most of us accepted immediate and drastic restrictions on our civil liberties to stop Covid-19. And the repressive capacities of the state have been deployed more against some groups than others: prisoners and detainees with underlying health conditions, not to mention those medical staff without proper protective equipment, have not had the option to 'stay home.' Moreover, the use of smartphones to track and trace the virus as a way out of the lockdown raises questions about the degree of surveillance to which we are all already subject, and how far the limits of states must, again, be redrawn.

Our difficulty as sociologists is, then, to analyze and communicate how states are both protective and repressive, and the ways in which they enable solidarity and control. What can we learn from this crisis about the capacities of the states in which we live? And perhaps above all, how can we contribute to demonstrating the value of the submerged social state? Without it we can only imagine how much worse this crisis would have been for everyone, and if it is undervalued once again we will learn, once again, how many people live ordinary life as a daily crisis.

Reflections on Borders in the Time of COVID-19

The Doubly Stigmatized

BY DANILO MANDIĆ,
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The current pandemic has inspired stirring calls for solidarity with “the most vulnerable among us.” This tends to encompass only citizens, in-group nationals, or co-ethnics (typically elderly). As governments increasingly shut and militarize borders, it is worthwhile to remember a category that notoriously falls between the cracks of nation-state boundaries: those in limbo; those in perpetual emergency; those whose very humanity, as Hannah Arendt famously argued, is questionable; those who have no “home” to designate them as “among us” to begin with.

Forced migrants—refugees, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, stateless people—number over 70 million worldwide. Most are women. Most are children. Of the (un)lucky few who crossed an international border, 80% reside in a country neighboring the one they fled. Germany recently became the first-ever Western country to join the top-ten refugee host nations; otherwise, they are all impoverished

societies, often with dismal health infrastructures. The rate of successful refugee resettlement globally is less than 1%. Meanwhile, 3.7 million school-aged refugee children have no education (nor access to Zoom).

Just as the UNHCR froze refugee resettlements due to the pandemic, fears of “refugee corona” seem to have embarked on an infectious trajectory of their own. The notion that refugees spread sickness—perhaps by design, it is insinuated—is a cornerstone of the xenophobic repertoire. During and after World War II, Jewish refugees were universally slandered as infectious. For Nazi propaganda, they were rodents (what do rats do, the thought went, other than spread disease?). But the sentiment was not restricted to Axis territories. The American War Refugee Board waged a Sisyphean campaign to persuade wartime elites and public opinion that Jewish refugees were not contagious. A common objection to Fort Ontario, the sole Jewish refugee camp on U.S. soil, was that its 900 brutalized inhabitants were a health risk to the native New York population. “Refu-Jews,” the slur had it, were sick.

Decades later, such defamations persist. Across the Middle East, encampment and non-encampment policies alike are justified in reference to forced migrants as public health hazards. Kenyan officials accused Somali and Ugandan refugees in Nairobi of spreading disease. The Rohingya were denounced as transmitters of STDs. Poland's largest opposition party crowed that Syrian refugees spread "cholera" and "dysentery." In the Czech Republic, television managers at Prima TV instructed their producers to fabricate reportages on refugees as health risks for Europe. In Scandinavia, Austria, Greece, and Serbia, right-wing vigilantes and hooligans assault refugees as self-appointed health inspectors. In the U.S., the president aggravated his cruel and dysfunctional "Remain in Mexico" policy by insinuating that all the migrants at the southern border (tens of thousands of whom are undoubtedly asylum seekers) are coronavirus carriers. The view that refugees bring sickness—indeed, are a sickness—is very seductive.

Yet study after study has demonstrated that refugees do no such thing. The World Health Organization (WHO) published a recent report, based on a synthesis of 13,000 documents, showing no increased transmission of illnesses from refugees to the native populations of host societies. Refugees, furthermore, are "more vulnerable than the host population to the risk of developing both

noncommunicable and communicable diseases." As it happens, the ghettoized spaces that forced migrants inhabit are precisely the most at-risk sites for the worst infectious illness outcomes. Due to collapsing health care systems, overcrowding, and neglect, Syrian refugees recently suffered a re-emergence of tuberculosis, polio, measles, and cholera. Millions of other forced migrants are compelled to reside in poor living conditions that drastically increase their risk for mental illness and disease, including respiratory infections. The average length of stay in refugee camps is ten years. The average duration of exile for refugees is over two decades. Sociologists have rightly called it "refugee warehousing" (a concept that captures some realities of U.S. detention facilities on the southern border as well).

Consider Moria, a Greek refugee camp on Lesbos island. The site is on the frontline of a cynical and deadly European-Turkish policy on the Mediterranean. When I visited the camp years ago, volunteers and administrators dreaded overcrowding. "What the hell will we do when it's 1,000 people? 2,000?" The despair and trauma were breathtaking. Even the prospect of the common cold spreading seemed unbearable.

Meanwhile, the camp—equipped to handle a maximum of 3,000

refugees—has swollen to 20,000 residents today. Food, water, sanitation and clothing are disappearing. Six people per single tent; one water tap per 1,300 people; one toilet per 250 people. Not only is social distancing physically impossible, so is hygiene. Last month, the first COVID-19 case was confirmed inside the camp. These residents are now “trapped in an overcrowded, dangerous, and unsanitary camp”; a fertile ground, experts note, for “catastrophic morbidity and mortality in a population that is unable to deal with the pandemic effectively.”

When it comes to disease among refugees, there is a twofold stigma. First, refugees are regularly demonized: as agents of economic destruction, as organized criminals, and as potential terrorist threats. This is perverse enough, given that refugees are victims of these very forces. Second, however, there is another, disease-specific stigmatization: they are spreading ill-health to the community that magnanimously accepted these outsiders. A healthy refugee is threatening enough; an infectious one is hopelessly unattractive.

Refugee-ness in the time of COVID-19 is, in the words of sociologist Erving Goffman, a doubly spoiled identity. During pandemics, refugees deserve double our attention.

Borders and Economics of Worth During COVID-19

BY IOANA SENDROIU AND
RON LEVI, UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

How have political leaders justified decisions to close or restrict national borders in response to COVID-19? We coded early political statements to close or constrain border crossings by President Trump in the United States, Prime Minister Trudeau in Canada, and the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

We coded these statements sentence by sentence to analyze the common moral registers being invoked, drawing on Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) to code for justifications in the name of the market, equality, community and custom, passion, creativity and the divine, reputation, or efficiency and reliability. Given the substantive goals of these statements, and our focus on social collectivities, we did not code for the “connectionist” order of worth, in which projects and networks are justificatory ends (Boltanski and Chiapello 2006). In so doing, we find that restricting borders can be underwritten by different moral justifications across political cultures (Dromi and Stabler 2019; Lamont et al. 2017).

The central difference in these statements lies in their use of the “civic” and “domestic” justifications for border restrictions. Civic claims justify contentious activity by referring to solidarity, equality, and the collective interest. Domestic claims instead justify actions through authority, trust, nationalism, and order. Each speaks in the name of social collectivities, such as nations (Thévenot 2002). And these two moral orders represent the majority of justifications in these early statements, though in different proportions.

Civic justifications were over twice as likely to be used in the Canadian and European Commission statements than in the US (57% in Canada; 48% in the EC; and 23% in the US). The Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, focused on collective solidarity: “[n]o matter what our next steps look like, you can rest assured that we will take them together—with Premiers and mayors, with doctors and families and neighbors. Because that is what Canadians do in difficult times. We pull together and we look after each other.” As the head of a customs union, the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen emphasized that “by staying together, by working together and coordinating, we are able to weather this storm, which is a global storm, without any question.”

President Trump similarly invoked civic solidarity, including that “[w]e

must put politics aside, stop the partisanship, and unify together as one nation and one family.” Yet he did so less often. Instead, President Trump’s most used justification emphasized the domestic order of worth (30%). “I will never hesitate,” President Trump stated, “to take any necessary steps to protect the lives, health and safety of the American people. I will always put the well-being of America first.” The phrase of “America first,” of course, echoes a theme of the current administration.

We note another difference. In the Canadian and EC statements, claims to the world of “opinion,” or reputation, were infrequent—Prime Minister Trudeau only once lauded Canada’s “world class health professionals and authorities.” President Trump’s statement, on the other hand, was more likely to invoke national reputation, including “[a]s history has proven time and time again, Americans always rise to the challenge and overcome adversity.” Renown here combines with and reinforces the domestic justification of the nation.

Recent research emphasizes how political practices and justifications vary across political cultures (Fourcade et al. 2016; Levi and Sendroiu 2019). Responses to COVID-19 reveal that even common responses to global crises may converge—while still echoing ongoing domestic politics.

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Teaching Political Sociology

On Teaching Political Sociology during US Elections

BY DANIEL LAURISON,
SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

I've taught a political sociology course four times so far and plan on teaching it again in 2021. Twice I taught my class in the fall semester during an election (2016 and 2018); the other two times the spring semester following. Each of these courses focused primarily on understanding how (potential) voters engage (or not) with elections and on

how campaigns try to mobilize or influence them. These have been some of the classes I've most enjoyed teaching, in no small part because the students who enrolled have all been very motivated to learn more about US politics and elections, as well as because the courses have allowed me to bring together the topics I'm personally most interested in.

I think the biggest benefit of teaching a political sociology course during an election year is that it is so easy to tie scholarly material

to a topic that students are already interested in, or at the very least are hearing about from the news, social media, and their friends and classmates. There is no shortage of news articles, videos, memes, etc. being produced every day in the fall of election years, and the first time I taught a class like this I tried to curate relevant media for each topic in the course. The downside of that approach turned out to be that there is so much that I could (and did) spend hours combing through possible stories to share. In later versions of the class, I shifted to asking students to share links to something they've come across relevant to that week's topic and readings, and that has worked much better. In 2018, I also required students to do a project that got them involved in the election in some way—some worked on campaigns, others did interviews with potential voters as part of my research, and others worked for nonprofit get-out-the-vote efforts. Having students directly engaged with voters while learning about what scholars know about campaigns and voting made for a powerful learning experience (I hope!) and great class discussions.

One challenge of teaching an election-linked course during an election has been that some topics students most want to talk about during class do not line up with what I put on the syllabus. One of those topics was the latest polls and the horserace aspects of the election;

I ended up, when I last taught this class, leaving some time at the beginning of each session for that kind of discussion, with some caveats from me about what polls miss and how little of the “big” news stories permeate most voters' consciousnesses, let alone affect the outcome of the race. Students also often really wanted to dig into the details about candidates' proposed policies on big issues like climate change and inequality, and/or to discuss their moral evaluations of the candidates and parties. Evaluating policy is a great topic, but not the focus of my classes. And while morality is obviously deeply important, especially since I've mostly taught in places where students largely agree with each other on these issues, I steer away from this conversation. Instead I ask students to focus on questions and readings about how people who aren't in our classroom understand politics, candidates, government, and voting.

The biggest challenge I've had in teaching during elections, though, was probably figuring out how to come back to my class of first-year students the Monday after Trump won in 2016 (the class of 2020 has had a rough four years). With the consent of my seminar of 12, we used our class time for a campus-wide teach-in where I and three other professors gave our interpretation of the election results, then facilitated discussion. Teaching after the 2018

midterms was much easier since the results lined up more with both what was expected ahead of time and my own and student's preferences.

If you are thinking about teaching a political sociology course during an election, I would say go for it—I have really enjoyed teaching these classes. I do think it could be much harder to

do, though, on a campus with more political divisions than mine, or with bigger class sizes. But so much of what the media focuses on in elections is so distant from what we know about how people see politics that I think we all ought to take the opportunity to give students some sociological perspective on an election if we can.

Tales from the Field: Thoughts on the Research Process

Unexpected Findings

BY LUIS ANTONIO VILA-
HENNINGER,
UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN

My qualitative research was motivated by a puzzle: the voter reasoning literature sees partisan voters' rationalizations of their policy positions as based on discourses that are carefully constructed and supplied by their affiliated political party (for a summary see Achen and Bartels 2016: 12, 268, 310-11). However, this perspective cannot explain how actors utilize ideological rationalizations across partisan affiliation (Vila-Henninger 2019).

To address this puzzle, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 120 respondents from 2013 to 2015.

I interviewed respondents about their positions on four direct democratic economic policies (DDEPs) that appeared on the Arizona state ballot from 2008 to 2012 regarding new home warranties, undocumented workers, medical marijuana, and tax policy. Furthermore, I recruited respondents from a highly politically polarized congressional district in Tucson, Arizona according to their economic position and partisan affiliation.

I recruited respondents from 2013 to 2015 by employing a variety of techniques. I used a combination of canvassing, locating gatekeepers, and referrals. While recruiting for my pilot study, I was warned by several different sources against door-to-door recruitment in low-

income areas, as well as in areas with neighborhood associations. For this reason, I notified homeowner and neighborhood associations about my canvassing efforts. These associations served as gatekeepers, so I worked with them to assure that my presence in their neighborhoods was welcome, as well as to see if they were able to assist me in my recruitment efforts. By going through these gatekeepers, I was able to successfully recruit a number of respondents.

Furthermore, after I interviewed each respondent, I gave the participant a flyer describing my research and asked the respondent for referrals. This generated some snowball sampling. I also recruited participants through the social networks of my research assistants and by posting announcements online.

The unexpected finding, which began to answer the empirical puzzle, was the emergence of a “moral economy”—defined as popular outrage based on non-economic moral principles of economic exchange (Thompson 1971). Partisan respondents, in addition to justifying their DDEP positions by appealing to norms of self-interest or to political ideology, often justified their position in terms of fairness. When respondents across partisan affiliation and economic position legitimated their position using the same concept of fairness, this

provided evidence of a moral economy. For example, respondents across economic position and partisan affiliation justified their support for a ballot measure regarding new home warranties by decrying those in the real estate market who took advantage of economically vulnerable homebuyers as unfair. Here, the moral principle of fairness was applied specifically through the American liberal ideological value of protecting the vulnerable (e.g. Haidt 2012). This demonstrated that in the context of economic policy, voters crossed ideological lines in their legitimation of their policy stance. This is surprising in the face of literature that demonstrates that partisan American citizens use heterogeneous political reasoning (e.g. Brooks and Manza 2013).

My full analysis will be available in my forthcoming book *Social Justification and Political Legitimacy: How Voters Rationalize Direct Democratic Economic Policy in America* (Palgrave).

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Tales from the Field

BY JENNIFER NATIONS,
UC SAN DIEGO AND
SCHOLARS STRATEGY
NETWORK

I am one of those gluttons for punishment who decided to get a PhD with children. My first child was almost two and I was pregnant with my second when I entered my first seminar in graduate school. Traveling to gather dissertation data and additional data for the dissertation book project (yes, I graduated!) has been a challenge given my family situation. The dissertation-turned-book project is a historical look at the politics of who pays for public higher education in California and New York.

I trace government support through three periods: founding and expansion (mid-1800s to 1965), retrenchment (1966-1990), and redistribution (1990-present). This tracing involves identifying the original sources of tax revenue used to fund public universities, how and why revenue sources changed over time, when and why university leaders and lawmakers adopted tuition charges, and how the rise of modern conservatism altered the politics of higher education support.

A central aspect of doing historical research is creating a timeline of significant events and identifying the people who moved ideas and policies forward. The traditional route to building a timeline and a character-driven story is to spend time in archives, which has been largely impossible for me. Over the past six years, I have learned three lessons about how to conduct historical policy research while generally avoiding travel.

First, use newspaper archives as search engines. I rely heavily on my university library's subscription to digitized historical newspapers to find the names of individuals and the titles of commissions, reports, legislation, speeches, and other data sources. With names and titles in hand, I search for original records by author, title, or keywords. Newspapers have also been critical because at times, records that were inaccessible to me were printed in their entirety as news articles. This

includes a 1903 statement by California Governor George Pardee, urging the legislature to more consistently fund the University of California, and a campaign trail speech of gubernatorial candidate Hugh Carey when he expressed support for CUNY's free tuition policy in 1974.

Second, interlibrary loan is the university library's most noble calling. Through ILL, I have been able to bring documents to me rather than have to travel to them. ILL librarians have acquired scans or microfiche or found alternative sources when documents do not circulate. One of the most significant categories of document ILL has brought to me are numerous New York State hearings about SUNY and CUNY from the 1960s onward. Because they are public hearings, these transcripts capture the conflict between students, university administrators, and politicians over funding, access, accountability, and equity—the issues that are central to political decisions regarding who pays for public higher education.

Third, plumb the depths of every digital archive that is remotely relevant. Few remember Alex Sherriffs, education advisor to Governor Ronald Reagan. Sherriffs's oral history—available online through the UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library, Reagan Gubernatorial Era Series—provided an insider's view of the battle over charging tuition at UC campuses. The oral history for Sherriffs, and other Reagan cabinet members, allowed me to make the case that Reagan drove the tuition policy reversal, motivated by conservative ideology to shrink government as well as his disapproval of UC's elitism. Mercifully, most oral history PDFs are searchable.

I continue making (slow) progress on the book manuscript despite all the limitations we are currently facing given Covid-19 closures. Lessons one and three may be relevant to the encumbered and unencumbered alike in our current moment when none of us can access archives or physical libraries.

Section Publications

NEW BOOKS & EDITED VOLUMES

Alexander, Jeffrey, Trevor Stack and Farhad Khosrokhavar, eds. 2020. *Breaching the Civil Order: Radicalism and the Civil Sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Andreas, Joel. 2019. *Disenfranchised: The Rise and Fall of Industrial Citizenship in China*. Oxford University Press.

Chernobrov, Dmitry. 2019. *Public Perception of International Crises: Identity, Ontological Security and Self-Affirmation*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Clemens, Elisabeth S. 2020. *Civic Gifts: Voluntarism and the Making of the American Nation-State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

DeFronzo, James, and Jungyun Gill. 2019. *Social Problems and Social Movements*. Rowman & Littlefield.

De Leon, Cedric. 2019. *Crisis: When Political Parties Lose the Consent to Rule*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Doering, Jan. 2020. *Us versus Them: Race, Crime, and Gentrification in Chicago Neighborhoods*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dromi, Shai. 2020. *Above the Fray: The Red Cross and the Making of the Humanitarian NGO Sector*. University of Chicago Press.

Hechter, Michael. 2019. *Rational Choice Sociology: Essays on Theory, Collective Action, and Social Order*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Janoski, Thomas, Cedric de Leon, Joya Misra and Isaac W. Martin, eds. 2020. *The New Handbook of Political Sociology*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jasper, James M., Michael P. Young, and Elke Zuern. 2020. *Public Characters: The Politics of Reputation and Blame*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

- Kallman, Meghan Elizabeth. 2020. *The Death of Idealism: Development and Anti-Politics in the Peace Corps*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kerrissey, Jasmine, Eve Weinbaum, Clare Hammonds, Tom Juravich, and Dan Clawson, eds. 2020. *Labor in the Time of Trump*. Cornell University Press.
- Reed, Isaac Ariail. 2020. *Power in Modernity: Agency Relations and the Creative Destruction of the King's Two Bodies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pfaff, Steven, and Michael Hechter. 2020. *The Genesis of Rebellion: Governance, Grievance and Mutiny in the Age of Sail*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Winders, Bill, and Elizabeth Ransom, eds. 2019. *Global Meat: Social and Environmental Consequences of the Expanding Meat Industry*. MIT Press.

NEW ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

- Burstein, Paul. 2020. "Testing Theories about Advocacy and Public Policy." *Perspectives on Politics*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592719004663>
- Feldman, David B. 2019. "Beyond the Border Spectacle: Global Capital, Migrant Labor and the Specter of Liminal Legality." *Critical Sociology*: 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920519884999>."
- Geva, Dorit. 2020. "A double-headed hydra: Marine Le Pen's charisma, between political masculinity and political femininity." *NORMA* (15)1: 26-42. DOI: [10.1080/18902138.2019.1701787](https://doi.org/10.1080/18902138.2019.1701787)
- Geva, Dorit. 2020. "Daughter, Mother, Captain: Marine Le Pen, Gender, and Populism in the French National Front." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* (27)1: 1-26, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxy039>
- Khutkyy, Dmytro and Kristina Avramchenko. 2019. "Impact Evaluation of Participatory Budgeting in Ukraine." Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337783495_Impact_Evaluation_of_Participatory_Budgeting_in_Ukraine

- Lotesta, Johnnie and Cedric de Leon. 2020. "Political Parties: From Reflection to Articulation and Beyond," pp. 646-665 in *The New Handbook of Political Sociology*, edited by Thomas Janoski, Cedric de Leon, Joya Misra, and Isaac W. Martin. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Luft, Aliza. 2020. "Theorizing Moral Cognition: Culture in Action, Situations, and Relationships." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* (6): 1-15.
- Luft, Aliza. 2020. "Religion in Vichy France: How Meso-Level Actors Contribute to Authoritarian Legitimation." *European Journal of Sociology*: 1-35.
- Luft, Aliza. 2020. "Three Stories and Three Questions about Participation in Genocide." *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 3(1): 196-206.
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- Mijs, Jonathan J.B. 2020. "Earning Rent with Your Talent: Modern-Day Inequality Rests on the Power to Define, Transfer and Institutionalize Talent." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* (Special issue: Talents and Distributive Justice), DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2020.1745629
- Mijs, Jonathan J.B. 2020. "The paradox of inequality: income inequality and belief in meritocracy go hand in hand." *Socio-Economic Review* (in press), DOI: 10.1093/ser/mwy051
- Mijs, Jonathan J.B. and Mike Savage. 2020. "Meritocracy, Elitism and Inequality." *The Political Quarterly* (in press), DOI: 10.1111/1467-923X.12828
- Mueller, Jason C. 2019. "Political, Economic, and Ideological Warfare in Somalia." *Peace Review* 31(3): 372-380. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2019.1735174>
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- Zhang, Tony Huiquan. 2019. "The Rise of the Princelings in China: Career Advantages and Collective Elite Reproduction." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 19(2): 169-196. DOI: 10.1017/jea.2019.11.

Zhang, Tony Huiquan and Robert Brym. 2019. "Tolerance of Homosexuality in 88 Countries: Education, Political Freedom and Liberalism." *Sociological Forum* 34(2): 501-521. DOI:10.1111/socf.12507.

Zhang, Tony Huiquan, Jing Hu, and Xichao Zhang. 2020. "Disparities in Subjective Well-being: Political Status, Urban-Rural Divide and Cohort Dynamics in China." *Chinese Sociological Review* 52(1): 56-83. DOI: 10.1080/21620555.2019.1654369.

SPECIAL ISSUES

"The Pro-Immigrant Movement in the United States: Political Mobilization from the 2006 Immigration Protests to Trump," edited by Irene Bloemraad and Kim Voss and published in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, January 2019. Available online:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1556447>

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGISTS IN THE NEWS

Reyes, Victoria. 21 February 2020. "After More than a Century, Did the Philippines Finally Break Free from the United States? Possibly. But to truly be free, the Philippines must also steer clear of China's grasp." Made by History at *The Washington Post*. Available online:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/02/21/after-more-than-century-did-philippines-finally-break-free-united-states/>

Gordon, Colin and Sara H. Bruch. 21 April 2020. "COVID-19 is Exposing the United States' Ragged, Shameful Safety Net." *Jacobin*. Available online:
<https://jacobinmag.com/2020/04/covid-19-social-safety-net-united-states>

Mijs, Jonathan J. B was quoted in a January 24 *The Guardian* article, a February 26 *Washington Post* article, and a March 3 *Financial Times* article about his recent article "The Paradox of Inequality: Income Inequality and Belief in Meritocracy go Hand in Hand" published in *Socio-Economic Review* (doi: 10.1093/ser/mwy051).

TEACHING & MENTORING TOOLS DURING COVID-19

Duquette-Rury, Lauren. 2020. "Conducting Social Science Research During Crisis." Wayne State University.

This memo was originally prepared for graduate students in Prof. Duquette-Rury's research seminar on Mixed Methods in the Social Sciences, but it is relevant for a broader audience of researchers. It is available here:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/10JX9dAeavBdeXjq4oWqdQTEf8azcJJTX/view?usp=sharing>

Section Announcements

2020 POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY SECTION ELECTION RESULTS

We are pleased to announce the 2020 ASA Political Sociology Section Election Results.

Fabio Rojas, Indiana University was elected chair. He will serve as chair-elect from August 2020 to August 2021 and then as chair the following year.

Kiyoteru Tsutsui, University of Michigan and Irene Bloemraad, University of California, Berkeley were elected to the section council. They both will serve three-year terms beginning August 2020.

Also, the proposed change to the by-laws passed. That means we will add two student members to the section council. They will serve two-year terms with one of those seats being vacated each year. In 2021 we will elect one of the two for a one-year term, allowing us to set a pattern of electing one student member each year.

AN INVITATION TO CELEBRATE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SECTION ON THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY

The Section on the History of Sociology (HoS) will mark its twentieth anniversary as a full ASA Section at the ASA Annual Meeting in August 2020, with the co-sponsorship of a thematic issue of *The American Sociologist* on “The Future of Sociology’s History,” intended to highlight the work being done by new voices in the field. In conjunction, the Section will also sponsor a virtual symposium “New Voices in the History of Sociology” during the time frame (August 8-11) originally scheduled for the ASA meetings—the exact date will be announced by July 15. This is intended to afford scholars working on contributions to *The American Sociologist* thematic issue (or to share similar work in progress) a responsive audience.

Paper proposals for the roundtables are due by email by **July 1, 2020** to Laura Ford (lford@bard.edu), Chair of the New Scholarly Voices Initiative for the Section. Proposals should be 5-10 pages on a topic in the history of sociology, suitable for submission to *The American Sociologist* thematic issue. You will be notified that you have been selected as a roundtable participant by July 15, 2020. An attempt will be made to accommodate all submissions so that everyone will have an opportunity to receive responses to their work. Participation in the roundtables is not a requirement for submission to the sponsored thematic issue of *The American Sociologist* nor does roundtable participation require submission.

The final version of the paper for *The American Sociologist* thematic issue should be submitted by October 31, 2020 following guidelines on website maintained by Springer publisher for *The American Sociologist* (<https://www.springer.com/journal/12108>).

If you have questions, please feel free to contact any member or the organizing committee,

Laura Ford, Subcommittee Chair (lford@bard.edu), Anne Eisenberg (eisenber@geneseo.edu), Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi (falasca@soc.ucsb.edu), Gary D. Jaworski (gdjaworski@gmail.com), Gillian Niebrugge-Brantley (niebran@gwu.edu niebran@attglobal.net), Lawrence T. Nichols, editor *The American Sociologist* (ltnichols@retiree.wvu.edu)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: SOCIAL DATA RESEARCH & DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS

The Social Data Initiative at the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) invites proposals from scholars in the social sciences and related fields for the Social Data Research Fellowship and the Social Data Dissertation Fellowship. These fellowships will support research projects of up to 12 months in length that are focused on two key areas:

- Advancing scholarly research on the role of social media in elections and democracy, with an emphasis on the 2020 US elections, including local, state, and/or national primary or general elections.
- Expanding best practices and methods for accessing and analyzing relevant data that can inform our understanding of the impact of social media on democracy.

Covid-19: The worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has rapidly changed the policy, electoral, and media landscapes related to the 2020 US elections. This grant opportunity's primary emphasis is related to social media and the 2020 elections, as described above; however, applications that investigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic as it intersects with the core themes outlined above are particularly encouraged.

The Social Data Research Fellowship program is open to researchers who hold a PhD in a relevant discipline and are based at an institution of higher education (college or university) or a nonprofit focused on social research. These awards may not exceed US\$50,000. The Social Data Dissertation Fellowship program is open to PhD students who are actively enrolled in a PhD program, who may apply for awards of up to US\$15,000 in support of dissertation research. Applicants to the program should have completed all PhD coursework by the beginning of the fellowship term.

The full request for proposals, including a detailed list of proposal requirements and complete eligibility requirements, is attached as a pdf and available on our website. Applications are due **Tuesday, June 16, 2020.**

Political Sociology Job Candidates



Joshua A. Basseches

Northwestern University

Website: www.joshuabasseches.com

Research Interests: Political Sociology; Environmental Sociology; Economic Sociology; Public Policy (especially energy and climate policy); Social Movements and Interest Groups; Legislative Process and Procedures; U.S. State Politics; Sociology of Law; Comparative-Historical Sociology

Bio: Basseches' research focuses on state-level climate policy and politics in the United States. Given that the political power of private interests is generally assumed to be the primary impediment to federal climate policy, his dissertation asks why the same interests have been unable to prevent so much progress in the states, where political scientists predict business influence to be even greater. He finds that even in the so-called "leading states" there is significant variation in the quality of the policies that have been adopted. After accounting for the role of social movement organizations, public opinion, and a range of other interest groups, he ultimately explains this variation in terms of differences in the policy preferences and political power of particular private interests, most pivotally the investor-owned utilities. His previous work focusing on social movement influence in the design of state-level climate policy has been published in *Mobilization*.

Nathan Katz

University of Missouri

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Research Interests: Political Sociology, Campaign Finance and Elections, Mass Media, Animals and Society, Culture, Comparative-Historical Sociology, Sociological Theory

Bio: Nathan Katz is a doctoral student at the University of Missouri. His main research interests look at the intersections of politics, media, and culture. His dissertation "Turning Money into Speech" is a sociological historical analysis of the evolution of what it means for money to be speech, using records of federal expenditures, media coverage, and archives of television advertisements from the creation of the Federal Election Campaign Act to the Citizens United ruling. This sheds light on how campaign finance regulations influence speech in the public sphere in the form of political advertising, developing a further understanding of how ideas shape institutional logics that can influence information delivered to the public. Other research projects have examined the culture behind white supremacist punk music, as well as special needs animal adoption. His past works are published in *Symbolic Interaction* and *Society & Animals*, and he has a forthcoming article in *Young*.



Johnnie Lotesta

Ash Center for Democratic Governance & Innovation, Harvard Kennedy School

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Research Interests: Political Sociology, Cultural Sociology, Labor & Social Movements, Sociology of Organizations, Qualitative Methods

Bio: I am a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School, and I received my PhD in Sociology from Brown University in 2019. My work focuses on American political development and subnational governance broadly defined, especially the relationships between political parties, labor and social movements, organized interest groups, and policy change. Preliminarily titled *Rightward in the Rustbelt*, my book project examines the partisan politics surrounding the introduction and passage of right-to-work laws in three Industrial Midwestern states in 2011 and 2012. Taking a comparative and historical approach, it shows how late-20th century shifts in the organization of American civic and political life displaced labor within both political parties and allowed conservative interest groups to gain greater influence over legislative programs and activities, particularly in the GOP. In other projects, I examine the institutionalization of policy experts in state legislative politics and the impact of social movement participation on youth perceptions of voting and civic engagement. My work has appeared in *Research in Political Sociology* and the *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*, among other outlets.



Morgan C. Matthews

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Research Interests: Gender, Political Sociology, Political Parties and Party Polarization, Social Movements and Social Change, Work and Organizations

Morgan C. Matthews is a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her dissertation analyzes historical patterns of gender polarization in state legislatures and examines how partisanship has taken on gendered meaning in the everyday practice of governance. Morgan uses multiple data sources and methods to understand these social processes, including longitudinal quantitative measures of women's representation and partisanship, discourse analysis of legislative speeches, legislative interviews, and archival research. Her dissertation has been supported by grants and fellowships from the Tobin Project, the UW Center for Research on Gender and Women, and the Institute for Legal Studies. Morgan's research has been published in *Sociology Compass* and *Socius*, as well as The Society Pages' blogs. She holds an MS in sociology from UW-Madison and an AB in sociology from Dartmouth College.



Kristopher Velasco

University of Texas at Austin

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Research Interests: Political Sociology, Global & Transnational Sociology, Organizations, LGBT Politics, World Culture, Networks

Kristopher Velasco is a sociology PhD candidate at the University of Texas at Austin studying the role of organizations in facilitating social and cultural change. His dissertation investigates how a transnational network of illiberal and right-wing actors challenge the dominance of traditional liberal values within the international arena. Using the case of LGBT rights, his dissertation challenges and expands present world society scholarship by demonstrating how the formation of pro-LGBT global norms can facilitate a rise in backlash policies against these populations by spurring the formation of a global, anti-LGBT network. This work demonstrates how world society mechanisms can diffuse defiance to liberal norms—not just compliance as typically assumed. Other on-going work focuses on U.S. non-profits and how these organizations enact social and cultural change. Kristopher's solo-authored research has appeared in *Social Forces* and *International Studies Quarterly*, with co-authored research in *American Review of Public Administration* and *Social Indicators Research*.



Luis Antonio Vila-Henninger (luis.vila@uclouvain.be)

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Research Interests: Economic Sociology, Political Sociology, Cultural Sociology, Qualitative Methods, and Sociological Theory

Luis Antonio Vila-Henninger holds a PhD in sociology from the University of Arizona. Luis uses semi-structured interviews to analyze how voters' justifications of their positions on economic policies help to maintain or undermine the political legitimacy—and by extension the political authority—of said policies. His qualitative work also investigates how such justifications are structured by economic inequality, partisanship, and cultural factors—such as political values, neoliberal ideology, and norms of self-interest. Luis's work with Qualidem uses secondary qualitative analysis to investigate how changes in public policy shape how citizens in western democracies understand their connections with national and supranational political systems. His work has appeared in *The Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *Sociology Compass*, *Sociological Perspectives*, *The Sociological Quarterly*, *Sociological Inquiry*, and *The Bulletin of Sociological Methodology*. Luis is working on a book manuscript under contract with Palgrave Macmillan entitled *Social Justification and Political Legitimacy: How Voters Rationalize Direct Democratic Economic Policy in America*.